ALL JOY IN ALL TRIALS   
NO. 1704

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My Brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.   
James 1:2-4.

JAMES calls the converted among the 12 tribes, his Brethren. Christianity has a great uniting powerit both discovers and creates relationships among the sons of men. It reminds us of the ties of Nature and binds us with the bonds of Grace. Everyone that is born of the Spirit of God is Brother to every other that is born of the same Spirit. Well may we be called Brethren, for we are redeemed by one blood! We are partakers of the same life; we feed upon the same heavenly food; we are united to the same living Headwe seek the same ends; we love the same Fatherwe are heirs of the same promises and we shall dwell forever together in the same Heaven! Therefore, let brotherly love continue; let us love one another fervently with a pure heart and manifest that love, not in words only, but in deed and in truth.

Whatever brotherhood may be a sham, let the Brotherhood of Believers be the most real thing beneath the stars. Beginning with this word, Brethren, James shows a true brotherly sympathy with Believers in their trialsand this is a main part of Christian fellowship. Bear you one anothers burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. If we are not tempted, ourselves, at this moment, others arelet us remember them in our prayers, for in due time our turn will comeand we shall be put into the crucible. As we would desire to receive sympathy and help in our hour of need, let us render it freely to those who are now enduring trial. Let us remember those that are in bonds, as bound with them, and those that suffer affliction as being, ourselves, in the body.

Remembering the trials of his Brethren, James tries to cheer them and, therefore, he says, My Brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various temptations. It is a part of our high calling to rise ourselves into confidence. And it is also our duty to see that none of our Brethren despond, much less despair. The whole tendency of our holy faith is to elevate and to encourage. Grace breeds no sorrow except the healthy sorrow which comes with saving repentance and leads to the joy of pardonit comes not to make men miserable, but to wipe all tears from their eyes! Our dream is not of devils descending a dreary staircase to Hell, but of angels ascending and descending upon a ladder, the top of which leads to the shining Throne of God!

The message of the Gospel is one of joy and gladness and were it universally understood and received, this world would be no longer a wilderness, but it would rejoice and blossom as the rose! Let Grace reign in all hearts and this earth will become a temple filled with perpetual song even the trials of life will become causes of the highest joyso beautifully described by James as, all joy, as if every possible delight were crowded into it. Blessed be God, it is our work not to upbraid, but to cheer all the Brotherhoodwe walk in a light which glorifies everything upon which it falls and turns losses into gains! We are able, in sober earnest, to speak with the afflicted and bid them be patient under the chastening hand of God. Yes, to count it all joy when they fall into various temptations because those trials will work out for them such signal, such lasting good, they may be well content to sow in tears since they are sure to reap in joy!

Without further preface we will come, at once, to the text and observe that in speaking about afflictionfor that is the subject of the textthe Apostle notes, first, the essential point which is assailed by temptation, namely, your faith. Your faith is the target that all the arrows are shot at. The furnace is kindled for the trial of your faith. Notice, secondly, the invaluable blessing which is thus gained, namely, the proving of your faith, discovering whether it is the right faith or not. This proof of our faith is a blessing of which I cannot speak too highly. Then, thirdly, we may not overlook the priceless virtue which is produced by this process of testing, namely, patiencefor the proving of your faith produces patienceand this is the souls surest enrichment.

Lastly, in connection with that patience, we shall note the spiritual completeness which is thus promotedThat you may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing. Perhaps you have noticed the little variations I have made in the text, but I am now following the Revised Version which gives an admirable rendering. I will read it. Count it all joy, my Brethren, when you fall into manifold temptations; knowing that the proof of your faith works patience. And let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing.

I. First, let us think a little UPON THE ESSENTIAL POINT WHICH IS ASSAILED by temptation or trial. It is your faith which is tried. It is supposed that you have faith. You are not the people of God, you are not truly Brethren unless you are Believers. It is this faith of yours which is peculiarly obnoxious to Satan and to the world which lies in the Wicked One. If you had no faith, they would not be enemies of yours. But faith is the mark of the chosen of God and, therefore, His foes become the foes of all the faithful, spitting their venom specially upon their faith. God, Himself, has put enmity between the serpent and the womanbetween the serpents seed and the womans Seedand that enmity must show itself.

The serpent bites at the heel of the true seed and, therefore, mocking, persecutions, temptations and trials are sure to beset the pathway to faith. The hand of faith is against all evil and all evil is against faith! Faith is that blessed Grace which is most pleasing to God and, therefore, it is the most displeasing to the devil. By faith God is greatly glorified and, therefore, by faith Satan is greatly annoyed. He rages at faith because he sees, there, his own defeat and the victory of Grace. Because the trial of your faith brings honor to the Lord, therefore the Lord, Himself, is sure to try it that out of its trial praise may come to His Grace by which faith is sustained! Our chief end is to glorify Godand if our trials enable us more fully to answer the end of our beingit is well that they should happen to us.

So early in our discourse we see reason to count it all joy when we fall into manifold temptations. It is by our faith that we are saved, justified and brought near to God and, therefore, it is no marvel that it is attacked! It is by believing in Christ that we are delivered from the reigning power of sin and receive power to become the sons of God. Faith is as vital to salvation as the heart is vital to the bodytherefore the javelins of the enemy are mainly aimed at this essential Grace. Faith is the standard bearer and the objective of the enemy is to strike him down that the battle may be gained. If the foundations are removed, what can the righteous do? If the cable can be snapped, where will the vessel drift?

All the powers of darkness which are opposed to right and truth are sure to fight against our faith and manifold temptations will march in their legions against our confidence in God. It is by our faith that we live we began to live by it and continue to live by it, forthe just shall live by faith. Once let faith go and our life is gone! Therefore it is that the powers which war against us make their main assault upon this royal castle, this key of the whole position. Faith is your jewel, your joy, your glory! And the thieves who haunt the pilgrim way are all in league to tear it from you. Hold fast, therefore, to this, your choice treasure!

It is by faith, too, that Christians perform exploits. If men of old worked daring and heroic deeds, it was by faith. Faith is the fighting principle and the conquering principletherefore it is Satans policy to slay it even as Pharaoh sought to kill the male children when Israel dwelt in Egypt. Rob a Christian of his faith and he will be like Samson when his locks were cut awaythe Philistines will be upon him and the Lord will have departed from him. Marvel not if the full force of the current shall beat upon your faith, for it is the foundation of your spiritual house! Oh that your faith may abide steadfast and unmovable in all present trials, so that it may be found true in the hour of death and in the day of judgment! Woe unto that man whose faith fails him in this land of peace, for what will he do in the swelling of Jordan?

Now, think of how faith is tried. According to the text we are said to fall into manifold temptations or into various temptationsthat is to say, we may expect very many and very different troubles. In any case, these trials will be most real. The 12 tribes to whom this Epistle was written were an especially tried people, for in the first place they were, as Jews, greatly persecuted by all other nations. And when they became Christians, they were cruelly persecuted by their own people. A Gentile convert was somewhat less in peril than a Jewish Christian, for the latter was crushed between the upper and nether millstones of Paganism and Judaism.

The Israelite Christian was usually so persecuted by his own kin that he had to flee from them. And where could he go, for all other people abhorred the Jews? We are not in such a plight, but Gods people, even to this day, will find that trial is no sham word. The rod in Gods house is no toy to play with! The furnace, believe me, is no mere place of extra warmth to which you may soon accustom yourselfit is often heated seven times hotter, like the furnace of Nebuchadnezzarand Gods children are made to know that the fire burns and devours. Our temptations are no inventions of nervousness nor hobgoblins of dreamy fear.

You have heard of the patience of Jobhis was real patience, for his afflictions were real. Could each tried Believer among us tell his own story, I do not doubt we would convince all who heard us that the troubles and temptations which we have endured are no fictions of romance, but must be ranked among the stern realities of actual life. Yes, and note, too, that the trials of Christians are such as would, in themselves, lead us into sin, for I take it that our translators would not have placed the word, temptation, in the textand the Revisionists would not have retained itif they had not felt that there was a coloring of temptation in its meaning and that, trial, was hardly the word.

The natural tendency of trouble is not to sanctify, but to induce sin. A man is very apt to become an unbeliever under afflictionthat is a sin. He is apt to murmur against God under itthat is a sin. He is apt to put forth his hand to some evil way of escaping from his difficultyand that would be sin. Hence we are taught to pray, Lead us not into temptation, because trial has, in itself, a measure of temptationand if it were not neutralized by abundant Grace it would lead us towards sin. I suppose that every test must have, in it, a measure of temptation. The Lord cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempts He any man, but this is to be understood of His end and design. He entices no man to do evil, but yet He tries the sincerity and faithfulness of men by placing them where sin comes in their wayand does its best or its worst to ensnare themHis design being that the uprightness of His servants may thus be proved, both to themselves and others.

We are not taken out of this world of temptation, but we are kept in it for our good. Because our nature is depraved, it makes occasions for sin, both out of our joys and our trials. But by Grace we overcome the tendency of nature and so derive benefit from tribulation. Do I not speak to many here, who, at times, feel strong impulses towards evil, especially in the darksome hour when the spirit of evil walks abroad? Have you not been made to tremble for yourselves in season of fierce trial, for your feet were almost gone, your steps had well-near slipped? Is there any virtue that has not been weather-beaten? Is there any love that has not, at times, been so tried that it threatened to curdle into hate? Is there any good thing this side of Heaven which has marched all the way in silver slippers? Did ever a flower of Grace blossom in this wretched clime without being tried with frost or blight?

Our way is up the riverwe have to stem the current and struggle against a flood which would readily bear us to destruction! Thus, not only trials, but black temptations assail the Christians faith. As to what shape they take, we may say this muchthe trial or temptation of each man is distinct from that of every other. When God tested Abraham, he was bid to take his son, his only son, and offer him upon a mountain for a sacrifice. Nobody here was ever tried in that way! Nobody ever will be. We may have the trial of losing our child, but certainly not the trial of having a command to offer him as a sacrifice. That was a trial peculiar to Abraham necessary and useful to himthough never proposed to us.

In the case of the young man in the Gospels, our Lord Jesus tried him with, If you would be perfect, go and sell all that you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in Heaven. Some have dreamed that it must, therefore, be the duty of everybody to part with their possessionsbut this is silly! It would not be the duty of any man to offer up his only son and it is not the duty of every man to part with all his goods. These were tests to particular persons and others equally special and searching have been applied in other cases. We are not to try ourselves, nor to desire other mens trials! It will be well if we endure those which the Lord appoints for us, for they will be wisely chosen. That which would most severely test me would, perhaps, be no trial to you. And that which tries you, might be no temptation to me.

This is one reason why we often judge one another so severely, because feeling ourselves to be strong in that particular point, we argue that the fallen one must have been strong in that point, too, and, therefore, must have willfully and earnestly have determined to do wrong. This may be a cruel supposition. We hastily conclude that the temptation must have been as feeble in his case as it would have been in our own, which is a great mistake, for a temptation which to you or to me would be no temptation at all, may be to another individual, of a peculiar constitution and under singular circumstances, a most fierce and terrible blast from the Adversary, before which he falls mournfully, but not with malice aforethought. Various temptations, says the Apostle, and he knew what he said.

And, dear Friends, sometimes these various temptations derive great force from their seemingly surrounding us and cutting off escape. James saysYou fall into various temptationslike men who fall into a pit and do not know how to get out. Or like soldiers who fall into an ambush; or travelers in the good old times when two or three footpaths surrounded them and made them feel that they had fallen into bad hands. The tempted see not which way to turn! They appear to be hemmed in. They are as a bird that is taken in the fowlers snare. This it is that makes calamity of our manifold temptationsthat they hedge up our wayand unless faith finds the clue, we wander in a thorny maze.

At times temptation comes suddenly upon us and so we fall into it. When we were at rest and were quiet, suddenly the evil came, like a lion leaping from the thicket. When Jobs children were eating and drinking in their elder brothers house, suddenly a wind came from the wilderness and the Patriarch was bereaved. The cattle were plowing, the sheep were grazing, the camels were at their serviceand in a momentby fire from Heaven and by robber bands, the whole of these possessions vanished! One messenger had not told his story before another followed at his heels! Job had no breathing timethe blows fell thick and fast!

The trial of our faith is most severe when various temptations happen to us when we look not for them. Is it not strange, then, in the light of these things, that James should say, Count it all joy when you fall into various temptations? Those were the days of tumults, imprisonment, crucifixion, sword and fire. Then the amphitheatre devoured Christians by the thousands! The general cry was, The Christians to the lions! Do you wonder, if sometimes the bravest were made to say, Is our faith really true? This faith which is abhorred of all mankind, can it be Divine? Has it come from God? Why, then, does He not interpose and deliver His people? Shall we apostatize? Shall we deny Christ and live, or shall we go on with our confession through innumerable tormentseven to a bloody death? Will fidelity answer, after all? Is there a crown of glory? Is there an eternity of bliss? Is there, in very deed, a resurrection of the dead?

These questions came into mens minds, then, and were fairly faced the faith of martyrs was not taken up at second hand, or borrowed from their parentsthey believed for themselves in downright earnest! Men and women, in those days, believed in such a way that they never flinched nor started aside from fear of death! Indeed, they pressed forward to confess their faith in Jesus in such crowds that, at last, the heathen cried, There must be something in it! It must be a religion of God, or how could these men and women and children so gladly bear their troubles? This was the faith of Gods elect, the work of the Holy Spirit!

You see, then, the main point of attack is our faithand happy is the man whose shield can catch and quench all the fiery darts of the enemy!   
II. That we may make the text more clear, we shall next, notice, THE INVALUABLE BLESSING WHICH IS GAINED BY THE TRIAL OF OUR FAITH. The blessing gained is this, that our faith is tried and proved. Two Sabbaths ago I addressed you upon the man whose bad foundations led to the overthrow of his house [Sermon #1702On Laying Foundations] and I know that many said after the sermonGod grant that we may not be like he wasmay we have a firm foundation for our soul to rest on. Then you went home and you sat down and said, Have I this sure foundation? You began to question, argue, reason and so on, and your design was a good one.   
But I do not reckon that much came of it. Our own looking within seldom yields solid comfort. Actual trial is far more satisfactory, but you must not try yourself. The effectual proof is by trials of Gods sending. The way of trying whether you are a good soldier is to go down to the battle! The way to try whether a ship is well built is not merely to order the surveyor to examine her, but to send her to sea! A storm will be the best test of her staunchness. They have built a new lighthouse upon the Eddystonehow do we know it will stand? We judge by certain laws and principles and feel tolerably safe about the structure, but, after all, we shall know best if, in later years, when a thousand tempests have beaten upon the lighthouse in vain!   
We need trials as a test as much as we need Divine Truth as our food. Admire the ancient types placed in the Ark of the Covenant of oldtwo things were laid close togetherthe pot of manna and the rod. See how heavenly food and heavenly rule go together! See how our sustenance and our chastening are equally provided for! A Christian cannot live without the manna nor without the rod! The two must go together. I mean this, that it is as great a mercy to have your salvation proven to you under trial as it is to have it sustained in you by the consolations of the Spirit of God. Sanctified tribulations work the proof of our faith and this is more precious than that of gold which perishes, though it is tried by fire.

Now, when we are able to bear it without starting aside, the trial proves our sincerity. Coming out of a trouble, the Christian says to himself, Yes, I held fast to my integrity, by Gods Grace, and did not let it go. Blessed be God, I was not afraid of threats! I was not crushed by losses! I was kept true to God under pressure. Now, I am sure that my religion is not a mere profession, but a real consecration to God. It has endured the fire, being kept by the power of God. Next, it proves the truthfulness of our doctrinal belief. Oh, yes, you may say, I have heard Mr. Spurgeon expound the doctrines and I have believed them. This is poor work! But if you have been sick and found a comfort in those doctrines, then you are assured of their truth! If you have been on the borders of the grave and the Gospel has given you joy and gladness, then you know it is true.   
Experimental knowledge is the best and surest. If you have seen others pass through death, itself, triumphantly, you have said, This is proof to me. My faith is no guess workI have seen for myself. Is not this assurance cheaply purchased at any price? May we not count it all joy when the Lord puts us in the way of getting it? It seems to me that doubt is worse than trial! I had sooner suffer any affliction than be left to question the Gospel or my own interest in it. Certainly it is a jewel worth purchasing even with our hearts blood! Next, your own faith in God is proved when you can cling to Him under temptation. Not only your sincerity, but the Divinity of your faith is proved, for a faith that is never tried, how can you depend upon it?   
But, if in the darkest hour, you have still said, I cast my burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain me, and you find He does sustain you, then is your faith that of Gods elect! If in temptation you cry to God in prayer that you may keep your garment unspotted and He helps you to do so, then, also, are you sure that yours is the faith which the Spirit begets in the soul! After a great fight of affliction, when I come forth a conqueror, I know that I believe in God, and I know that this faith makes me a partaker of Covenant blessings! And from this I may fairly argue that my faith is of the right kind. I find it especially sweet to learn the great strength of the Lord in my own weakness. We find out, under trial, where we are most weak. And just then, in answer to prayer, strength is given answerable to the need.   
The Lord suits the help to the hindrance and puts the plaster on the wound. In the very hour when it is needed, the needed Grace is given! Does this not tend to breed assurance of faith? It is a splendid thing to be able to prove, even to Satan, the purity of your motives. That was the great gain of Job. There was no question about his outward conduct, but the question was about his motive. Ah, says the devil, he serves God for what he gets out of Him. Have You not set a hedge about him and all that he has? His is cupboard lovehe cares nothing for God, Himselfhe only cares for the reward of his virtue. Well, Job is tried, and everything is taken awayand when he criesThough He slay me, yet will I trust in Him! When he blesses the taking as well as the giving God, then the devil, himself, could not have the prudence to accuse him again! As to Jobs own conscience, it would be quite settled and confirmed as to his pure love to God.   
My Brothers and Sisters, I reckon that the endurance of every imaginable suffering and trial would be a small price to pay for a settled assurance which would, forever, prevent the possibility of doubt! Never mind the waves if they wash you upon this Rock! Therefore, when you are tempted, Count it all joy that you are tried, because you will thus receive a proof of your love, a proof of your faith, a proof of your being the trueborn children of God! James says, Count it. A man requires to be trained to be a good accountant. It is an art which needs to be learned. What muddles some of us would make if we had to settle accounts and manage disbursements and receipts without the aid of a clerk! How we should get entangled with balances and deficits! We could much easier spend money than count it. But when a man once knows the science of bookkeeping and gets into the way of it, he readily arrives at the true position of affairs. He has learned to count and no error escapes his eyes.   
James gives us a ready reckoner and teaches us, in our troubles, how to count. He sets before us a different kind of measure from that which carnal reason would usethe shekel of the sanctuary was very different from the shekel in common commerceand so is the counting of faith far other than that of human judgment! He bids us take our pen and sit down quickly and write at his correct dictation. You are going to write down, Manifold temptations. That would be so much on the wrong side, but instead, he bids you set down the proving of your faithand this one asset transforms the transaction into a substantial gain!   
Trials are like a firethey burn up nothing in us but the drossand they make the gold all the purer. Put down the testing process as a clear gain and, instead of being sorry about it, count it all joy when you fall into various temptations, for this bestows upon you a proof of your faith! So far there is sufficient ground for counting all trials joy. Now, let us go a little further.   
III. Let us think of THE PRICELESS VIRTUE WHICH IS PRODUCED BY TRIAL, namely, patiencefor the proof of your faith works patience. Patience! We all have a large stock of ituntil we need itand then we have none! The man who truly possesses patience is the man that has been tried. What kind of patience does he get by the Grace of God? First, he obtains a patience that accepts the trials as from God without a murmur. Calm resignation does not come all at onceoften long years of physical pain, or mental depression, or disappointment in business, or multiplied bereavements are needed to bring the soul into full submission to the will of the Lord.   
After much crying the child is weaned. After much chastening, the son is made obedient to his Fathers will. By degrees we learn to end our quarrel with God and to desire that there may not be two wills between God and ourselves, but that Gods will may be our will. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, if your troubles work you to that, you are a gainer, I am sure, and you may count them all joy!   
The next kind of patience is when experience enables a man to bear ill treatment, slander and injury without resentment. He feels it keenly, but he bears it meekly. Like his Master, he opens not his mouth to reply and refuses to return railing for railing. Contrariwise, he gives blessing in return for cursing, like the sandalwood tree which perfumes the axe which cuts it. Blessed is that holy charity which hopes all things, endures all things and is not easily provoked. Ah, Friend, if the Grace of God, by trial, shall work in you the quiet patience which never grows angry and never ceases to love, you may have lost a trifle of comfort, but you have gained a solid weight of character!   
The patience which God works in us by tribulation also takes another form, namely, that of acting without undue haste. Before wisdom has balanced our zeal, we are eager to serve God all in a hurry, with a rush and a spurt, as if everything must be done within the hour or nothing would ever be accomplished. We set about holy service with somewhat more of preparedness of heart after we have been drilled in the school of trial. We go steadily and resolutely about work for Jesus, knowing what poor creatures we are and what a glorious Master we serve! The Lord our God is in no hurry because He is strong and wise. In proportion as we grow like the Lord Jesus, we shall cast aside disturbance of mind and fury of spirit.   
His was a grand lifework, but He never seemed to be confused, excited, worried, or hurried, as certain of His people are. He did not strive nor cry, nor cause His voice to be heard in the streets. He knew His hour was not yet come and there were so many days in which He could work and, therefore, He went steadily on till He had finished the work which His Father had given Him to do. That kind of patience is a jewel more to be desired than the gem which glitters on the imperial brow! Sometimes we blunder into a deal of mischief, making more haste than speedand we are sure to do so when we forget to pray and fail to commit our matters into the Divine hands. We may run with such vehemence that we may stumble, or lose our breaththere may be in our random efforts as much undoing as doing, for need of possessing our souls in patience.   
That is a grand kind of patience, too, when we can wait without unbelief. Two little words are good for every Christian to learn and to practice pray, and, stay. Waiting on the Lord implies both praying and staying. What if the world is not converted this year! What if the Lord Jesus does not come tomorrow! What if our tribulations are lengthened out! What if the conflict is continued! He that has been tried and, by Grace, has obtained the true profit of his trials, both quietly waits and joyfully hopes for the salvation of God. Patience, Brothers and Sisters! Is this high virtue scarce with you? The Holy Spirit shall bestow it upon you through suffering.   
This patience also takes the shape of believing without wavering, in the very teeth of strange Providences and singular statements, and perhaps inward misgivings. The established Christian says, I believe my God and, therefore, if the vision tarries I will wait for it. My time is not yet come. I am to have my worst things first and my best things afterwards and so I sit down at Jesus feet and wait for His leisure. Brothers and Sisters, if, in a word, we learn endurance, we have taken a high degree! You look at the weather-beaten sailor, the man who is at home on the seahe has a bronzed face and mahogany-colored flesh. He looks as tough as heart of oak and as hardy as if he were made of iron. How different from us poor landsmen!

How did the man become so accustomed to hardship, so able to breast the storm, so that he does not care whether the wind blows south-west or north-west? He can go out to sea in any kind of weather. He has his sea legs onhow did he come to this strength? By doing business in great waters! He could not have become a hardy seaman by tarrying on shore. Now, trial works in the saints that spiritual hardihood which cannot be learned in ease! You may go to school forever, but you cannot learn endurance there! You may color your cheeks with paint, but you cannot give them that ingrained brown which comes of stormy seas and howling winds. Strong faith and brave patience come of trouble and a few men in the Church who have thus been prepared are worth anything in times of tempest.   
To reach that condition of firm endurance and sacred hardihood is worth all the expense of all the heaped-up troubles that ever come upon us from above or from beneath! When trial works patience, we are incalculably enriched. The Lord give us more of this choice Grace! As Peters fish had the money in its mouth, so have sanctified trials spiritual riches for those who endure them graciously.   
IV. Lastly, all this works something better, still, and this is our fourth headTHE SPIRITUAL COMPLETENESS PROMOTED. That you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. Brethren, the most valuable thing a man can get in this world is that which has most to do with his truest self. A man gets a good house. Well, that is something. But suppose he is in bad healthwhat is the good of his fine mansion? A man is well clothed and well fed. That is something, but suppose he shivers with fever and has no appetite through indigestion? That spoils it all. If a man is in robust health, this is a far more valuable gift.   
Health is far more to be prized than wealth, or honor, or learningwe all agree to that. But suppose that a mans innermost self is diseased while his body is healthy, so that he is disgraced by vice or fevered with passion? He is in a poor plight, notwithstanding that he has such a robust frame, is he not? The very best thing is that which will make the man, himself, a better man! Make him right, true, pure and holy! When the man, himself, is better, he has made an unquestionable gain. So, if our afflictions tend, by trying our faith, to breed patience and that patience tends to make us into perfect men in Christ Jesus, then we may be glad of trials! Afflictions, by Gods Grace, make us all-around men, developing every spiritual faculty and, therefore, they are our friends, our helpersand should be welcomed with all joy. Afflictions find out our weak points and this makes us attend to them. Being tried, we discover our failures and then, going to God about those failures, we are helped to be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.   
Moreover, our trials, when blessed of God to make us patient, ripen us. I do not know how to explain what I mean by ripening, but there is a sort of mellowness about Believers who have endured a great deal of affliction that you never see in other people. It cannot be mistaken or imitated. A certain measure of sunlight is needed to bring out the real flavor of fruitsand when a fruit has felt its measure of burning sun, it develops a lusciousness which we all delight in. So is it in men and womena certain amount of trouble appears to be necessary to create a certain sugar of graciousness in them, so that they may contain the rich, ripe juice of a gracious character. You must have known such men and such women, and have said to yourselves, I wish I could be like they areso calm, so quiet, so self-contained, so happyand when not happy, yet so content not to be happy, so mature in judgment, so spiritual in conversation, so truly ripe. This only comes to those in whom the proof of their faith works experience and then experience brings forth the fruits of the Spirit.   
Dear Brothers and Sisters, there is a certain all-roundness of spiritual manhood which never comes to us except by manifold temptations. Let me attempt to show you what I mean. Sanctified trials produce a chastened spirit. Some of us, by nature, are rough and untender. But after a while friends notice that the roughness is departingand they are quite glad to be more gently handled. Ah, that sick chamber did the polishing! Under Gods Grace, that depression of spirit, that loss, that cross, that bereavementthese softened the natural ruggedness and made the man meek and lowly like his Lord. Sanctified trouble has a great tendency to breed sympathy and sympathy is, to the Church, as oil to machinery.   
A man that has never suffered feels very awkward when he tries to sympathize with a tried child of God. He kindly does his best, but he does not know how to go to work at it. But those repeated blows from the rod make us feel for others who are smarting and, by degrees, we are recognized as being the Lords anointed comforters, made meet by temptation to succor those who are tempted. Have you never noticed how tried men, too, when their trouble is thoroughly sanctified, become cautious and humble? They cannot speak quite so fast as they used tothey do not talk of being absolutely perfect, though they are the very men who are Scripturally perfect. They say little about their doings, but much about the tender mercy of the Lord. They recollect the whipping they had behind the door from their Fathers hands and they speak gently to other erring ones. Affliction is the stone which our Lord Jesus throws at the brow of our giant prideand patience is the sword which cuts off its head!   
Those, too, are the kind of people who are most grateful. I have known what it is to praise God for the power to move one leg in bed. It may not seem much to you, but it was a great blessing to me. They that are heavily afflicted come to bless God for everything. I am sure that woman who took a piece of bread and a cup of water for her breakfast, and said, What? All this, and Christ, too! must have been a tried woman, or she would not have exhibited so much gratitude. And that old Puritan minister was surely a tried man, for when His family had only a herring and a few potatoes for dinner, He said, Lord, we bless You that You have ransacked sea and land to find food for us this day. If he had not been a tried man, he might have turned up his nose at the meal, as many do at much more sumptuous fare. Troubled men get to be grateful men, and that is no small thing.   
As a rule, where Gods Grace works, these come to be hopeful men. Where others think the storm will destroy the vessel, they can remember storms equally fierce which did not destroy it, and so they are so calm that their courage keeps others from despair. These men, too, become unworldly men. They have had too much trouble to think that they can ever build their nest in this black forest. There are too many thorns in their nest for them to reckon that this can be their home. These birds of paradise take to their wings and are ready to fly away to the land of unfading flowers!   
And these much-tempted ones are frequently the most spiritual men and, out of this spirituality comes usefulness. Mr. Great-Heart, who led the band of pilgrims up to the Celestial City, was a man of many trials, or he would not have been fit to lead so many to their heavenly rest. And you, dear Brother, if ever you are to be a leader and a helper, as you would wish to be, in the Church of God, it must be by such means as this that you must be prepared for it. Do you not wish to have every virtue developed? Do you not wish to become a perfect man in Christ Jesus?  
If so, welcome with all joy various temptations and afflictions! Fly to God with them! Bless Him for having sent them! Ask Him to help you to bear them with patience and then let that patience have its perfect work and so, by the Spirit of God, you shall become perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. May the Comforter bless this word to your hearts, for Jesus Christs sake. Amen.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #735 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

LOVING ADVICE FOR ANXIOUS SEEKERS

NO. 735

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 17, 1867, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him. James 1:5.

IF YOU are acquainted with the context, you will at once perceive that this verse has a special reference to persons in trouble. Much-tempted and severely-tried saints are frequently at their wits end, and though they may be persuaded that in the end, good will come out of all their afflictions, yet for the present they may be so distracted as not to know what to do. How fitly spoken and how seasonable is this word of the Apostle, If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God. And such wisdom shall the Lord afford His afflicted sons that the trying of their faith shall produce patience, and they themselves shall count it all joy that they have fallen in many trials.

However, the promise is not to be limited to any one particular application, for the word, If any of you, is so wide, so extensive that whatever may be our necessity, whatever the dilemma which perplexes us, this text consoles us with the counsel, If any man lacks wisdom, let him ask of God. This text might be peculiarly comforting to some of you who are working for God. You cannot work long for your heavenly Lord without perceiving that you need a greater wisdom than your own! Why, even in directing an enquirer to the Cross of Christ, simple work as that may seem to be, we shall often discover our own inability and folly.

In rebuking the backslider, in comforting the desponding, in restoring the fallen, in guiding the ignorant we shall need to be taught of God, or else we shall meet with more failures than successes. To every honest Christian worker this text speaks with all the soft melody of an angels whisper. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God. Your lips shall overflow with knowledge, and your tongue shall drop with words of wisdom if you will but wait on God and hear Him before you speak to your fellow men! You shall be made wise to win souls if you will learn to sit at the Masters feet that He may teach you the art which He followed when on earth, and follows still.

But the class of persons who just now win my hearts warmest sympathies are those who are seeking the Savior, and, as the text says, If any of you. I thought I should be quite right in giving seekers a share in it. They are seeking Christ, but they are in the dark. Their soul desires Him, but it has little light, little guidance, and their cry is, O that I knew where I might find Him! That I might come even to His seat! I thought that this text might be as the balm of Gilead to some of these unwise ones who have found out, all of a sudden, their own sin and folly. I thought it would say to them, If you, poor Sinner, if you lack wisdom, seek of God who gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not.

Let us put ourselves, then, at once in order for this work of comforting seekers, and may God the Holy Spirit, make it effectual.   
I. First, I shall call your attention to THE GREAT NEED OF MANY SEEKERS, NAMELY, WISDOM. This need occurs from many reasons. Sometimes it is their pride which makes them fools. Like Naaman, they would do some great thing if the Prophet had bid them, but they will not wash and be clean. The natural heart rebels against the simplicity of the way of salvation. What? Am I to do nothing but simply accept the righteousness already finished? Am I to leave off doing and merely look unto Him who was nailed to the tree and find all my salvation in Him? Well, then, says the proud Heart, I cannot understand it. It cannot understand it because it does not love it.   
Now, Soul, if this is your difficulty, and I believe, in nine cases out of ten, a proud heart is at the root of all difficulty about the sinners coming to Christif this is it which turns you aside and makes you foolishthen go to God about it and seek wisdom from Him. He will show you the folly of this pride of yours, and teach you that simply to trust in Jesus is at once the safest and most suitable way of salvation. He will make you see that if the way of salvation had been by doing, the method would not have suited you, for what could you do? If it had been by feeling, it would not have suited you either, for what can your hard heart feel?   
How can you make yourself tender of heart? But, seeing that it is by faith, it is therefore by Divine Grace. O that you may be made wise enough to stoop and kiss the silver scepter which is outstretched to you! Wise enough to come and buy this wine and milk, without money and without price, and accept with your whole heart, with intense joy, this perfect righteousness, this finished salvation which Christ has worked out and brought in for every seeking soul!   
Many persons, also, are made foolish so that they lack wisdom through their despair. Probably nothing makes a man seem so much like a maniac as the loss of hope. When the mariner feels that the vessel is sinking, that the proud waves must soon overwhelm her, then he reels to and fro and staggers like a drunken man, because he is at his wits end. Ah, poor Heart, when you see the blackness of sin I do not wonder that you are driven to despair! And when your sins come howling behind you like so many ravenous wolves, all seeking to devour you, I do not marvel if you should be ready even to lay violent hands upon yourself!   
It is no strange thing for men to be sorely tempted when they are under a sense of sin. And now you know not what to do. If you could be calm and quiet we could tell you plainly the way of peace, and you might understand that there is no reason for despair since Jesus died and rose again, and is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him. But you cannot give us a calm hearing for you are distracted, and you think that this comfort applies to everybody but you. You lack wisdom because you are in such a worry and turmoil. As John Bunyan used to say, you are much troubled up and down in your thoughts. I pray you, then, ask wisdom of God, and even out of the depths if you cry unto Him, He will be pleased to instruct you and bring you out into a safe way.   
No doubt many other persons lack wisdom because they are not instructed in Gospel doctrine. It is wonderful how Satan will plague many timid hearts with the doctrine of Election. That doctrine, rightly understood, is full of comfort. But, distorted and misrepresented, it often appears to be a bolt to shut sinners out from mercythe fact being that it shuts none out, but shuts tens of thousands in! Why, the very doctrine of the Atonement is not understood by many while they are under a sense of sin! If they could see that Christ took their sins and carried their sorrows. If they could perceive the meaning of that word, substitution, light might break in! The window of the understanding is blocked up with ignorance. If we could but clean away the cobwebs and filth, then might the light of the knowledge of Christ come streaming in and they might rejoice in His salvation!   
Well, dear Friends, if you are bemired and puzzled with difficult doctrine, the text comes to you and says, If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God. Ignorance, also, of Christian experience is another cause for the lack of wisdom. I have seen many enquirers who have told me what they have felt, and to them it was so amazing that they half expected to see individual hairs of my head stand upright while they told me their feelings! And when I said, Oh, yes, yes, I have felt just that. That is the common way of most souls that come to Christ, they have looked surprised beyond measure! The very road which is most safe you think to be most dangerous. And that which leads to Christ, you fancy leads to Hell!   
Little do you know the value of that stripping work which you so much dread. Surely, you say, I am being stripped that I may be cast away, whereas the Lord only strips those whom He intends afterwards to clothe with the robe of His salvation. Those cuts of the lancet are sharp and you think the surgeon means to kill, but he intends to cure. When God is making you feel the burden of your guilt, you suppose that now He has forgotten to be graciouswhereas it is now that He is gracious to you in very deed, and is using the best means of making you understand and value His Grace. The way of life is a new road to you, poor seeking Soul, and therefore you lack wisdom in it and make many mistakes about it.   
The text lovingly advises, Ask of God. Ask of God. Very likely, in addition to all this, which may well enough make you lack wisdom, there are certain singularities in the action of Providence towards you which fill you with dismay. Ever since you have begun to think about the Lord Jesus, things have gone cross with you in the outward world. You have not only trouble within, but, strange as you think it is, you have now trouble outside! It partly arises from friends who say you are madwould God they were bitten with the same madnesspartly from circumstances over which you can have no control. It is not at all unusual for God to make a complete shipwreck of that vessel in which His people sail, although He fulfils His promise that not a hair of their heads shall perish.   
I should not wonder if He would cause two seas to meet around your ship, so that there should not be more than a few boards and broken pieces of the ship left to you. But oh, if you have faith in Christ, He will certainly bring you safe to shore! It is not at all an uncommon thing for the Lord to add to the inward scourging of conscience the outward lashings of affliction. These double scourging are meant for proud, stubborn heartsthat they may be humbly brought to Jesus feet, for of us it may be said, in truth, as Solomon says of the childFoolishness is bound in his heart. But the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.   
God is thus, dear Hearer, bringing folly out of you by the smarts of His rod. It is written, The blueness of a wound cleanses away evil, and therefore the Lord is making your wounds to be black and blue, and I should not wonder if He will even let them putrefy till you have to say with Isaiah, From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores. Then it is that eternal mercy will take advantage of your dire extremity and your deep distress shall bring you to Christ who never would have been brought by any other means!   
To close this somewhat painful picture. Many lack wisdom because, in addition to all their fears and their ignorance, they are fiercely attacked by Satan. John Bunyan tells us of Apollyon, that he said, No king will willingly lose his subjects. Of course he will not! And Apollyon, as he sees his subjects, one after another, desert him to enlist under the banner of King Jesus, howls at his losses and he leaves no stone unturned to keep souls back from mercy. Just at that critical moment when the soul is beginning to turn to God, he says to himself, It is now or never! If I do not nip these buds, they will become flowers and fruits. But if I can bring in a withering frost, I shall kill the young plant.   
The great enemy takes dead aim at anxious souls. He it is who digs that Slough of Despond right in front of the wicket gate and keeps the big dog to howl before the door so that poor trembling Mercy may go into a fainting fit, and find herself too weak to knock at the door. Now, he says to all his servants, shoot your arrows at that awakened soul! It is about to escape from me! Empty your quivers, you soldiers of the Pit! Launch your hot temptations, you Fiends of Hell! Sting that soul with infidel insinuations and hideous blasphemies, for if I once lose it I have lost it forever! Therefore, hold it, you princes of the Pit, hold it fast, if you can.   
Now, in such a plight as thatwith your foolish heart, and the wicked world, and the Evil One, and your sins in dreadful alliance to destroy youwhat could such a poor timid one as you do if it were not for this precious word, If any of youthat must mean youIf any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not?

II. We shall now mention the second point in the text. THE PROPER PLACE OF A SEEKERS RESORTLet him ask of God. My dear Friends, bear me witness that it is my constant effort to teach you the spirituality of true religion and the necessity of our own hearts having personal dealings with the living God. Now, though this you have heard thousands of times, I was about to say from me, yet, once again, I must remind you of it: the text says, Let him ask of God.   
Now, you perceive that the man is directed at once to God without any intermediate object, or ceremony, or person. You are not told here to seek direction from good books. They may become very useful as auxiliary helps, but the best of human books, if followed slavishly, will mislead. For instance, I am sure that hundreds of persons have been kept in unnecessary bondage through that wonderful and admirable book, Doddridges Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul. It has been the means of the conversion of hundreds. It has been profitable to thousands more. But there is a point in which it fails, so that, if you slavishly follow it, you may read the book through and I undertake to say, you will not find comfort by following its exhortations.   
It fails, as all human guides must, if we trust in them and forget the Great Shepherd of Israel. When a man is really under concern of soul he is in a condition of considerable danger. Then it is that an artful false teacher may get hold of him and trick him into heresy and unscriptural doctrine. Hence the text does not say, If any man lack wisdom, let him ask his priest. That is about the worst thing he can do! For he who sets himself up for a priest is either a deceiver or deceived. Let him ask of Godthat is the advice of the Scripture. We are all so ready to go to books, to go to men, to go to ceremonies, to anything except to God.   
Man will worship God with his eyes, and his arms, and his knees, and his mouthwith anything but his heartand we are all of us anxious, more or less, until we are renewed by Divine Grace, to get off the heartworship of God. Juan de Valdey says that, Just as an ignorant man takes a crucifix and says, This crucifix will help me to think of Christ, so he bows before it and never does think of Christ at all, but stops short at the crucifix. So, he says, the learned man takes his book and says, This book will teach me the mysteries of the kingdom, but instead of giving his thoughts to the mysteries of godliness, he reads his book mechanically and stops at the book, instead of meditating and diving into the Truths of God.   
It is the action of the mind that God accepts, not the motion of the body. It is the thought communing with Him. It is the soul coming into contact with the soul of God. It is spirit-worship which the Lord accepts. Consequently, the text does not say, Let him ask books, nor, ask priests, but, let him ask of God. Above all, do not let the seeker ask of himself and follow his own imagination and feelings. All human guides are bad, but you, yourself, will be your own worst guide. Let him ask of God. When a man can fairly and honestly say, I have bowed the knee unto the Lord God of Israel, and asked Him, for Jesus sake, to guide me and to direct me by His Spirit, and then I turned to the Book of God, asking God to be my Guide into the Book, I cannot believe but what such a man will soon obtain saving wisdom!   
I beg to caution all of you against stopping short of really asking of God. I conjure you by the living God, do not be satisfied with asking of me. I am no priest, except as all Believers are priests. Thank God I wear no title of ecclesiastical dominion. Be not content with asking my Brethren, the deacons and elders. God has made many of them wise in helping souls out of difficulties but do not be satisfied with the advice of any man, however godly and holy, but go directly to the Lord God of Heaven and earth, and say unto Him, Lord, teach me! Show me Your way, O God! Teach me in Your Truth! You are not bid to go to any second-hand source of wisdom, but to God the only Wise, who alone can direct you. Let him ask of God.   
Such advice as this must be good. You cannot suspect us of any interested motive in exhorting you to this! It is your good which we seek and not our own glory. It must be best to go to the headquartersyou will surely be led aright if so you seek direction. Some say, Lo, here! Others say, Lo, there! But if you go to God, and then with His guidance study His Word, you shall not fail of wisdom. How can you? Moreover, remember that there is one blessed Person of the Divine Unity who makes it His special office to teach us! Therefore, if you go to God for wisdom, you only go for that which it is His Nature and His office to give.   
The Holy Spirit is given to this end: He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you. When you go to God, you may say to Him these words, O Father, You have been pleased to reveal to us the Holy Spirit who is to enlighten our darkness and to remove our ignorance. Oh, let that Spirit of Yours dwell in me! I am willing to be taught by Your Spirit, through Your Word, or through Your ministers, but I come first to You because I know that Your Word and Your ministers, apart from Yourself, cannot teach me anything. O Lord, teach me.  
I do not mean by any word of mine to make you think little of ScriptureGod forbid!nor little of those who may speak to you with the Holy Spirit sent down from Heaven. But I did mean to make you look even at this Book and at Gods ministers as being subservient to the Holy Spirit Himself. Go to Him! Ask Him! For there in the Book is the letter which kills. He, He alone can make you to know the living essence and the quickening power of that Word. Without the Holy Spirit, my dear Hearer, you must still be as blind with the light as you would have been without it! You will be as foolish after having been taught the Gospel in the theory of it, as you were before you knew it! Let the Holy Spirit, however, teach you, and you shall know all things that are necessary for this life and godliness.   
Thus, then, we have brought two points before youthe great need of the seeker is wisdom. And the right place to get that need removed.   
III. Thirdly, THE RIGHT MODE IN WHICH TO GO TO GOD. Let him ask. Oh, that simple word, Let him asklet him ask! No form of asking is prescribed. No words laid down! No method dictated, no hour set apart, no rubric printed! But there it stands in gracious simplicity, let him ask. He who will not have mercy when it is to be had for the asking deserves to die without it! While I am thinking of this word, before I plunge into its fullest meaning, I may well say, if God will give wisdom to the seeker only because he asks for it, what shall I say of the folly which will not even ask to be made wise? May God forgive you such folly for the past, and deliver you from it for the future!   
The text says, Let him ask, which is a method implying that ignorance is confessed. No man will ask wisdom till he knows that he is ignorant. Come, dear Hearer, confess your ignorance into the ear of God, who is as present here as you are! Say unto Him, Lord, I have discovered, now, that I am not so wise as I thought I was. I am foolish and vain. Lord, teach me. Make a full confession, and this shall be a good beginning for prayer.   
Asking has also in it the fact that God is believed in. We cannot ask of a person of whose existence we have any doubt! We will not ask of a person of whose hearing us we have serious suspicions. Who would stand in the desert of Sahara and cry aloud where there is no living ear to hear? Now, my dear Hearer, you believe that there is a God. Ask, then! Do you not believe that He is here, that He will hear your cry, that He will be pleased in answer to your cry to give you what you ask for? Now, if you can believe that there is a Godthat He is here and that He will hear youthen confess your ignorance, and ask Him now to give you the promised wisdom for Jesus sake!   
There is in this method of approaching God by asking, also a clear sight that salvation is by Divine Grace. It does not say, Let him buy of God. Let him demand of God. Let him earn from God. Oh, nolet him ASK of God. It is the beggars word. The beggar asks for alms. You are to ask as the beggar asks of you in the street, and God will give to you far more liberally than you give to the poor! You must confess that you have no merit of your own. If you will not acknowledge that, neither will God hear your prayers. But come now with the acknowledgment of ignorance, with the confession of sin, and believing that God is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, and He will even now give you the wisdom which saves the soul.  
Observe here, what an acknowledgement of dependence there is. The man sees that he cannot find wisdom anywhere elsethat it must come from God. He turns his eyes to the only Fountain and leaves the broken cisterns. Do this, dear Hearer. I feel as if the text did not need any explanation from me but only needs carrying out by you! Let him ask of God. I think I can hear 50,000 objections from different parts of the building. One is saying, But I dont understand, ask of God. Another is saying, I cannot comprehend, ask of God. If you have made some difficulties for yourself, if you are such a fool as to be tying knots and wanting to get them untied before you will believe in Jesus, then I have nothing to say to you, unless it were, beware lest you tie a knot that shall destroy your soul!   
But if you are troubled with an honest objection, I say to you now, in Gods name, Ask of God. You need not wait till you get home! You need not stay till you have left that seatbut now, silently, in your soul, as Hannah did when she went up to the tabernacle, breathe the prayerO God, teach me! Lead me to the foot of the Cross! Help me to see Jesus! Save my soul this day! End the doubtful strife! Answer these questions! Bring me, as an humble seeker, to lie before the footstool of your Sovereign Mercy and to receive pardon through the mediatorial Sacrifice. Let him askthat is alllet him ask.

IV. Fourthly, the text has in it ABUNDANT ENCOURAGEMENT for such a seeker. There are four encouragements here. Let him ask of God, who gives to all men. What a wide statementwho gives to all men! I will take it in its broadest extent. In natural things, God does give to all men life, health, food, raiment. Who makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good. Who causes the rain to descend upon the fields of the just and of the unjust. Every creature is favored with Divine benevolence and there is not a creature, from the tiniest ephemera which creeps upon the green leaf of the forest to the swift-winged angel who adoringly flies upon his Masters will, which is not made to partake of the gifts of the Great Father of Lights.   
Now, if God has gifts for all men, how much more will He have gifts for that man who earnestly turns his tearful eyes to Heaven and cries, My Father, give me wisdom, that I may be reconciled to You through the death of Your Son? Why, the grass, as Herbert says, never asked for the dew, and yet every blade has its own drop! And shall you daily cry for the dew of Divine Grace and there be no drop of Heavens Grace for you? Impossible! Fancy your own child saying, My Father, my Father, I want to be obedient, I want to be holy. And suppose that you have power to make your child socould you find it in your heart to refuse? No! It would be a greater joy to you to give than it could be to the child to accept.   
But it has been said the text ought not to be understood in that broad a sense. Very probably it ought not to be so. I conceive that there is implied the limitation that God gives to all who seek. Though the limitation is not stated, yet I think it is intended, because of spiritual mercies God does not give to all men liberally. There are some men who live and die without the liberal favors of Divine Grace because they wickedly refuse them. But He gives to all true seekers liberally. We may take that view of it, and we may find you hundreds of witnesses to prove the truth of it, and can find them in this very place this morning!   
Here is one witnessI myself personally sought the Lord and He heard me and delivered me from all my fears. My dear Brothers, and my Sisters, too, I know you could spring up like a great army, if it were a fitting thing to ask you to do, and you could say, This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him. The God of Jacob has not despised nor abhorred the cries of His people. Now, Soul, if God has heard so many who sought His face, why should He not hear you? Is it not a comfort to think that hundreds, thousands, and tens of thousands have gone to God and there never has been a case in which He has refused one? Will He begin with you? Shall you be the first rejected seeker? Oh, then what a strange destiny yours will be, to have to say in another world, I am the first who sought Divine Grace, and found it not! I wept at the foot of the Cross and I found no mercy! I said, Lord, remember me, but He would not remember me.   
You will never be able to say that! Hell will never make its boast over such a case! Heaven will never have its honor tarnished by one such solitary instance! Seek the Lord and His strength! Seek His face evermore! Your hearts shall live that seek Him!   
The next comfort is, He gives to all men liberally. God does not give as we doa mere trifle to the beggarHe bestows His wealth by the handfuls. Solomon asked for wisdomGod gave him wealth and power. In nearly every instance of prayer in the Old Testament, God gives ten times as much as is asked for. Jacob asked that he might have bread to eat, and raiment to put onGod made him to be two bands. The Lord will do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.   
This is the Divine habit! He not only redeems His promises, but when He might pay them in silver He prefers to pay them in gold. He is exceedingly bountiful. Dear Hearers, we have found Him so when we have tried Him, and do you think He will begin to be stingy with you? If He should liberally forgive your sins, He will be none the poorer. If He should withhold forgiveness, He will be none the richer. Why should He limit His favor? You want to wash away your sinsthere is a river of Grace to wash in. You want Grace to refresh your soulsHe has floods to pour upon the dry ground. We read of the unsearchable riches of Christ.   
Ho, you leviathan sinners, here is an ocean of mercy for you to swim in! Ho, you elephantine sinners, here is an ark large enough to hold you and float you above the waters of the deluge! Ho, you gigantic sinners, whose sins of pride reach up to Heaven, and whose feet of lust are plunged in the mire of Hellthe sacred hiding place is large enough to hide even you! The Lord is great in mercy! Oh, who would not ask of so liberal a God, whose thoughts are as high above our thoughts as the heavens are above the earth?   
It is added as a third comfort, and upbraids not. That is a sweet word! If you help a friend who is in debt, and wants to borrow money, you say, Remember, I do not like it, you ought not to be in such a state. Your brother wants some aid. You have helped him many times, and will again, but still you upbraid him and tell him he is very imprudent. You tell him he ought not to get into these messeshe ought to manage his business better. If you do not tell him so with your mouth, you look at him, and he thinks to himself, Its very kind of him to give me the help, but really, it is very humiliating to me to have to ask of him because I get so severe a lesson.   
I suppose we do right to upbraid. I have no doubt we do so with good motives. But God never does upbraid seeking souls! He gives liberally and does not dim the luster of His Grace by harsh rebukes. He does not say, Ah, you Sinner, how came you to commit such sin? I will forgive you, but. The Father does not talk thus to the returning prodigal. One would have supposed that when the prodigal came back the father would have said, Well, dear Boy, you are forgiven, but never let me see you do that again. How wrong of you to take that portion of my goods, and spend it in that way! I shall never be so well off as beforeyou have wasted half my living! And now think where you have beenwhat a dishonor you have cast upon your fathers name and character through wasting your living with harlots. I forgive but I cannot forget.   
My Brothers and Sisters, it was not so! The prodigal remembered his sins but his father forgot them all, and exclaimed with joy, This, my son, was dead, and is alive again! He was lost, and is found. O Soul, if you did but know the heart of the Savior you would not tarry in sin! If you could but know the overflowing love of the Divine Father, you would not linger in unbelief   
*His heart is made of tenderness,   
His heart melts with love.*  
Fool as you are, be not such a fool as to be unwilling to ask for wisdom, but now, breathe the prayer, Teach me, O God, to trust Your dear Son this day.   
Then comes the last encouragement. It shall be given him. Looking through my text last night, I asked the questionIs that last sentence needed? Let him ask of God, which gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not. Now, if the Lord gives to all men, He will certainly give to the seeker. Is that last promise needed? And I came to this conclusionit would not have been there if it was not required. There are some sinners who cannot be content to draw obvious inferencesthey must have it in black and white. Such is the fearfulness of their naturethey must have the promise in so many express words. Here they have itit shall be given him.   
You are not left to suppose that it shall be, or to infer that it may be. But it is written, it shall be given him. But to whom shall it be given? If any of you lack wisdom. Well, says one, I am quite out of all catalogs. I am one by myself. Well, but you are surely contained in this, any of you. Ah, says one, but I have a private fault, a sin, an offense which I would not dare to mention, which I believe has damned me forever. Yet the text says, If any of you. If I saw a door open and it said, If any of you are hungry, let him come in here, I should not stop outside because I feared that I was not quite the person intended! I should say, It is their responsibility, who mean to keep me out, to be more specific in their invitation. They have put it, any of you. I am certainly one of the sons of men, and I will step into the feast.   
Ah Soul, if God had meant to shut you out, He would have been more plain about it! But here is not a shutting-out word at all. It says, If any of you lack wisdomwell, that is you, surelythat lack of wisdom helps to include you within the boundary. It does not limit the characterit widens it to you because you feel how foolish you are. The promise is, it shall be given him. Suppose I do not get it, you say. You must not suppose God to be a liar. How can you suppose such a blasphemy? Let him ask of God, and it shall be given him. But, says one, suppose my sins should prove to be too great?   
I cannot, will not suppose anything which can come in conflict with the positive Word of God! Let him ask of God, and it shall be given him. Do you think God does not mean what He says? O Sinner, will you add to all your other sins this sin of thinking that God would lie? O Man, He invites you to ask of Him wisdom, and He says He will give it to you! Doubt not the Lord! Distrust not the veracity of Jehovah! But come at once humbly, tremblingly, to the foot of the Saviors Cross. View Him lifted on high as the great atoning Sacrifice! Look to His streaming wounds! Behold His brow still covered with the crimson drops which flow from the wounds caused by His crown of thorns!   
Look to Him and live! Theres life in a look at the Crucified One! Look to Him and the promise is that you shall be saved! I commend the text to the careful, thoughtful, believing acceptation of every sinner here. Ask that the sun may not go down until you, each and all, have received the promise which the text presents to you. May the Holy Spirit now give His own blessing, for Jesus sake. Amen.

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2537 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A WARNING TO WAVERERS   
NO. 2537

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, OCTOBER 3, 1897. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, MAY 25, 1884.

But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For   
let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. James 1:6, 7.

THE Apostle James was always very practical. He never really differed from Paul, but, whereas Paul dwelt more upon the doctrinal side of the Truth of God, James, who has given us but one Epistle, dwelt more upon the practical. I should not have wondered, if Paul had taken up the same subjects as James did, if he had written in the same style. At any rate, we are very grateful to James that he is so downright, so straightforward, so plain and practical. He never minces matters. He hits the nail on the head every time. Whenever he talks about faith, he seems to be saying all the while, Believe. If he discourses on prayer, you can hear him crying, Pray! And if he speaks concerning holy living, you can hear the thunder at the back of his words commanding us to forsake sin and to follow after righteousness!

In the passage before us, the Apostle is dealing with the matter of prayer, but not with that, alone, for, while the verse previous to my text is about a man praying and, therefore, James says, Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, yet the verse following our text is not about prayer, but about a mans general lifeA double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. Therefore I shall try to show you, first, that the text speaks of the great necessity in prayer, namely, decided faith. And then I shall use the text as pointing forward to that which follows it, and speak to you concerning the great necessity in life, namely, decision of character for the Lord.

I. To begin, then, the Apostle James first speaks of THE GREAT NECESSITY IN PRAYER. If we would pray successfully, we must have a decided faith.

There should be, first of all, a very decided conviction in our own minds as to the desirableness of the thing that we are asking for. Why, says one, that is self-evident! Would a man pray if he did not thoroughly desire what he asked of God? My reply is that I am afraid a great many people ask for what they do not really desireand they would be taken aback if God were, at once, to give them what they have asked for! There is a man who says that he has been praying for a new heart, but then he does not intend to give up frequenting the bars, nor will he leave off associating with his bad companions. Well, if God could give such a man as that a new heart, all of a sudden, and he could still retain his love for his old evil habits, he would be likely to kneel down and pray to have it taken away again, for he would be very uncomfortable with such a burden as a new heart and a right spirit! That is not what he truly wants.

Some men pray to be made holy, but they wish to keep some little pet sin in the backyard. They do not really want what they are asking for they are not yet convinced of the desirableness of the thing that they profess to be seeking. Men and women pray that they may be saved, but if we explained to them what it is to be saved, they would pray, Lord, do not save usat least, not just yet! We must have a little more of the world. We have some unholy engagements that we must keepwe do not want to be made religious people just at present. In all probability, the more they understood of what salvation really is, the less they would think of praying to be saved.

A man kneels down, and says, Lead us not into temptation, and he gets up and goes straight away to a place where temptations swim all around him. What is he but a self-deceived man asking for a thing which he practically proves that he does not wish for? He prays, Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. Within five minutes of so praying, he says, I will never forgive that fellow! I hate him for what he did and the longer I live, the worse I shall hate him. Will a man thus mock God? Will he so trifle with his Maker? Alas, how many do! If you must insult someone by your mockeries, go and insult your equalyour king if you dare! But to go and insult your Godcan you commit such a terrible sin as this? Yet many do it. If they complain that their prayers are not answered, they have no right to complain, for such people must not expect to receive anything of the Lord. They are wavering even as to the sincerity of their prayer! Their own wish is not intense enough or intelligent enough to be really their settled desire. They waver even on the threshold of the House of Mercyhow can they expect to succeed in their business with the great Lord of the house?

Further, wavering may be seen in some persons as to the fact of Gods hearing prayer at all. Possibly they are not even sure that there is a God, or, if that Truth of God is believed, yet Gods existence is to them a matter of great obscurity. They know little about Him and do not care to know any more. Yes, they say, with a kind of languid assent which they have not the moral courage to refuse, no doubt there is a Godand they are a little proud to think that they are not atheists as some people areYes, there is a God, but does He really hear prayer as a man hears the requests of his fellow men? And does God actually attend to the prayer so as to be affected by it and to grant the desire of His creature? If, my dear Friend, you have been led to question this Truth of God, you must not expect to receive anything of the Lord, for, he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. If either of these is a moot point with you, you might as well stand upon a hill and whistle to the wind, as go up into your chamber and bow your knee in prayer! You are a waverer about matters in which a man must not waver if he expects to be successful in pleading with God! Your fulcrum is not fixed, so you cannot have any effectual leverage in prayer. This must be a settled and fully-believed fact, that God is, and that He hears and answers prayer. You may not be able to make out how that is consistent with His fixed purposes and it is a blessing that you need not try to make it out. The way to Heaven is not by explaining riddles, but by believing Revelations. The way to Heaven is not through the cleverness that can spell out an enigma, but through the simplicity that believes in God who cannot lie. It is true that Gods eternal purpose is fixed, do not doubt thatbut it is equally true that the Lord listens to the voice of a man and that whatever we ask in prayer, believing, we shall receive.

Furthermore, there are some who very greatly spoil their prayers because they waver as to Gods granting the specific thing which they are seeking at His hands. You know, dear Friends, that there is a way of praying in which you ask for nothing and get it. I have heard that kind of praying even in public Prayer Meetings. It was a very good prayer, indeed, containing many admirable phrasesa prayer that was very well put togetherI seem to have heard it ever since I was a boy. But there is no real prayer in it and that is the fatal flaw in it. It would be a capital prayer if it were a prayer at allit has all the makings of a prayerand yet it is no prayer! It is just as though you might see in a shop window all the garments of a man, but no man wearing the garments! Now, such a prayer as that never succeeds with God because He does not play at hearing prayer though far too many play at praying. It is earnest work with God and it must be downright business work with us.

Suppose you go into a bank and stand at the counter, and say, I want some money. The clerk says, How much do you want, Sir? Please put the amount down on this check. Oh, I do not want to be specific! You can give me a few hundred pounds, but I do not know to a sixpence exactly what I want, I am not sure that I could put it down in black and white. You will get no money at all that way! But if you write down in black and white exactly how much you wantspell it in letters and put it down, also, in figuresthe clerk will give you the money if you have so much in your account at that bank. So, if you have an account with the great Godas, blessed be His name, some of us havego and ask for what you want!

The Apostle James says in the chapter we read, If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God. If a man asks of God riches, that is not what He has promised to give! If he asks of God good health, that may be granted to him but, still, the promise is concerning wisdom, and that is what the man needs! Therefore, let him with all his heart pray, Lord, give me wisdom. I think our prayers would succeed much better if we were not so wavering about what it is that we really require, and if we were not dubious as to whether God could give us that very thing.

You, dear Friends, are in a fixyou do not know which way to move. Happily, you have forgotten your troubles the little while you have been in the House of Prayer, but tomorrow morning the first thing you will say to yourself will be, What am I going to do today? Do you believe that God can give you wisdom and that He will do so if you ask Him? Then go at once to Him and say, Lord, this is what I need. Specify your needs. State your exact condition. Lay the whole case before God with as much orderliness as if you were telling your story to an intelligent friend who was willing to hear it and prepared to help you. And then say, Lord, this is specifically what I think I need, and I ask this of You believing that You can give it to me.

If it is wisdom that you need, it will be essential, when you ask for that wisdom, that you decidedly believe that this Book, through which God teaches us wisdom, is really Inspired, so that what it teaches is distinctly and unquestionably trueand is received by you as the utterance of Infallibility. Ask of God in the full belief that it is so, or else I do not see how you can pray to be guided. Moreover, the Author of the Bible is prepared to teach you concerning the things which are written in this Book and it is essential, when you ask for wisdom, that you should believe that the Holy Spirit is able to enlighten you and is willing to instruct you concerning those things which now perplex you. Go, then, to God in prayer, believing in His Word and believing in His Holy Spirit.

God also teaches men sometimes by Providence. He guides their way as otherwise it could not have been directed. Believe in the Providence of God, in the overruling hand of God everywhere in everything and, believing that, go upon your knees and say to Him, Lord, give me direction. Give me wisdom by Your Word, by Your Spirit, or by some other means in Your gracious Providence, and I will bless Your name for it. But, mark you, when you go to God asking for wisdom, you will not get any help from Him unless you are prepared to follow the guidance of that wisdom when He gives it to you. Many people, when they ask advice, have long before made up their minds what they mean to do. It is not infrequently my lot, as pastor, to be consulted by some persons about marriage. I am very careful as to what I say upon that matter because I am pretty sure that, long before they ask my opinion, they have decided whom they mean to marry. In the case of marriage with ungodly persons, they only come just to salve their consciences, meaning, all the while, to do what they know is wrong.

Now, dear Friends, do not go to God in that fashionhaving made up your mind already what you mean to do! Lord, says one, help me to do right in this business. And he means to do right if it will not be too expensive. Lord, he says, keep me upright in this transaction. And he means upon the whole, preferably, to be uprightif, if, ifif there is anything to be made by it. He would sooner get the money honestly than the other way but, still, he means to make money somehow! Well, that kind of praying is impudence, and worse than thatit is an attempt to flatter the Oracle to take the responsibility of iniquity off your shouldersand that will never do when God Jehovah, the All-Glorious One, is the Oracle to which you appeal! No, there must be in our cries to God a firm belief in the power of prayer, a firm conviction of the truth of Revelation and a strong resolve that whatever the Lord bids us do, we will do it, for only to the man who keeps His Commandments and delights himself in the Lord, will God give the desires of his heart. If you will not listen to Gods Word, neither will God listen to your word when you come to Him in prayer.   
II. Now I want to gather up all my strength and to ask the special attention of all of you who are undecided, while I speak about THE GREAT NECESSITY IN LIFE, that is, decision for God and for His Truth.

What is indecision? Well, first, it is a thing which permeates the lives of many men. I could describe some of them and they would probably think that I was very personal. I wish that they would believe that I mean to be exactly so! They wish above all things to be Christians, especially on Sundays, but they have some associates whose company is particularly pleasurableand when they are with them, they studiously avoid anything that looks like religion! I have seen them among Christian people and they are very cautious, for they would not like to be thought worldly. And I have seen them among worldly people and they are very cautious there, too, for they would not wish to be thought to be Christians! They highly approve of a religious book, but then, as some men like a little rotten cheese for the taste of it, so they like just a flavoring of bad literature because they must know what is in the worldand that rottenness has to them rather a pleasant flavor.

As for prayer, of course that is admirablethey are glad that their wives pray, they would be delighted to hear that their children pray and they, themselves, do praybut not very often. They do it when they are obliged to, just as some ships put into harbor when there is rough weather about. They are upright in business, nobody can find much fault with them in that respect. They only rob God, that is alland God being of no particular consequence to them, they act just as they like towards Him. Imagine, dear Friends, that you can see a pair of scales and you have a good illustration of what these waverers are like. Look, that scale slowly gets to a balance and, by-and-by, the wrong side goes down, and the right side proves to be short weight! That is how it is with these peoplethey would and they would notthey are, to good and evil equal bent.

And, according to the mood in which you catch the man, he is either a devil or a saint! He can speak very prettily when, after a service, he is questioned about his conversion. He says that he is very much obliged to the friend for being so careful about his soul and he hopes that there is some good thing in himself toward the Lord God of Israel. If one from the opposite camp were to accost him in his shop and say, You go to a place of worship, dont you? he is such a coward that, though he might not actually tell a lie about it, he would sail wonderfully near the wind and you might think, from what he said, that he was much more often at the theater than at a House of Prayer!

This is the kind of man who is undecided and, in describing him, I take leave to tell him that his condition is one of immorality. Nothing can be more immoral than for a man to know the right, yet not to follow it and so far to admit the importance of that right as well-near to yield to it, and yet to do such despite to God and to his own conscience, as not to yield to it at all, but to be drawn aside by altogether opposite influences! If a man were to say, Well, I am undecided upon the question of honesty, I would be very decided about locking up the spoons! If there should be a woman who said, I am very undecided about the question of purity of morals, I would know that she was no better than she ought to be. There are some things about which a man must not be undecided you must not be undecided about being chaste, about speaking the truthand you cannot be undecided about serving God without being guilty, in that very indecision, of manifest treason against the majesty of Heaven! I pray every undecided man to give himself his true character and that will not be a good one. It will be written out in large letters, You are in an immoral state as long as you are halting between two opinions. Christ reckons that the man who is not with Him is against Him! He who does not serve Christ is opposing Him. There are no betweenitesnone can dwell on the fence. You are either in Immanuels land, or else you are in the dominions of Satanyou can be sure of that! If not right, you are wrong! If not a friend of Christ, you are His enemy!

This condition of things is also very dangerous. There are some persons here for whom I always pray whenever I enter the pulpit and see them here. There are some not here, as I see by their not being in their places, for whom I think no Sunday has passed over my head for years without my breathing a prayer for them. And still they are not saved. I have seen some very strange persons who had never come in before and they have been converted the first time they have attended this place. But these other people have been here, some of them for 20 years, and they are not a bit nearer than they were at first because they have always seemed so near. They still appear very promising, but it never comes to anything. Everybody who knows them says that within a very short time they will come forward and confess Christ, but a very long time has already passed and they have not done so yet because they do not know Him in their heart and, therefore, they cannot confess Him with their mouth. You know that when a man is an out-and-out black sinner, you can aim at him and hit the mark the first shotbut these people who are a sort of whitey-black, or a kind of blackey-whiteyou do not know which they are! It might have been white originally, but certainly it has been smoked nearly black. Or it may have been originally black, but it has been certainly bleached to look like white. These undecided people somehow baffle us. We cannot get at them and meanwhile they get confirmed in that wretched conditionand there is no doing anything with them. It is a very, very dangerous position for a man to occupy.

O my Friend, if this is where you are, I pray you not to sit down at ease in such a state as that! As well might a man go to the edge of Shakespeare Cliff at Dover, and lie down to sleep there, and feel himself perfectly safe, when in a moment he may be dashed to pieces at the foot of the rock! O Sirs, will you stay where you are? You are on a volcano! It will burst before long to your destruction. Therefore, escape for your life!

Our text also tells us what this indecision is like He that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. Like a wave of the sea! Well, a wave of the sea is very unrestful. You see it come rolling up from a distance. On, on it sweeps and never stops! Out on the broad Atlantic, what a life a wave seems to havenever stillnever for a second in one place. Now up like a mountain, then down again like a great abyss! Such is the life of the undecided manhe does not know where he isand you do not know where to find him. He is never quiet, never still, never at rest. A man who gives himself up to the devil gets a kind of dead peace within him. His conscience being seared as with a hot iron, he is still. This is quite different from the state of the Christian who gives himself up wholly to his Lord and who, therefore, enters into a delightful heavenly peace which continually deepens and increases. The man who is always shilly-shallying, playing at see-saw all his life, knows nothing of real rest. He does not make even the best that can be made out of the devilhe gets nothing worth having from either one side or the otherso he is a wretched creature, indeed!

The Church will not acknowledge him and the world is suspicious of him. I am always glad when the world turns out a person of this character. When I was pastor at Waterbeach, a certain young man joined the Church. We thought he was an excellent young man, but there used to be in the village, once a year, a great temptation in the form of a feast, and when the feast came round, this young fellow was there in very evil company. He was in the long room of a public house in the evening, and when I heard what happened I really felt an intense gratitude to the landlady of that place. When she came in and saw him there, she said, Halloa, Jack So-and-So, are you here? Why, you are one of Spurgeons lot, yet you are

here? You ought to be ashamed of yourself! This is not fit company for you. Put him out the window, boys. And they did put him out the window on the Friday nightand we put him out the door on the Sundayfor we removed his name from our Church-book! Where was he to go? The world would not have him and the Church would not have him. If he had been all for the world, the world would have made something of himand if he had been all for Christ, Christ would have made something of him. But as he tried to be a little of each and so nothing to either, his life became a wretched one! As he walked the streets, people pointed at him with scorn. The Christians turned away, thinking him a hypocrite, as I fear he was, and the worldlings called him so, and made his name a by-word and a proverb. Oh, you who are neither for God nor the devil, nobody will respect you long! They cannot!

You fancy, just now, because you have money in your pocket, that you are a very respectable person. But you are a disreputable person and the world itself says that you are! And you will find it out, yourself, before longand you will be unrestful, like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

The undecided man is also like a wave of the sea, unstable. Yonder great wave seems to form a pyramidlook how it towers aloft! It is a wonderful sight, but while you are admiring it, it is gone. It was only made of water and it has disappeared into its own element. So are there some people who appear to be excellent and admirable, but they are undecided and their goodness is as the morning cloud and as the early dewit soon passes away.

They are also uncertain. That wave that is rolling away yonder, where will it end? Will it sweep across the Atlantic till it reaches the shore of America? Look, there comes a north wind and it turns towards the icebergs! But another wind blows and now the wave is rolling towards the coast of England. It is in a perpetual whirl, just as the winds happen to drive itand we have many people of that uncertain kinddriven with the wind and tossed.

These undecided persons, too, are like the waves of the sea because they have no inward vital principle. A wave of the sea is dependent upon the wind that comes to bear it on. There may be a great force in the waves, but even that is not mighty enough to stand against the rough galethey are driven with the wind and tossed. And look at some of you! There has only to be a bit of a breeze and see how you are driven by it. You sang with us just now, Happy day! Happy day! Yet, perhaps, tomorrow evening you will be at a social party where there will be jesting at religion and some questionable witticismsand you will laugh at them as loudly as others will. And if somebody does charge you with being on the other side, you will stutter, stammer, blush and, at last, you will say something that all the while you do not like to say. Yes, you are driven with the wind. There are some fellows six feet high if they did but stand upright, yet anybody can twist them whichever way he likes.

For my part, I had as well not be, as live to be in awe of such a thing as I myself. What does it matter to me what a mere mans opinion of me may be? Nothing whatever! If a thing is right, I believe it, say it and try to live it. And if others also think that it is right, so much the better for them, but if they think it is wrong, it is none the worse for me when I have once learned to stand on my own legs. But there is a certain class of people who always stand on other peoples feet. They ask Mrs. Grundy what is the proper thing to do. If they move in West-End circles, they would sooner die than be out of the cruel bondage that is called, fashion. If they live at the East-End, there is a rough sort of fashion there, and they cannot stand against it. They are like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. I should have an unutterable contempt for all such people if I did not feel an earnest desire that they might yet possess a living, powerful principle, and begin to stand alone in the power and energy of the Divine Life which God gives to all of those who believe in His Son, Jesus Christ.

The worst of these wavering, undecided people is that, like waves of the sea, though they are creatures of circumstances, yet they have a great force for evil. Those waves of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed, sink many a gallant ship and devour many a brave marinerand these unstable people have an influence by which they carry many away. They half wish that they were not themselves carried away, yet they are. There is something good about them, but there is also something so bad that they sweep others on with them to destruction! Perhaps they are bearing their own children away by their indecision, so that they, too, will grow up undecidedand generation after generation may be cursed by their wicked hesitation. God grant that they may not continue in this evil condition a single moment longer!

In closing, what shall I say to you who are undecided? I pray you think whether you have not been undecided long enough. Remember that the question you have to decide is by no means a difficult one. Whether you shall serve God or Satan, whether you shall live with Christ in Heaven or lie among the lost in Hell foreverthese are not questions about which there ought to be any choice! Decide, then, foolish waverer! If you are a Believer in the Scriptures, a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Savior of men, decide to follow the teaching of those Scriptures and to accept that Saviorand decide at once! May God help you to decide very speedily! All this while you are robbing yourself of happiness, robbing God of glory, robbing His people of your help, you are even robbing this poor wicked world of what little you might do for its benefit, robbing your family of a holy example, robbing your entire life by letting its best days go for nothing. It is time, then, you were decided! O Lord, bring these waverers to decision, for Your dear Sons sake! Amen.

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

Verse *1.* James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. According to the teaching of some in the present day, the Apostle should have said, To the two tribes and the ten that are lost, but he does not say so, nor does Scripture say so. To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greetings.

2. My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations. Or, trials. This is a strange thing to say, is it not? Should we not count it great joy when we escape from trial? Perhaps so, but we are expressly told to count, or reckon, it all joy when we fall into divers trials. Have you never known what it is, in times of peace and quietness, to feel as if you missed the grandeur of the Presence of God? I have looked back to times of trial with a kind of longing, not to have them return, but to feel the strength of God as I have felt it, thento feel the power of faith, as I have felt it, thento hang upon Gods powerful arm as I hung upon it, then, and to see God at work as I saw Him then. I think the mariner at home must sometimes feel a kind of longing to once more enjoy a storm on the ocean and to see how the good ship rides on the billows crest. Life gets flat, sometimes, while all goes smoothly, and we need even the variety of a trial to bring us to close dealing with our God. It is so much for our good to be tried, it is so much for the glory of God that we should be tried, that we will read the verse again and note what the Apostle says My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers trials. Be like the soldier who is not afraid of the shot and shell, and the turmoil and strife of the battle!

3. Knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience. That is a gem of the first water, well worth finding even if you have to dig in the mines of trial for it.

4. But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. This is true Christian perfection, when every gracious quality is present, and present in perfection! If you have a child, it is a great joy to you to find the child perfect as a childwith no sense deficient, no limb missing and every part rightly formed. Oh, that we may all be such Christiansperfect and entire, wanting nothing! 5. If any of you lack wisdom. That is the point in which we are all deficient and if we are to be wanting in nothing, we must not be lacking in wisdom. How, then, are we to obtain it?

5. Let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him. Young beginner, you who have but lately put on Christ, you certainly do lack wisdomyou cannot have attained that gift in all its fullness as yetthen go to God for it! He can give it to you and he will give it to you if you ask Him for it.

6, 7 *.* But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. It ensures failure in prayer when there is not a decided faith in the one who praysand it ensures failure of the whole life if there is not a decided determination to serve the Lord.

8-11. A double minded-man is unstable in all his ways. Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: but the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass, he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withers the grass, and the flower thereof falls, and the graceOr, beauty.

11. Of the fashion of it perishes: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways. No matter how luxurious may be his mode of living, no matter how admirable may be his taste, he shall certainly fadeand all that he has will fade, too. And if this is all that can be said of him, that he is a rich manhe is a very poor creature, indeed.

12. Blessed is the man that endures temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love Him. For that is the purpose of our trialsthat we should be made to love Him more and love him better. This is that Divine Grace which shall win the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love Him.

13. Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts He any man. That is to say, if God permits or sends temptation to any man, it is not an inducement to sin. In that sense, God tempts no man. Those temptations which are said to come from God are trials or tests. In that sense, God does tempt all His people, even as it is written, God did tempt (or, prove) Abraham. He tries and tests them, that they may see and that He may see, whether their faith and their profession is genuine or not, even as the Angel of the Lord said to Abraham, after the trial of his faith, Now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son from Me.

14. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. This is the essence of an evil temptationa mans own lust.   
15. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. There you see the egg, the larva and the full-grown fly of sin! Sin, when it is finished, brings forth death.   
16. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Do not err about anything, but, especially do not err about this matter of temptation, where you may so easily make a blunder. Do not err, my beloved brethren.

17. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Ascribe all evil to yourself, to the world, or to Satan but ascribe all good unto God. Every good gift and every perfect gift every grain of goodness, every trace of excellence that there is in the world comes from Himbut no evil ever comes from Him.

18. Of His own will He begat us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures. It is a very delightful idea that we are presented to God as a kind of first fruits of His creatures. There is a whole harvest behind us, as Paul also reminds us in Romans 8:19-21 For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope, because the creature, itself, also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

19, 20. Therefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger: for the anger of man works not the righteousness of God. Therefore, when we are tempted, let us not be in a hurry to pronounce a verdict on the temptation. If we are slandered and evilly spoken of, let us not be quick to reply, or to grow angry. Let us be slowvery slowto anger. It will be our wisdom, for no good comes of human anger. The anger of man works not the righteousness of God.

21. Therefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness and receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls. Receive it as a graft. As the tree is prepared by the knife to receive the new shoot that is to be put into it, and so does receive it as to make it its own, and to use it for its own fruit-bearing purposes, even in that way receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls.

22-24. But be you doers of the Word, and not hearers, only, deceiving your own selves. For if any is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: for he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was. The best thing to do when you look into a mirror, and spy a spot on your face, is to wash it off. The true use of hearing the Word, or reading it, is to amend ones self at once in those points in which the Word discovers us to be faulty. To look in the mirror and not to wash off the spots is but a piece of vanity. And to hear a sermon, or read a chapter, and not to put into practice what we are taught is a sad waste of time.

25. But whoso looks into the perfect Law of liberty and continues therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. There are many who complain of their short memories when they are hearing sermons. Well, then, let them be quick about doing what the sermon bids them, and then they will not be forgetful hearers. You have heard how one good woman described the effect of the sermon she has heard. She was one who washed wool and when her minister went round to ask her what she had learned on the previous Sabbath, she did not even remember the text. Oh, Janet, he said, I am afraid you are a forgetful hearer! I cannot see what good the sermon has done for you. So she took him to the back of her house where she had a pumpand she worked at the handle while she held underneath the spout a sieve full of wool that was dirty and foul. The water ran through the wool and through the sieve, and all ran away. There, she said, this sieve is like my memory. But, Sir, though the water does not stop in the sieve, it washes the wooland what you preach, though it does not stay in my memory, it has washed my heart and cleansed my life and conversation. Never mind about keeping the water in the sieve so long as it washes the wool! No man can be said to be a forgetful hearer who is a doer of the work that he is bid to perform!

26. If any man among you seems to be religious. You know what that means and there are some who do seem to be wonderfully religious. Butter would not melt in their mouths, as we say, they are so solemn. If any man among you seems to be religious.

26. And bridles not his tongueThat little noisy troublesome member. And bridles not his tongue.   
26. But deceives his own heart, this mans religion is vain. If religion does not salt your tongue and keep it sweet, it has done nothing for you. If the doctor wants to know the state of your health, he says, Let me see your tongue. And there is no better test of the health of the mind than to see what is on the tongue! When it gets furred up with unkind words. When it turns black with blasphemy. When it is spotted with lasciviousness, there is something very bad inside the heart, you may be quite sure of that!   
27. Pure religion.It might be rendered, Pure ritualism.   
27. And undefiled before God and the Father is this. What is pure ritualism according to the Inspired Apostle. To wear a white surplice and to change it for a black gown? I do not see that in the Scriptures. To have little boys in white to sing for you? I do not see that. What I do see is this   
27. To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world. I should like to have such a surpliced choir as thisa company of Christian men and women robed in unspotted holiness! We shall have such a choir as that around the eternal Throne of God, so they who wish to be there had better begin to practice the music here! The Lord help you to do so, for Christs sake! Amen.

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A DISCOURSE UPON TRUE BLESSEDNESS HERE AND HEREAFTER

NO. 1874

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, DECEMBER 13, 1885. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 2, 1885.

Blessed is the man that endures temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love Him.   
James 1:12.

THE text is a Beatitude. It begins with BLESSED. We should all like to be blessed. What a more than golden word that blessed, is! It begins the Psalms of Davidthere is sweetest poetry in it. It begins the sermon of the Son of David. It is the end of all holy teaching. Happiness is the earthly word. Blessedness is the heavenly one. Happiness may prove to be a superficial appearance, but blessedness is deep as the abyss. Happiness ripples like a flowing brook, but blessedness is a springing well. Happiness may be wholly human, but blessedness has the Divine element in it. Happiness is transient; blessedness is eternal! Happiness may lie in our own conception of things; blessedness is Gods verdict, Gods truthful statement of a mans condition! Happiness may prove but tinselblessedness is solid gold. Oh, to be blessed! Blessed of the Lord which made Heaven and earth!

Where are these blessed men? There are such still upon the earth, for the text says, Blessed is the man. It speaks not of a phantom, but of a man. It treats not of an ideal man, but of one who is tried and made to endure temptation. I hear in this verse the echo of the music of many a Psalm which was chanted by the saints hundreds of years ago! James took pen in hand concerning blessed men and of the same persons, David, long before, had sung of men well known to him. There are such persons as blessed men, or the eminently practical James would not have written concerning them. It is true the curse has fallen on the world and man is born to endure toil and suffering in tilling a thorn-bearing earth and earning his bread with the sweat of his face, but for all that, there are blessed menmen so blessed that the wilderness and the solitary place are glad for themand by their presence the desert is made to rejoice and blossom as the rose!

Where are these blessed men? Can we be of their number? Is there any way by which we can enter their ranks and become members of their glorious peerage? Blessed men! From this day on we will not rest until we are initiated into this sacred fellowship!

Great mistakes are made as to the persons who are happy and blessed. Some suppose that the wealthy must be blessedbut if their lives were written, it could be proven, without a doubt, that some of those who have had the largest possessions have had the very least of blessedness, especially when those possessions have brought with them the curses of the oppressed and the wailings of the down-trodden. It must be an awful thing to have tons of cankered gold and silver pressing upon the soul and burying the true life beneath the accursed load! Yes, and when wealth comes justly, it often brings such care, such burdensomeness with it, that it is well described in the Scriptures as a load of thick clay! In addition, there may be such a lack of power to enjoy it that the man may be rather cursed than blessed by his possessions. Well may we pity the man who has pictures but no sight, music but no ear, meat but no appetite, estates but no health with which to enjoy them.

Are there not thousands of such? Certainly they are not blessed by their fortunes. Moreover, riches are uncertain things. Like the hoarfrost of the morning, they are gone when the sun is up. Do but clap your hands and the birds that cover the fields fly awayand so do richesthey take to themselves wings and fly away. How should such fleeting things bring blessedness to the fields on which they light for so short an hour? No, look not in gold mines for blessedness, for it gleams not among the nuggets. Blessedness cannot be gotten for all the treasures of the miser, or the wealth of nations.

But, surely, it is to be found in positions of eminence and power! These are greatly coveted and men will sell their souls to win them. But I suppose from what I have read of history that if I were to select the most unhappy set of men beneath the vault of Heaven, one would only have to select statesmen, emperors and kings! Surely on the day of his installation, the great man may well says, Farewell peace! I should certainly not search among the lofty glaciers of yonder Alps to find the flowers of happiness. All is chill and cold and tempestuous in the high places of the earth. And if one had the choice of such a place, he might accept it out of a self-denying wish to do good, but otherwise he were unwise to have it as a gift. Not the high but the holy are blessednot those who sit with the great, but those who serve with the good are marked out by the Lord as blessed.

Nobler natures feel no greed for gold and pine for no distinction of rank. They count those blessed who know and are stored with wisdom. Surely to pry into the secrets of Nature and read the pages of philosophy must be pleasure of a lofty kind. Therefore ambitious youth burns the midnight oiland the oil from the marrow of life as wellhoping that in search and study the mystery of blessedness will be discovered. But is it so? Does he that increases knowledge increase joy? Does he not, rather add to his sorrow? If knowledge were bliss, the devil would be in Heaven! Should we possess the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, yet these would profit us nothing in the trade of happiness. Telescopes, microscopes, air pumps and calculating machines are not the instruments of that alchemy which brings happiness out of all conditions! In another school than that of Plato we must learn in whatever state we are to be content. Blessedness is not the bookworm of the library, but a spirit which descends from above!

But some think that, surely, blessedness may be had by a combination of dignity and wisdom and riches. Put these together and a man might surely be blessed! And yet it does not seem so. I should think that no mortal that ever lived had finer opportunities than Solomon. He began with a blessed heritage from a father who was a man after Gods own heart. He gathered riches like the sand of the sea and he had a capacious mind like the sea itself! None of that age could be thought of as his rival and, perhaps, none since have altogether equaled this many-sided man. He denied himself no luxury. He abstained from no pleasure. He tried everything that could be tried, both serious and comic.

There was nothing from which he stayed his hand. He cast everything into the crucible and he brought out of it, not gold, but ashes! Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, all is vanity. This is the conclusion of Solomons life as well as of Solomons discourse. No, you cannot find blessedness on a throne nor in making many books, nor in seeking out many inventions, nor in enjoying all luxuries. These things all cry, It is not in me! Blessedness is a thing which is not discoverable beneath the moon, apart from Him who sits above this world and looks downand by His Spirit influences human minds after the best things. Apart from Him you may have health and wealth and talent and eminence and power and dignityand yet be written down among the most wretched of mankind!

If you want blessedness, hear Him speak who knows. That is, hear the Holy Spirit speak by the mouth of His servant JamesBlessed is the man that endures temptation. The subject for tonight shall be the blessed man in his worldly state and, secondly, the blessed man in the world to come.

I. We are going to find him first, in this present world, and consider him in this present life. Let us behold THE BLESSED IN THIS LIFE. Blessed is the man that endures temptation.

It does seem very startling, at first sight, that the blessed man should be described in this way. Notice, it does not say, Blessed is the man that is tempted, nor, Blessed is the man that is beset by temptation. No. Blessed is the man that endures temptation. That is to say, the man who bears up under it, survives it, is not led aside by it, but endures it as gold endures the fire.

But observe, first, that it does not say, Blessed is the man who is never tempted. I am sure that word has often been ready upon our lips when we have been in the sharp fire of the enemy. We have said, Blessed is that man who is never tried, never afflicted, never tempted. Oh when shall we get to the place where there shall be none of these trials and temptations? But James says not, Blessed is the man who is not tempted, but, Blessed is the man that endures temptation.

Look, Sirs, suppose we are professing Christians tonight and, as such, think that we have genuine faith in Christthat we have a bright hope of Heaventhat we have a pure and fervent love to Godthat we have, in ourselves, received the gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit and that we are certainly the children of God? These are flattering beliefs and tend greatly to our present comfort.

But suppose none of these have been tried? It would be a very presumptuous and unwise thing for us to pronounce ourselves blessed, for when such trial shall comeand come it will to us all in life or in death suppose all our happy signs and cheering tokens should fail us? We cannot say that we are blessed till our Graces have been tried and proven and when they have been tried and proven and we have endured the test in Gods great proof-house, then are we blessed, but not till then! Here is a man who has received a file of what looks to be bank notes and he thinks he is very rich. Have you tried to pass one of them? Have you taken one of them to a bank? No, poor fool! He does not wish to have his fine fortune tried, but he gets angry when you suggest a doubt. And yet his wealth is mere fiction! Those flimsy papers are bank notes of the Bank of Elegance and if he were to attempt to pass them, he might rather be suspected to be a thief, than be judged to be a rich man! Much faith in this world is no better than thatand he is not blessed, but blindedthat possesses it!

He is blessed who has tried his faith, who has gone to God with a promise and received an answer to his prayer. He is blessed who has had his faith triedwho, having been put into the furnace, has by that faith in God been made to walk safely amid the flaming coals and to come out unharmed. Untried faith is questionable faith. Is it faith at all? Was there ever in this world a Believer altogether without trouble, or a grain of faith which had undergone no trial?

Blessed, then, is the man that endures trial. I would not like to have everything about me untried. You would hardly like to sleep in a bed concerning which you were not sure that it might not be damp and cause your death. One would not like to buy a house that he had never seen, or a yoke of oxen that he had never tried, or even a cheese which he had not tasted. One feels like David when he put on Sauls armor. Though it was royal armor, he did not like it any the better for that, for he had never seen the go of it, nor tried how far he could move and fight in it. It fitted him a great deal too much and he could hardly find himself within its ample scope. At last he made up his mind to have none of ithe must have it off and, therefore, he cried I cannot go with these, for I have not proven them! He had well tried that bit of hide which made his sling, thoughhe knew what he could do with that and a smooth stoneand, therefore, he felt at ease with tried weapons. But as for Sauls armorwell, he had not tried it. If your religion has never been tested, you can hardly be described as blessed. Blessed is the man that endures temptation.

It may seem a fine thing to have a religion that you lay aside on Monday morning after having carefully brushed it. It may seem correct and proper to put your Sunday religion into a box with a sprig of lavender or something to keep away the moth. But it is an awful farce. Your godliness will come out again on Saturday evening with your clean linen and you will be very gracious on Sunday morning when you have put on your suit and your sanctity, your hat and your heavenly-mindedness. As for the weekwell, you do not need to wear your religion out too soon and, therefore, you do not use it on Monday! You have other manners for Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. This is a wretched comedy! O Sirs, the sooner you burn such religion, the better! You need to have a religion which is tested every day in the week and which stands you in good stead because it can endure the test! You are blessed if you have a religion which God gives, which God tries, which God sustains, which God accepts! As an uncultivated garden is no garden, so untried godliness is no godliness! A faith that will not bear strain and test is no faith! A love that cannot endure a temptation is no love to God at all! See, then, he is not blessed who is screened from temptation, but he is blessed whose faith, hope, love and every Grace will bear the trial.

In these times, we need not wish for more temptations, for they are all around us. Men who live in London need not go across the street to meet the devil. The very atmosphere of a great city is close and hot with the reek of sin. As flies in summer, so will temptations torment you, go where you may. Men of business, you need not ask for temptationsthey are thick in every trade and they multiply like gnats. They swarm in the factory, the counting-house, the exchange and the shop. The Christian man in public needs not sigh for temptationsthey will not be ashamed to solicit him in the open streets. This age tests the backbone of every Christian. A man had necessarily be a man at such an hour as this! We must not be dwarfs nor spiritual consumptives! We have come into the very thick of the fight and woe to that man who cannot endure temptation but blessed is the man who can bear it even to the end!

Dear Sister in Christ, you think yourself very patient. Have you any pain? Have you endured the loss of children or husband? If not, be not too sure of your patience. But blessed are they whose patience has endured the open grave, the constant gnawing at the heart, the bitterness of poverty and the agony of an everyday struggle for bread. The men who bear affliction in a gracious manner, these are the blessed people, for they have a patience that has been tested, a faith that has passed the ordeal, a love that has been more than a conqueror in trial! These, according to our text, are the blessed people! The Holy Spirit pronounces them such.

And they are blessed among other things for this reasonbecause they have endured temptation through their love to God. Read the text again, Blessed is the man that endures temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promisedto them that endure temptation? No, to them that love Him. So that those who endure temptation rightly, endure it because they love God. They say to themselves, How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? They cannot fall into sin because it would grieve Him who loves them so well and whom they love with all their hearts! To abstain from sin for any reason is, so far, good. But you may abstain from sin from a motive which will lend no virtue to your abstinence! Some abstain from sin from fear of men, or from hope of gainas the thief is honest when he sees a policeman and the beggar becomes pious when a meal is to be had at church. One sin will often kill another sin, as the miser shuns profligacy because he is too mean to spend his money riotously.

But to abstain from sin because you love Godyes, that is the thing! To cease from evil ways because the Lord Jesus Christ has loved you and given Himself for you and you have been led to put your sole trust in the merit of His precious bloodthis is a genuine work of Grace! You love Him because He first loved you and then you say, Now will I, with holy earnestness, keep myself clean from every sin and fly from everything that is not upright, true, honest, kind, good and pure. I will purge myself, by the help of Gods Divine Spirit, from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit. When you endure temptation out of love to God, then you are blessed!

Well, says one, I do not yet see the peculiar blessedness of that. You would, dear Friend, if you had ever possessed it! I do not need, for a moment, to explain to the child of God what a blessed condition he is in who has endured temptation out of love to Godfor there is, first, a main element of blessedness in the fact that it is a blessed thing to love God. I cannot see how a man can be unhappy who really loves God. If you love God, you cannot be cast into Hell because there can be no Hell in the heart that loves God! Love to God is, in itself, such a delightful emotion that before long the indulgence of it perfumes the whole mind with happiness. To love You, my God! To love You, my God! Surely if You give me no more than this I will bless You forever and ever! It is Heaven enough for such a poor creature as I am to be permitted to love the Lord my God with all my heart, soul and strength!

Then there arises out of the endurance of temptation a sense of Gods acceptance. The text says, Blessed is the man that endures temptation, for when he is approvedthat is the new versionand a very correct one, too. Not so much when he is tried, but when he has been triedwhen he has been put into the refining pot and has come out certified to be real unalloyed gold. When he is proven and, therefore, approvedthen he shall receive the crown of life.

After the tried man has stood against temptation, God says of him Now I know that you fear Me, as he said concerning Abraham after He had tried him. Now I know that you fear God. This approval of God breeds a holy delight in the soul. The soul becomes conscious of the approbation of God and, I venture to say, that any man who has felt that approbation in his heart knows the beginning of Heaven! Blessed is that man who consciously enjoys his Makers approval, who can stand up before the infinitely Holy One and say, Although I have sinned, my Lord Jesus has washed me in His blood and the Holy Spirit has helped me to resist the temptations which once overcame me. And I know that the gracious Father approves me. This is, indeed, blessedness! I know of nothing to exceed it. Blessed is the man that steadfastly endures temptation, for the Lord Himself is well pleased with Him!

There comes over the back of this a number of things to help to make such a man blessed, for he has great thankfulness in his soul. O God, he says, I thank You that I have been kept while passing through those temptations. He is as glad as one who has been taken out of a burning house! I have known what it is to escape from a strong temptation without falling into it and I think that I have felt as grateful to God as a man would be who had seen a shark after himand had been almost between its jaws and had just slipped away as he heard the monster close his mouth with a snap! I remember standing under a building which was in course of building and seeing a mass of stone fall from a great height just in front of me. What a thud it made! How narrow was my escape! How I started! But what joy filled my heart! So it is when one is delivered from temptationfrom temptation which began to overpower the heart. As David said, My feet had almost gonemy steps had well near slipped.

You remember Bunyans description of the feelings of Christian when he had passed through the Valley of the Shadow of Death and was able to look back by the morning light? He was struck with awe to think that he had ever passed through such a war as that, with an abyss on one side and a quagmire on the other. The road was haunted with sprites and hobgoblins and beset with traps and snares beyond all countand yet he had actually come through that way in safety! When he saw what he had escaped, what could he do but fall down on his knees and bless God with all his heart that he had been protected through so great a peril? It helps to make a man blessed when his mind is filled with holy gratitude to God who has preserved him

*Kept alive with death so near,   
I to God the Glory give,*   
says the man. And he is blessed by the thankfulness which he so gladly expresses!

Besides, another feeling comes over himthat of deep humility. Oh, he says, what a wonder of Grace I am! However is it that I have escaped such peril? With such a base nature as mine, how have I been kept from destruction? I shall perish and fall tomorrow unless the Lord, Himself, is still my Helper. Putting his trust in God, that sense of his own nothingness, accompanied with a sense of his perfect security in God, makes him feel exceedingly happy! A little rabbit, hunted and pursued, rushes through a narrow crevice under the rock and enters the place where he has his burrow. How quiet he is when he is once there! He hears many noises, but he knows that he is quite safenot because he is so big or so strong, but because he is so little and so weak that he has been able to hide himself away under a rock where nobody can get at him. Such a feeling is blessedness to the child of Godto be nothing, but for Christ to be everything to himto be weak to the last degree, but for Gods strength to be his everlasting security! Therefore, such a man who has been hunted by temptation and driven into the cleft of the Rock, Christ Jesus, enjoys a very singular and remarkable blessedness!

And, once more, he enjoys a fearlessness of heart. It must be an awful thing to go about the world and feel, I fell under that temptation the other day and I would not have it known for all the world. I fell into that vile deed on such and such an occasion and if it were known, where should I be? Poor wretch! I have heard of a toad under a harrow and I have often admired that situation without wishing to be in itbut that would be Heaven to the position of men who are conscious that they have not been true to conscience or true to God and yet have kept up a flaming profession! What poor creatures are those jackdaws who strut about in feathers which are not their own! A guilty conscience is the back door to Hell! But he that knows that, before God, he has stood though tempted and that though often assailed he has never been vanquished, can walk through the world and care for no man! The forked tongue of slander has no power with him! He has an antidote against the venom of malice. The noise and strife of this world can little distress him, for innocence walls him up against the onslaught of the enemy! He stands like a rock in the midst of the raging billows, for God has given him steadfastness of soul and is not that blessedness?

If it is not, I cannot tell what is! Young men beginning the Christian life, pray that you may be helped to endure temptation, for in that endurance lies blessedness like a pearl within a rough oyster shell! All of you that take the name of Christ upon you, ask for Grace to stand fast in your integrity, for as the beauty of the palm is its uprightness, so is integrity the Glory of the man! Ask for power to stand against every wind and wave because you have heard Christs Words and, by His Grace, have practiced them and are, therefore, like houses that are built upon rocks! Ask for Grace that your piety may be such as will stand every assault of the world, the flesh and the devil, for, blessed is the man that endures temptation.

So ready are we to sin, that to prevail over one temptation is a great joy! To have overcome many temptations is a multitudinous blessedness! To have overcome them all will be an infinite Heaven! The poet Spenser seems to anticipate that we shall all be overcome if the battle lasts long enough, just as a famous politician was known to say that every man has his price. At any rate, it will be a great rapture to fight out the last conflict and conquer in it. Oh to be victorious in our last Armageddon! It will be a joy worth worlds to disprove the Spenserian stanza which I have alluded to, which may well make the most bold tremble

*But all in vain; no fort can be so strong,   
No fleshly breast can armed be so sound,   
But will at last be won with battery long,   
Or unawares at disadvantage found.   
Nothing is sure that grows on earthly ground, And who most trusts in arm of fleshly might And boasts in beautys chain not to be bound Does soon fall in disadventurous fight   
And yields his wretched neck to victors most despite.*

With this dark prophecy ringing in our ears, we can truly call him blessed who endures right on, and never starts aside, let the test be what it may! Thus I have set before you what the blessed man is on earth.   
II. Just a few words on WHAT THE BLESSED MAN IS TO BE, BY-ANDBY. When he is approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love Him   
He shall receive a crown. Of course the allusion is to the Grecian games. See how the man runs! Every muscle is strained. There is not a part of his body but what is violently exercised. He tries to pass his fellows. He flies to the goal; he reaches it and then he receives a crown. A crown of laurel, or of ivy, or, perhaps, of parsley, is put upon his head. It has no value in itself. The Greeks were so little honest that a man could not have kept his crown in his house if it had been worth a penny. Strong rooms and iron safes had not, then, been dreamed of and, therefore, they gave the athletic Greek a crown of fading leavesand yet many men threw away health and even life to gain that paltry wreath! Though it was intrinsically worthless, it had about it a meaning which made each leaf inexpressibly precious to him who labored for it and obtained it. Now, if we live through faith in Christ, by Gods Grace, a life that shall be full of purity and holiness, God will give us a crown, not of laurel, nor of parsley, nor even of gold and rarest gems, but a, crown of life that He has promised to them that love Him. Very wonderful, is it not, that God should reward our poor endeavors? Yet so He will!   
Let us dwell, just for a minute, upon the figure of a crown. What did that crown mean? It meant something donea race finished, a battle fought, a prize poem written with care and accepted by the Greek world. It recorded and rewarded something done. Oh it will be glorious, at last, for Christ to say, Well done! That crown which is promised us is not for talk, nor thought, nor vow, but it records something done.   
It was something appreciatedappreciated by him that gave the crown. It will be no small Heaven for God, Himself, to appreciate our poor lives! We think little of them if we are gracious, but God thinks much of them because He is gracious. It is ours to humble ourselves for our imperfections, but it is Gods, despite the imperfections, to see what we desire to be and what in heart we really are. It is our blessedness both now and forever to be accepted in Christ Jesus. A crown signifies something done and that something appreciated.   
A crown meant reward. Now, in the Gospel system there is room for a reward, though it is not of debt, but of Grace. The child of God, like Moses, has respect unto the recompense of the reward. He does not run to win a crown by his own merit, but he runs knowing that there will be a crown given to him according to the love and goodness of the God of Grace. It is not difficult for a child of God to hate legality and yet to expect a reward at the last. He knows how the great Lord who saves us by His Grace does also reward us according to His Grace! God grant us, then, Brothers and Sisters, to be living so as to receive the gracious reward of a holy life.   
There is a crown for me. Does it make you laugh? I think I seldom think of it without beginning to laugh. Shall you and I wear crowns? Shall it be that our poor limping will yet win the racethat our staggering struggles will yet overcome and that we shall be crowned? O you dear Christian people that live in poverty and obscurity, I have a reverence for your heads which are already anointed with Grace, for your heads that are yet to be crowned with Glory! You runoften run better than the greatest and most observed of your fellow Christiansand you shall not miss your reward! There is a crown laid up, not only for Paul, but for all them that love our Lords appearing. Therefore, laugh to yourselves, not with unbelief as Sarah did, but with a holy joy, as Abraham did! Shall I have a crown? Shall this aching brow be decked with a crown? Shall this forehead be decked with a tiara? O my God, will You set a coronet upon my head? Then will I gird up my loins and quicken my pace, since the crown is so sure to those who run with patience!   
Now go an inch farther in the textA crown of life. What must that be? What is a crown of life? A crown is a dead thing. There, put it away, put it away! Somebody may steal it if they think it worth the snatching, but, after all, it is a poor lifeless circlet! A crown is made of a somewhat rare earth which men call gold, a substance yellow and cold which is hammered and sold to break hearts and buy immunity for vice. Poor stuff! In crowns there are also jewels. Pebbles, or perhaps, consolidated gases which flash and blaze in a cold joyless light of their own. A crown is a dead hard weight. But if we serve the Lord aright, we are to have a crown of life. What is life? Well, I thought to myself, this morning, as I was preaching and the multitude were listening so eagerly, This is life. It was no dead work to preach! Sometimes one preaches and you are like a yacht out at sea without a capful of windand there you lie dead, becalmed, motionless. Many a sermon resembles a dead ship on a dead sea! But when the breeze is up and you fly before it merrily, then you say, This is life. This kind of thing comes to us in our spiritual work, as well as in our everyday course.   
Life does not mean existence. Why, they say that when God promises eternal life to Christians, it means that they shall eternally exist. They always must eternally exist because God has made their souls immortal but there is no blessing in eternal existence! On the contrary, it may curdle into a curse. The blessing is in eternally livingand what is living? It is not mere existing! In fact, existence, though it is essential to life, does not enter into the meaning of life, nor so much as come near it! To live means to be in health, to be in vigor, to be in force, to be in joy, to be in right and fit condition, to have ones whole self in order and to enjoy all that surrounds you with all that is within you. God will give to all His people, by-and-by, such a crown of life! There shall be no sicknessthe inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick. There shall be no weaknesseven our body shall be raised with power. There shall be no dullnesswe shall be forever fresh and youngled to living fountains of water!   
There shall be no emptiness, no sense of depletion, nor of needwe shall be forever filled with all the fullness of God. There shall be no pain, no miserybut a plenitude of enjoyment at His right hand where there are pleasures forevermore. We shall possess and enjoy all that manhood can desire. All that you can ask or think shall be yours and much more than thatinconceivable enjoyment, bliss, rapture and ecstasyall shall be bestowed upon you by the unstinted hand of boundless love. Life shall crown all! All your life shall be crowned and all the crown shall be life! A crown of life.   
Does it not mean, however, as wellis it not a sort of Hebraism for a living crown? The crown they gave in the Olympic games soon faded. That bit of parsley, or olive, or laurel was soon turned into faded leaves. But you shall have a living crown, that is to say, it shall never be taken from you, nor you from it. When yon sun grows pale with weariness; when his bright eye grows dim with age; when yonder moon shall redden into blood as her brightness is over shadedthen shall your crown be as resplendent as ever! When time, itself, shall cease to be and visible things shall die and death, itself, shall be swallowed up, yet you shall not cease to be blessed, for you shall receive a living crowna crown of everlasting life which cannot know an end!   
What is more, it shall be a living crown. The best thing in this world grows stale. If a man could have all the wealth and all the art treasures of this world, he would soon grow tired of it. Did you ever go to see any exhibition without, at last, feeling, Well, I have had enough of this. I would not care to come here every day? But the crown of life will be just as fresh after myriads and myriads of ages as on the first day of your celestial coronation! There was a dear Sister of ours, whom the most of us will never forget, Mrs. Bartlett. Blessed among women was that mother in Israel! She has been 10 years in Heaven, today! Did you remember that? I should like to hear her story of her first 10 years in Paradise. What a chapter to read if she could write it and send it down to us! I will guarantee you that she has not known a weary moment! She has not known an instant in which her Lord has ceased to be, to her, a fullness of delight! I believe that she is beginning Heaven nowit is still the New Jerusalem to her! She is just at the commencement of her bliss!   
Brothers and Sisters, we shall soon be with her! Our own beginnings of Glory are drawing near. Project yourselves through a million years till all that is prophesied shall be fulfilled and there you are, sitting among the angels. Listen! It is a new song they are singing and you are evidently delighted with the new melody. Did you hear those harps? They strike out novel music. You have heard it long, but it is quite new to you. Look! Look at the brightness of the seraphs! They shine as burningly as if their glow had only but kindled yesterday! But as for myself, says a bright spirit, clothed upon with his resurrection body, it is a million years since I was down on earth and sinnedand washed my robes in the blood of the Lamband I have needed no other washing! Come, Brother, let us sing together, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, for we have washed our robes and made them white in His precious blood and, therefore, are we before the Throne of God! They are always at their

beginnings in Glory, for Christ is always their Alpha. They have always reached the fullness of their Glory, for He is their Omega! O happy saints, that wear an ever living crown!   
But listen once more. Did you ever try to indulge a speculation as to what the crown of life shall be? I mean thisyou have a bulb in your hand of an unknown plant. I have had several, lately, from Central Africa. The missionary said, Put it in your hothouse and I did. It did not look to me worth half a farthingit was an uncomely root. But it has developed large green leaves! It is growing rapidly and it does not yet appear what it shall be. I am speculating upon the color of the flowers and the form of the fruit. I guess, by the delicate velvetiness of its leaves, that it is going to turn out something very remarkable, but I cannot prophesy what it will be. Man, by nature, is that uncomely bulb. When he dies, you know what a poor dried-up bulb he seems to those who lay him in his coffin. Yet even here, when God gives spiritual life, what a beautiful thing the Christian is! There is an amazing comeliness about the heavenly life even here below yet we do not know what it is going to be. We know what spiritual life is, but we cannot guess what the flower of that life will be. Whatever it is to be, God will give that Glory to those who, by His Grace, endure temptation because they love Him.   
You gentlemen who believe in evolution, as I do not, tell us what a man will come to when God has sanctified him fully, by His Grace, and he has passed through ages of blessedness. What will he be when his life develops into the crown of life? We make poor guesswork of it. But I will tell you what I mean to do. I pray you follow me therein. I mean to go and see what this crown of life is like. We do not know what we shall be, but we have heard a soft whisper say, When He shall appear, we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is. Come, let us go to Jesus! First, let us hasten away to His Cross and unitedly look up, and say, We trust You, Jesus. Then, from His Cross let us come down and take His yoke upon us and learn of Him, and say, Jesus, we will follow You. Then, let us go with Him into the thick throng of temptation, where Satan shall try us with wealth and honor, or with necessities even unto hunger, as he tried our Lord. And there let us stand and say, We will wrestle with temptation, O Lord Jesus, even as You did. O Lord, when we have done this, we will die with You! And if You come not soon, we will lie asleep in You! And when You say, Awake, we will answer, Here we are. We will live with You forever and forever!   
And our joy shall be that crown of life which the Lord has promised of His own free, rich, Sovereign Grace to them that love Him! May every person in this congregation wear that crown! May you soldiers in your red coats over yonder win this crown and wear it forever! May you all be more than conquerors, for Jesus Christs sake. Amen!

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONPsalm 73.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK674, 857.  
Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #3275 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A KIND OF FIRST FRUITS   
NO. 3275

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1911.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, JANUARY 5, 1868.

Of His own will He brought us forth by the Word of Truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of His creatures. James 1:18.

MARTIN LUTHER, the great defender of the faith, who passionately loved the Doctrine of Justification by Faith, once grew so thoroughly out of temper with the opponents who quoted the Apostle James against him, that he almost threatened to tear his Epistle out of the canon, because he supposed that James fell afoul of Paul upon the matter of justification by faith alone. It is, however, very clear to us that James, like the other Apostles , never doubted that every good thing that can be found among mankind is a gift of pure Grace, the gift of God. Hear how he puts it in the verse preceding our text, Every good gift and every perfect gift is from abovenothing from human nature, nothing from mere free agency. Good and perfect gifts are flowers too rich and rare to spring up of themselves upon the dunghill of human nature. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of Lights. James knew how to

*Give all the Glory to Him*

*To whom all the Glory belongs.*   
There was no gainsaying upon this matter with the Apostlehe put the crown upon the right head and ascribed the honor to Him alone who is worthy to receive it.

Waiting upon God this evening in the same spirit, and desiring to honor and magnify Him, I ask you to consider the words of the text. They speak only to the saintand a division must therefore be made in the congregation at once, for I fear we are not all savednot all the children of the Divine God, not all resting upon the Rock of Ages. Let conscience speak, let each man judge himself, and let us now stand a divided companyas I fear we shall one day stand, some on the right hand and some on the left of the Judge.

It is to the children of God, the Believers, the saved ones, that such a pedigree belongs and such a destiny opens up. Their privilege of birth claims our first notice. And then the practical consequences flowing from that privilege must engage our attention.   
I. THE PRIVILEGE MENTIONED IS THAT WE HAVE BEEN REGENERATED, THAT WE ARE NEW CREATURES THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD.

Of his own will He brought us forth. Regeneration and all consequent blessings come to us entirely through the absolute but gracious will of God. He is not bound to give. He may, if He wills, withhold. We have no claim upon God, except the claim of justiceand what would that involve but that He should punish us for our sin? We are felons against the Majesty of Heaven. We have forfeited all the rights we ever had under the Divine Government. The right to punishment is the only right we can now claim upon the footing of justice. Henceforth we are simply in the hands of God awaiting His sentence. He may, if He wills, save the entire human race. If it pleases Him, He may save none. If so He wills, He may make this man a monument of mercy and leave his neighbor to reap the due reward of his works. This is what God has a right to do and He claims His sovereign prerogative! Are not His own words heard through Scripture like peals of thunder, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion; so then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy? There are some who, in their blindness, grow wrathful at this Doctrine, as if it were ungracious to mention a fact which it is impossible to disguisethey will almost froth at the mouth when the subject is broached. Well, let them do soit still stands firm as a rock and fast as the eternal hills! Jehovah gives no account of His matters. He does as He wills among the armies of Heaven and among the inhabitants of this lower earth. So

*Mortals, be dumb! What creature dares   
Dispute His awful will?   
Ask no account of His affairs,   
But tremble and be still!*

Brothers and Sisters, you and I, to whom this sovereignty has looked forth through the lattice of Grace, can gladly appreciate it. We bless that wonderful, discriminating love which fixed upon us while others were let to go their downward course and perish. The only motive God had to stir up His mercy, was His own will. To us, therefore, it is precious. Before we ever prayed, before we ever sought His face, His own will, acting spontaneously, brought to us the bounty of His loving kindness. Now most men who are generous need to have their generosity excited. They will need to be waited upon. Appeals must be laid before them. They must sometimes be pressedan example must lead them on. But of His own will God did to us all that has been done, without any incentive or prompting, moved only by Himself because He delights in mercybecause His name and His Nature are Lovebecause evermore, like the sun, it is natural to Him to distribute the beams of His eternal Grace! Of His own will He brought us forth. Come, my Brothers and Sisters, let us magnify the Lord who loved us when we were dead in trespasses and sins! Let us extol the freeness of that mercy, the goings-forth of which were of old, from everlasting, while we remember that we deserved it notthat we set ourselves against it, that when we did know it, we despised it! That when it was presented to us, we defied it, resisted it, stood out against it many a long year! Oh, when we think of this, I say, let us bow humbly before the Throne of the Infinite Majesty and bless Him whose mercy endures forever and whose loving kindness, like Himself, owes nothing to any incentive beyond itself, but is causeless, not communicated, existing full and free in the mind of God Himself! Because He willed and according to the dictate of His own good pleasure, did He have compassion upon us!

The benefit we have thus received is described in the next words, Of His own will He brought us forth. That is to say, we have, by Divine power, been born-again! Our first birth was to us our sensitive creation. Our second birth, our regeneration, is our second creation. We were made once and God made us. These bodies are the wonderful fabrics of His skill and these souls are the emanations of His power. Father of Spirits, You are, O God, and we are Your offspring, and Yours alone! But our being made again is as great a work of God and quite as solely a work of God, quite as entirely the handiwork of God, as our first creation! Of His own will He gave us a new life and made us new creatures. Beloved, are we conscious tonight that we are new creatures? Some, perhaps, have doubts about it sometimes, but a man cannot be a new creature and not be conscious of some sort of change. And there will be times, with the most doubtful of the saints, when they are certain and assured that they are no longer what they were, but have passed from death unto life! Search your own hearts, dear Friends. Let the prayer that was offered just now to the great Searcher of Hearts, and Trier of the reins of the children of men, come from your lips and your hearts, Search us, O God, and try us! Verily, verily, I say unto you, if you have not something more than what Nature gave you, you will perish! If you are not something higher than the best morality, the most exact discipline and the most consistent moral behavior can make you, you will never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven!

You must be born-again. This declaration stands like a sentry at the gate of Heaven, thrusting the bayonet in the way to show that, however amiable, moral, upright and excellent those may be who seek to enter there, they must be born-again. You must be born-again. You dignitaries of the Church, you senators of the nation, you who wear imperial crowns and you who don your coronets, you must be born-again! You who have been brought up and dandled upon the knees of piety. You who have not openly offended against the Law. You who have been in your houses a joy and in the world a delight, you must be born-again! It matters not who you areif you are born of woman, how can that be clean which comes of the unclean? You must be passed out of the flesh into the spiritand this must be the work of God, Himself, or it is worth nothing! It must be a supernatural change, above and beyond all the struggling and the striving of the creature. It must be the display of the eternal power of the Holy Spirit, or where God, is you cannot go. Happy should you be, my Brothers and Sisters, who trust that you have a share in this unutterably precious privilege! Of His own will He brought us forth. You are twice born. You are Gods children with an emphasis which belongs not to other men. You, though you were dead, are now alive! Though you were carnal, you have been spiritualized! Though you were far off, you have been brought nearand this all due to the Sovereign will of God alone! Bless Him, bless Him, and humble your hearts before Him!

The instrumentality through which this singular change has been worked in us is clearly stated, Of His own will He brought us forth by the Word of Truth. Men are not usually saved without the immediate agency of the Gospel. Some have said that the Spirit of God always works through the Truth of God and that the Truth is sure to work conviction. The Truth, however, is preachedand faithfully preachedto tens of thousands to whom it conveys not a blessing at all, but is the savor of death unto death! Others have said that the Spirit of God regenerates men apart from the Word of God but this is not told us in Scripture and is not, therefore, to be received. But always the Word and the Spirit are put together. Scripture does not talk of the Word of God as a dead letter. It says, The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. On the other hand, Scripture does not speak of the Holy Spirit as though the Word would work apart from Him, but the two are put together, and what God has joined together, let no man put asunder. My dear Brothers and Sisters, you who have been begotten again unto a lively hope, was it not through the hearing of the Word, or the reading of it, or the remembrance of some hallowed text which you had almost forgotten? You know it was! Good McCheyne used to say, Depend on it, it is Gods Word that saves souls, and not our comment upon Gods Word. And so I believe it is. It is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes!

And what is this Word? What is it that usually brings men to be begotten unto a new life? The Word, the special quickening Word, is the preaching of the Doctrine of the Cross. Beloved, no man was ever begotten again by preaching to him the Law. The Law may smite him, and lay him low in his death and ruin, and break and bruise him, but the telling him of what he ought to be, and should be, and of what he has done amiss, and of the punishment that he will receive will never quicken him! It is telling him that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto themthis it is which brings the heart to God, to peace, to life, to safety! Leave out the Doctrine of the Cross and you have left out everything! Those men who take away the Atonement from the Gospel, murder the Gospelthey are like vampires that suck the blood out of the living mans veins, and lay him dead! That word, blood, is one of the most solemn and most important in the whole of Scripture! The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin, is one of the most weighty of all the Truths of Revelationand he that speaks that Doctrine stammeringly, or who holds it without confidence, had better go to his bedbut never to his pulpit, for he cannot win souls! Let him repent of his iniquity, but never pretend to be a minister of Christ! Oh, then, if you have been quickened by the Word, proclaim the Word! If the Gospel has brought you to salvation, proclaim that Gospel! Whisper into every sinners ear the fact that Christ died for sinners. Make it known wherever your influence can reach that whoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ has everlasting life! Tell how Jesus stood as the Substitute for guilty men. How, when Vengeance poured out her vials, she emptied them upon Christ instead of us! How, when the sword awoke against iniquity, it smote the Shepherd instead of the sheep! And how the Beloved Redeemer

*Bore, that we might never bear,   
His Fathers righteous ire.*

Now, looking back, I recall the minds of Believers to holy gratitude and humble hope as they look back to what God has done, and bless His name that of His own will He brought us forth by the Word of Truth.

II. And now we shall ask your earnest attention to THE PRACTICAL DUTY WHICH SPRINGS OUT OF THIS PRIVILEGE.  
It is a universal rule that to whom much is given, of him much will be requireda rule as much under the Gospel as under the Lawit is a part of the government of the great House of God. Now, we were begotten by the Word with an end and with a purpose, namely, that we might be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.   
I suppose it is meant that we should have a dignity above all the rest of His creatures. God intends to put us first. He puts His saints beyond all others as His peculiar treasure. I ventured to say, last Sabbath evening, that I believed the poorest and the meanest of the Lords people were, in the estimation of God, infinitely more important than the greatest potentates living upon the face of the earth when they are unconverted. God looks upon the rest of mankind as though they were but the common pebbles of the brook, but these are the gems, the jewels, the regalia of His crown! In these He takes delightthey are His peculiar treasure. See, then, dear Brothers and Sisters, your privilege. You have been begotten on purpose that you may be the choice ones of the earthprecious beyond conception, dear to the heart of God and lying very near to His bosom!   
But the duty that comes out of this is the point to which I wish to call your attention. This morning I told you that the first fruits were gathered out of the harvest and presented to God. I think I shall have time to read a few verses from the 26th Chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy which will throw a great deal of light upon the fact of the first fruits and may help us in practically aiming to be such.   
In Deuteronomy 26:1-4, we read as followsAnd it shall be, when you are come in unto the land which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance, and possesses it, and dwell therein, that you shall take of the first of all the fruit of the earth which you shall bring of your land that the Lord your God gives you and shall put it in a basket, and shall go unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose to place His name there. And you shall go unto the priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him, I profess this day unto the Lord your God, that I am come unto the country which the Lord swore unto our fathers to give us. And the priest shall take the basket out of your hands and set it down before the altar of the Lord your God. Then there is an account of what the offerer shall say, which we will read, by and by, and then the account closes in the 11th verse, And you shall rejoice in every good thing which the Lord your God has given unto you, and unto your house, you, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you.   
Now, according to James, God has been pleased to save us, that we may bring ourselves as an offering unto God, just as the Israelites brought a basket full of the first ripe ears of corn to offer them unto the Lord in sacrifice.   
Observe, that this was ordered of God. This giving of the first fruits was according to Gods own ordinance. My Brothers and Sisters, I might if I liked, tonight, talk to you about the duty of giving a portion of your substance to Gods cause, but I trust that you have learned that and that many of you practice itas many of you as do not, neglect your own profit. The rich should give that they may be rich and the poor that they may become richfor those who give shall usually find that God returns it into their bosoms abundantly. But I am not going to speak of that just now. When it was the birthday of Socrates, each one of his disciples brought him a present, but there was one so poor that he brought nothing, but he said to Socrates, Oh, teacher, I give you myself as my offering. So you saints of God, I shall say nothing to you about your substanceit belongs to God. You are only stewards. I will say nothing about your timethat belongs to God, and not to you unless you redeem it, you that care for it. But rather I speak about yourselvesthis is an ordinance of God, that every soul redeemed by blood should acknowledge that he is not his own, but that he is bought with a price. If you reject the giving up of yourselves to God, then you reject the purchase of the bloodbut if you acknowledge that you are redeemed, you must also admit that you are not your own, but that you belong to Christ. Professors and members of this Church, may I solemnly put it to you, whether you are carrying out day by day the consecration of yourselves to Christ? Could you honestly say, For to me to live is Christ? Remember, if you cannot say that, there is something wrong withinyou are acting dishonestly to Him whose servant you profess to be!   
A genuine Christian, I take it, makes the main and chief objective of his life the extension of his Masters Kingdom and the manifestation of the Redeemers Glory. He can scarcely be thought to be a Christian, except in name, who lives from week to week with no more spirituality than that which enables him to go sometimes to the House of Prayer, but who, neither by his powers, nor his gifts, nor his time, nor by any other means, ever does service to the Lord, his God! I must be faithful with you, his servants you are to whom you obey! If you spend the whole of your energies, the whole of your strength in serving yourselves, then you are your own servants and not Gods. If Christ is in you, you will seek to honor Christ! Away with your profession, away with your name to live if there is no care for Christs honor! I believe that there are some professors who would as soon see the Church decline as prosper, who would just as soon hear of no conversions as of many, who never did go about to bring a soul to Christ, who never sought by any means to increase the number of the faithful! Woe unto such when He shall come, whose fan is in His hand and who shall thoroughly purge His floor. Woe unto you, I say, in that day when He shall sit as a refiner and shall purify the sons of Levi, for that which is not living Christianity will rot and be cast into the sea in that day! That which is not solid, sterling service to Christ will be held to be wood, hay and stubble which the fire shall burn! I tremble while I thus speak, for those of us who do the most may yet be doing it unto ourselvesand even the preaching of the Cross may be to us a selfish service! Oh, it is to be feared that we may sometimes preach Christ rather for the display of our own ability than the display of Christs beauty! And if so, we have brought no sacrifice to Himwe have rather prostituted the service of Christ to our own pride and so have dishonored Him and brought sorrow upon ourselves! Come, then, you who claim that you are blood-bought! Come, I pray you, tonight, and confess your shortcomings and ask for Grace that, henceforth, if you live, you may live unto Christ! And bring yourselves, now, I pray you, as is your reasonable service, your spirits, souls and bodies, and present them to your God, for they are His unless you have deceived yourselves!

But, in the next place, the offering was a willing one on the part of the offerer. Nobody ever went up to Gods House, in the olden time, flogged there or dragged there! If the Israelite did not choose to bring the first fruits, it was his own decision, and his own alone. He incurred the penalty. He lost the blessing. But if he did bring it, God loved a cheerful giverit was to be brought by him freely. So, Beloved, if I were speaking to you tonight about the giving of your substance, I would say, Not by constraint, but willingly. If I were speaking to you concerning the offering of your time to serve God, I would say, Not grudgingly, but being glad to be servants of the Most High. But I am speaking of yourselves, and I pray you bring yourselves cheerfully. Tis mine to exhort you, but, oh, where the heart is right, our exhortation will be thankfully receivedbut still the heart will be willing beforehand. Happy is he who preaches to a people whose pure minds have the good thing in them and who, therefore, only need to have them stirred up by way of remembrance. Yet to any that have hitherto held back, I say, I beseech you, Brothers and Sisters, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Do you notice the word the Apostle uses, I beseech you? Beseech! It is the beggars word. I beseech you, and I do. If I may have any love to you at all, or any care for your spiritual prosperity, I would express in this earnest beseeching of you that you would present yourselves to God!   
Ah, we shall soon be gone, and on the dying bed may it never be your regret nor mine that we wasted opportunities of serving our Lord! I have stood by bedsides, and of good men, too, where there has been much of darkness and of gloom because they had to confess that they had not lived as they should have lived. O may your deathbed pillow never be stuffed with thorns because you have been unfaithful! My Hearer, are you doing all you can for Christ? Is there any service that you might undertake which you have hitherto slighted? My young Brother, with all the strength of your youth, or you, yonder, with all the wisdom of your experienceare you sure that you have laid out every talent? Is there any rusty talent wrapped in a napkin? Is there not yet something that you might do for your Master? May God grant us what I cannot bestowthe Grace to be wholly sanctified! I am afraid that few of us are so and yet we might bemight be without giving up our business, might be without leaving our daily callingfor there is such a thing, as you full well know, as eating and drinking to the Glory of God! You can buy and sell, you can sweep a street crossing, you can do anything if the heart is but right, so as to glorify God in it! The household servant, the nursery girl, the laborer in the docks, the carpenter, the bricklayer, the tradesman, the merchant, the senator, the clerkeach of these is necessary to the commonwealthand if they are diligent and fear God in all they do, they may be as acceptable as the minister of Christ whose whole time is devoted to what are thought to be more sacred works! Only do, I beseech you, do bring yourselves cheerfully, willingly, without pressing or persuasion! Bring yourselves unto Christ in every way that your loving heart can devise and make yourselves a living sacrifice!   
You noticed, perhaps, when I was reading the Chapter in Deuteronomy, that the man brought ears of corn in a basket, and he brought them freely. But he did not, himself, offer them to God. Did you note those words, And the priest shall take the basket out of your hand? Not the mans hand that brought them could offer them but the priests hands should offer themThe priest shall take the basket out of your hand, and set it down before the altar of the Lord your God. Our offering of ourselves to God, then, is Divinely ordered and should be willingly performed, but it must be mediatorially presented. We cannot offer ourselves to God directlywe must come through Jesus Christ. Nothing that you and I can do or can be, in itself, is acceptable to the Most High! Christ must wash the sins of our best charities in His precious bloodand He must perfume our most industrious works with His own meritor else they are not such as the pure and holy God can receive! I do like to think that I can bring myself by holy self-consecration to the Lord Jesus Christ, and can say to Him, Here I am, a poor unworthy one, defiled with sin. I want to serve God. I do desire to give Him all my powers, my goods, my hoursbut Lord, everything I have is so defiled, and I myself am so polluted! Put out that dear hand of Yours that was once outstretched to bleed for sin. Take me into Your hands and then take me up to Your Fathers Throne and say, Father, I have brought You a poor sinners heart. He freely offers to give it, for I have fairly won it, and I present it to you. It is all Yours, it is all Mine. Father, help that poor heart, as long as it beats, to live for You. Help it with Your Grace to move hands, and tongue, and feet, and every power that is within it for your Glory and for Yours alone. Come then, Brothers and Sisters, on this, the first Sabbath of the year [1868]bring your hearts, bring yourselves to the High Priest, our blessed Lord Jesusand let us pray Him to take us as we are and offer us before the Eternal Throne, that we may be accepted in the Beloved.   
After that, it appears that the worshipper made a confession of what he owed to God. I have no time to read the rest of that 26th Chapter, but it suffices to say that the pious Jew, standing there with his ears of corn, confessed that his father was a Syrian, that he went down into Egypt, that there God multiplied him. That Israel was brought out of the wilderness and made, through Divine Love, to possess the promised land. Now, therefore, he says, in effect, of Your own do I give unto You. Now, if you and I give ourselves to God anew tonight, let us remember all the ways whereby the Lord has led us. Why, some of us were but boys and girls when we first loved Christ! When we were singing just now that hymn   
I could not help thinking what a blessing and a privilege it has been to have had ones choice fixed on Jesus so many years ago! Why, it is some 18 years ago since Jesus won my heart and I am not yet old! That is much the biggest half of my life and I bless Him for it. Would I have had it postponed? Would to God I had known my Lord before I was fifteen, and loved Him while still youngerwhile still a child! But what has been our experience since then? Very checkered, many ups and downs, a world of ingratitude and forgetfulness on our part, but a Heaven of faithfulness and loving kindness on His part! We can sing of His love tonight, His immutability, His long-suffering, His forgiving Graceand every note in that song seems to say to us, Then bring yourselves and offer yourselves afresh. By every sin forgiven, by every Grace received, by every prayer answered, by every trial from which you have been delivered, by every conflict in which you have obtained the victory, by every act of mercy vouchsafed to you, I beseech you, bring yourselves as living sacrifices unto God! Oh, if you have never got to the dignity of being sacrificed for Christ, strive after it! An ordinary Christianity is not worth the picking up, but the true Christianity that wraps a man up and envelopes him as the bush was enveloped in the fire and was not consumedthat will make you happythat will make the eyes to flash and the soul to beat high with a more than earth-born joy! I tell you solemnly, I believe that half the professors do not know what true religion means. They have never got to it. They have got to the skimmed milk, the scum and the froth, but they have not got down into the depths! The more you give up self, the more you dare and do for Christ, the more fully Jesus sits on the throne of your heart and the more Divinely blessed will this life become to you! But the farther you keep from Christ and the more content you are with a half-hearted religion, the more will you find it to be a weariness, a mere burden to be borne, a custom to be endurednot a banquet to be enjoyed, nor a thing Divine to be loved and to be grasped with all your mind and heart!   
After the worshipper had presented his ears of corn, he went his way. And we are told in Deuteronomy that he was to have gladness of heart and a blessing upon all. The consecration of the first fruits was a blessing on the whole, for it was a rule with God that if the first fruits were holy, the lump should be also holy. Now, if you, then, would have a blessing from God, begin, my fellow Christians, with a thorough consecration. Oh, you say, my boys did not turn out as I wished! How did you turn out yourself? Ah, you say, there are my girls growing up, and I do not believe they will ever be converted! How near do you live to God yourself? There are my servantsI was in hopes that I should see some of them joined to the Christian Church and walking in the faith. How about your own example? As sure as there are laws and rules of Nature, you will find that by living near to God, yourself, you will become a channel of blessing to others. God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us; that Your way may be known upon earth, Your saving health among all nations. The blessing comes to His people, first, and then afterwards it comes to all nations. Did you forget that promise, I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon, and so on. And then, They that dwell under His shadow shall return? When you get consecrated yourselves, those who are overshadowed by your influence shall be blessed by the Divine Grace which comes to you! True revivals must begin at home. If you want to kill weeds, take the hoe into your own garden . If you want to make sweet flowers grow, dig up your own beds. So, then, if you want to have the oil of Grace communicated to the whole household, strive, as the father, the mother, the elder brother, or the sister, or the servant, or whoever you may be, to get the Divine Grace abundantly into your own soul, that afterwards it may come to the rest! O Brothers and Sisters, bring yourselves, like the basket of ears of corn, to the Lord, now, and there shall be a blessing in your going out and in your coming in! And if the blessing comes not in the shape that you would prefer, yet for all that, all things shall work together for your good. If your house is not so with God as you could desire, yet shall you feel that He has made with you an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure!

All this while I have been speaking to the children of Godbut to others of you I cannot thus speak. It would be sheer hypocrisy for me to say to you, Come and bring yourselves to God. Ah, no! You can make no offering to Him. Your heart is not right with Him and, therefore, you could not be accepted. But I will tell you what you can do by His Grace. Though you have nothing to bring Him, you have something to ask from Him. If your heart is not such that you can bring it, and say, Take it, Lord, take and seal it, yet there is the heart of Christ ready for you to take, and the love of Christ ready for you to receive! You cannot be a giver, so be a receiver! You say, How can I receive? I notice the poor hungry creatures on these wintry days, when they stand round the soup kitchens, bringing their pitchers with themthey do not bring their pitchers full! They bring an empty pitcher, each one of them, and they get it filled. Now, all that Christ wants of you is your empty pitcherthat poor, empty, needy heart of yours! If you would receive from Him, here is His command, Believe and you shall live. To believe is to trust, to confide, to lean upon, to depend. Depend upon Christ, trust in Christ and He will save you, for no one ever yet did lean on Christ and find Him fail! Oh, may you be led to a simple confidence in the dying, but now risen Saviorand then, after thatgive God your whole heart and live to Him who died for you!   
The Lord command His blessing for Jesus sake! Amen!

**O happy day, that fixed my choice On You, my Savior and my God**   
EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 43.**

Verses 1, 2. Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man. For You are the God of my strength. In the previous Psalm, David had called the Lord the God of his life. Now he calls Him the God of his strength. We generally sing ourselves up. We may begin in a very low key, as David did, but if we can praise God in the dark, we shall soon praise God in the light!

2-4. Why do You cast me off? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? O send out Your Light and Your Truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto Your holy hill, and to Your tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy. My exceeding joyexceeding all the other joys I haveexceeding all the joys of the happiest men I have ever known!

4. Yes, upon the harp will I praise You, O God, my God. It was not enough for David to say, O God. He cries, O God, my God. You cannot praise another mans God. Possession is not only nine points of the law, but it is all the points of the Gospel!

5. Why are you cast down, O my Soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God. May the Lord comfort His mourning people by such words as these!

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1847 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

BEFORE SERMON, AT SERMON AND AFTER SERMON

NO. 1847

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, JUNE 28, 1885, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted Word,   
which is able to save your souls. But be you doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.   
James 1:21, 22.

BRETHREN, it is a good thing to be under the sound of the Word of God. Even if the very lowest motive should induce persons to come to hear the Gospel, it is, nevertheless, a good thing that they should come. We have heard of some who have even come to stealand yet the Word of God has stolen into their hearts. In many cases, in olden times, spies were sent to hear the Protestant divines who preached the Gospeland these took notes of all that was said, with a view to accuse them of false doctrine that they might be punishedyet in several cases, the spies, themselves, were converted! Such is the power of the Gospel of Christ, that it woos and wins, even, its greatest enemies. He that comes near to its fire, even with the intent to quench it, may find himself overcome by its heat.

Master Hugh Latimer, in his quaint manner, when exhorting people to go to church, tells of a woman who could not sleep for many nights, notwithstanding that drugs had been given to her. She said that if they would take her to her parish church she could sleep, there, for she had often enjoyed a quiet slumber under the sermon. And he goes the length of saying that if people even come to the sermon to sleep, it is better than not to come at all for, he adds, in his fine old Saxon, they may be caught napping. It is even so. A sick man does well to live where there are physicians, for one day he may be healed. If men are in the heat of a battle, they may be woundedif they come where Gospel arrows are shot, they may fall under them. Plants that grow in the open are likely to be watered when the shower falls. We dare not say to any man who wills to enter the House of Prayer, You must not come because your motive is gross and low. No, you are welcome, anyway! Who knows but that, being in the way, God may meet with you. Being where His Truth is preached, you may hear itand faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

Yet it will strike you at once that though it is well to come to the hearing of the Word of God in any case, yet it is better to come in a better way. We should endeavor to gather the most we can from the means of Grace and not pluck at them at random. A farmer may feel that there will be sure to be some crop upon his land if he does but seed it, but, if he is a wise man, he is not satisfied with a bare crophe fertilizes his land heavily and tills it well so that it may bring forth a large return to himfor in these times, the largest harvest is no more than he needs. So, my Brothers, let us so use the holy ordinance of preaching that we may extract the largest possible amount of gold from the ore. Let us so come into the solemn assembly that we may hope to meet with God, there, for this is the chief end of our gathering together. And let us so behave ourselves before the coming, in the coming and after the coming, to the sanctuary, that we may gain the greatest possible profit by our coming together. To hear the Word of the Lord is often made, of the Spirit of God, to be life to dead souls and the most eminent means of further quickening to those who are already alive unto God. Let us not lose a grain of the blessing through our own fault. The Word of the Lord is precious in these dayslet us not trifle with it.

This morning I shall handle my text with the earnest design of teaching you how to hear. Oh, that the Spirit of God may graciously help me! First, let us note what to do before the sermonLay aside all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness. Secondly, let us learn how to behave during the sermonReceive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls. And thirdly, here is the instruction for after the sermon Be you doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

I. Let us consider the fit and proper preparation for listening to the Gospel, or what is to be done BEFORE HEARING. It will strike every man who thinks about it, that there should be some preparation of the heart in coming to the worship of God and to the hearing of the Gospel. Consider who He is, in whose name we gather, and surely we cannot rush together without thought! Consider whom we profess to worship and we shall not hurry into His Presence as men run to a fire. Moses, the man of God, was warned to take off his shoes when God only revealed Himself in a bush how should we prepare ourselves when we come to Him who reveals Himself in Christ Jesus, His dear Son? There should be no stumbling into the place of worship half-asleep; no roaming there as if it were no more than going to the theater. We cannot expect to profit much if we bring with us a swarm of idle thoughts and a heart crammed with vanity. If we are full of folly, we may shut out the Truth of God from our minds. We should make ready to receive what God is so ready to bestow. If he was condemned, who came to the wedding feast not having on a wedding garment, what shall we say of those who habitually come into the festivals of our Lord and never think of being meet to be partakers of His royal dainties? What shall we say of those who defile the temple of God by never seeking to have their souls washed from the filthiness of their sin? Certainly there should be a serious preparation when a sinful creature draws near to the most holy God!

Brothers and Sisters, when I think of our engagements throughout the week, who of us can feel fit to come into the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High? I mean not into these tabernacles made with hands, but into the inner spiritual temple of communion with God. How shall we come unto God until we are washed? After traveling so miry a road as that which runs through this foul world, can we come unto God without shaking the dust from off our feet? Can we be busy with earthly cares all the six days of the week and be ready for the holy Sabbath without a thought? I think not! Even in the heathen temples before the solemn mysteries began, the herald cried, Far hence, you profane! Far hence, you profane! And should not some herald cry to our wandering thoughts, Far hence, vain thoughts, for God is here!

When the hour is come for drawing near unto the glorious Lord before whom angels veil their faces as they cry, Holy, holy, holy, it becomes us to be devout and humble, holy and earnest. Yes, Brothers and Sisters, if we were always occupied with Divine worship; if we never knew thought or care except for His Glory; if we were altogether dissociated from the entanglements and defilements of the world, I should not be so earnest to speak of preparation before hearing the Word of God! But, alas, it is not so! We are men of unclean lips and we dwell among a people of unclean lips! We have not yet come into the holy country where everyone that salutes us is either saint or angel. We have not yet cut off all the Canaaniteswe still have need to watch against them daily. Because of the sin which dwells in us and around us, we have need to wash ourselves in the laver at the tabernacle door before we may come near unto the Most High.

There is a common consent among mankind that there should be some preparation for worship. I see the visible signs of it here, today. Before the Sabbath dawned, you began to prepare clean linen and brighter garments than those of common days. It is but an outward and common matter, but still, within the shell there lies a kernel. Man puts off his ordinary weekday garments and puts on his best apparel for the Sabbath because, by instinct, he feels that he should pay some reverence to his God. I fear this change of clothing full often degenerates into a wish to look good before your fellows, but the underlying meaning should be thisI am going up, this day, to the worship of my God. I will not go, therefore, either in uncleanness of body or of apparel, but will put on the best raiment, that I may show respect to my God and to the assemblies of His house.

My counsel to you is cleanse your hearts rather than your garments! Go before God in newness of spirit rather than in newness of clothing. If of old the Prophet said, Rend your heart, and not your garments, so may I say, today, Put on the garments of righteousness and holiness by the Grace of Christ Jesus our Lord, rather than external garments which do but adorn the flesh. Yet, I say, even in that change of raiment there is an admission that there should be God and to worship His holy name. God grant that we may not be forgetful of some kind of special preparation when we go up to hear the Word.

In making this preparation, our text tells us that there are some things to be laid aside. What does it say? Therefore lay aside all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness. Some things must be removed before the Word of God can be received. And what are these things? The text mentions all filthiness. Now sin of every kind is filthiness. It does not strike the most of men sothey call it pleasure! I have even known them to think it an ornament. But in the judgment of the Spirit of God, who speaks here by His servant, James, every sin is filthiness. In the sight of every renewed man, all sin is filthiness and nothing better. Ever since the day when the Spirit of God took the scales from his eyes, the godly man sees sin to be a foul thingabominable in the sight of a holy God. Sin in the thoughts is filthiness of the thoughts! Sin in words is filthiness of speech! Sin in action is filthiness in life! Everywhere, the transgression of the Law is a foul and polluting thing, which neither God nor good men can bear.

Now, Brothers and Sisters, in coming before God, by the help of His Spirit, every sin must be confessed, forsaken, and hated. By faith in the precious blood of Jesus, it must be washed out, for we cannot come before God with acceptance while iniquity is indulged. We must remain apart from God till we are apart from filthiness. Filth, you know, is a debasing thing, meet only for beggars and thievesand such is sin. Filth is offensive to all clean persons. We cannot bear close contact with a person who neglects the washing of his body or of his clothes, so as to become a living dunghill. However poor a man is, he might be clean. And when he is not, he becomes a common nuisance to those who speak with him, or sit near him. If bodily filthiness is horrible to us, what must the filthiness of sin be to the pure and holy God?! I cannot attempt to express the abomination of sin to God! He hates it with all His soul. If we are to be acceptable before God, there must be no keeping of favorite sins, no sparing of darling lusts, no providing for secret iniquitiesour service will be filthiness before God if our hearts go after our sins. He says, Be you clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord. He would not have the vessels of His sanctuary touched with filthy fingers.

Have we well considered this? Lay aside, then, all filthiness unless you wish to arouse the wrath of God. If we are offensive to God, all we do becomes offensive to Him. Remember how it is written that, the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering, He had not respect. The Lords acceptance is, first, to the person and, then, to the sacrificeto Abel, first, and to his offering afterwards. If God has no delight in a mans person, then has He no delight in his services. Think not, you unclean, that your hymns and praises, however sweetly they are sung, can be music in His ears! Think not that your forms of prayer can ever ascend like sweet perfume before Himthey are a stench to Him and an abomination, so long as you, yourselves, are not washed from your filthiness! The filthiness of sin is to be put aside if we would hear the Word aright.

Moreover, sin is not only offensive, but it is dangerous. We have learned at last, I hope, though some are still ignorant of the fact, that filthiness means disease. Men begin to see that unless we are clean we cannot be healthy. He who harbors filth is making a hot-bed for the germs of disease and thus he is the enemy of his family and of his neighborhood. The filthy man is a public poisoner, a suicide and a murderer! Sin is the greatest conceivable danger to a mans own soulit makes a man to be dead while he livesyes, corrupt before he is dead. Sin is a mortal disease and he that bears it about him is not far from Hellwhile he continues to love it, he can never enter Heaven. Will you come before God and tread His courts with this leprosy upon your foreheads? Will you bring your infectious diseases into His Temple? They must be laid aside. Oh, for Grace to do this! There are at least three sins that are intended, here, and one is covetousness. Hence the desire of unholy gain is called filthy lucre because it leads men to do dirty deeds which otherwise they would not think of. If the lust of wealth enters into the heart, it rots it to the core! The Apostle cries, Your gold and your silver are cankered! Truly, the man becomes full of cancer and cankered, too. Now, when a mans heart is full of filth, when the desire to get gain and to get it anyway he can is strong on a man, he is in a very unfit condition to profit by hearing the Gospel. You cannot get the Gospel into hima golden bolt fastens the door. He is somewhat in the condition of the sea captain I have heard of who went out after whales and when he landed and heard the Gospel preached, he said to the man of God, Sir, it was of no use your preaching to me, for all the while I was thinking about where I should find a whale. There is no room for anything else in my mind but whales. I must have whales and, for the time, I can think of nothing else but whales. So it must be with the man who is hot for gainhis farm and his merchandise are in his heart crowding out everything else. He who has a stall in Vanity Fair is in an unfit state to buy the Truth of God since his merchandise is vanity. A covetous man is an idolater and cannot receive the gift of God till he has mastered his bosom sin. He is too foul to draw near to the Lord! God help him to escape from the idolatry of riches.

Then, with peculiar correctness, lustfulness may be spoken of as filthiness. I need not enlarge. Does not Nature, itself, teach us that the indulgence of our animal passions, whatever form that indulgence may take, whether of drunkenness or lewdness, is a condition that makes a man unfit for the reception of the pure Word of God? How should spotless purity come and dwell with that man whose life is brutish indulgence? How should the thrice Holy Spirit come and dwell in that heart which is a den of unclean desires? Did the men of Sodom profit by the teaching of Lot? Shall a man come from the chamber of lust to the house of the Lord? No, Brothers and Sisters. We must lay apart all filthiness if we are to worship God in spirit and in truth.

But in the connection of my text, the filthiness meant is especially anger. Read it and you will see. The wrath of man works not the righteousness of God; therefore lay aside all filthiness. Some persons, when they are angry, will say things that never ought to be repeated, or even said for the first time. It was so, no doubt, in Jamess day even more than in our ownthen angry men let fly horrible epithets and abominable insinuations which were, indeed, a superfluity of naughtiness. Now, the child of God is to subdue his anger, wrath and malice. How can you accept the Word of Peace while you are at enmity with your brother? How can you hope to find forgiveness under the hearing of the Word of God when you forgive not those who have trespassed against you? We would have you pray before you come into this house on the Sabbath morning or eveningand see to it that you come in the spirit of gentleness and meekness! Only thus will you receive the engrafted Word. The wrath of man is so filthy a thing that it cannot work the righteousness of God! Nor is it likely that the righteousness of God will be worked in the heart that is hot like an oven with passion and malice. A revengeful, bitter and malicious spirit is little likely to imbibe the sweet forgiving spirit of the Gospel. God help us, then, to lay aside all filthiness and especially all enmity.

But it is added, and superfluity of naughtiness. What does that mean? Any kind of naughtiness in a child of God is superfluousiniquity ought not to be within him! Superfluity of naughtiness, or the outpouring of evil, is unnecessary. It is an excrescence upon a child of God. The phrase here used differs not in meaning from the first epithet of the textit gives another view of the same thing. You have seen a rose bush which, perhaps, was bearing very few roses, and you half wondered why. It was a good bush and planted in good soil, but its flowers were scanty. You looked around it and, by-and-by, you perceived that suckers were growing up from its roots. Now, these suckers come from the old, original briar on which the rose had been graftedand this rose had a superfluity of strength which it used in these suckers. These superfluities, or overflows, took away from the rose, the life which it required, so that it could not produce the full amount of flowers which you expected from it. These superfluities of naughtiness that were coming up here and there were to the injury of the bush.

Children of God, you cannot serve the Lord if you are giving your strength to any form of wrong! Your naughtinesses are springing from the briar stock of your old nature and the best thing to do is to cut off those suckers and stop them as much as possible, so that all the strength may return into the roseand the lovely flowers of Grace may abound. Oh, that Gods people, when they come up here on the Sabbath, may first have undergone that Divine pruning which shall take away the superfluity of naughtiness, for there cannot be grafting without a measure of pruning! The gardener takes off from a certain part of the tree, a shoot of the old stock, and then he inserts the graft. There must be a removal of superfluities in order that we may receive with meekness the engrafted Word which is able to save our souls. This is what is to be put away.

The garments spotted with the flesh and infected with disease are to be taken off and laid aside. We are to wear them no more if we desire to profit by the Word which we hear. We are not to lay up these to put them on again, but lay them aside among the offal of Tophets firewith the strong desire never to touch them again. To the fires we condemn these filthy things! What have we to do with filthiness, now that we have been begotten by the will of God to be the first fruits of His creatures? You who are the children of a holy God, what have you to do with naughtiness, or any such superfluity? God help you to shake off sin as Paul shook off the viper into the fire!

Why is this? Why is a man, as he comes to hear the Gospel, to see to this? I take it because all these evil things preoccupy the mind. Whether it is covetousness, or lewdness, or anger, in addition to the pollution which these bring, they also possess the thoughts, so that they are not likely to be blessed while hearing the Word of God. These are the rocks which prevent the seed from entering the mind. These the birds which devour that which is sown. These are the weeds which choke the upspringing shoots. Therefore, lay these aside. If you bring your measures to this place filled to the brim with chaff, how can you expect to have them filled with wheat? If we come here with this filthiness about us, how can we expect that the pure and incorruptible Word of God shall be sweet to us?

Moreover, sin prejudices against the Gospel. A man says, I did not enjoy the sermon. How can you? What have you been enjoying during the week? What flavor did last night leave in your mouth? I cannot stand that man, says one. And if you could, it would be an evidence that the man was not faithful! Can Ahab love Elijah? I remember seeing one get up and go out in hot indignation at what I had said, which happened to come personally home to him, though the man was a stranger to me. What I had said was the pure Truth of God and I could not be sorry that an illliving man was indignant at it, since this was the only homage that such as he could pay to purity! Had he but known it, there was therein a manifestation to himself of what his nature was and in what condition he was. Do you think Christs servants desire to please those who will not please God? Oh, said one to a Puritan Divine, my lord heard you, this morning, and he is mightily offended at your remarks upon profane language, for my lord is given to drop an oath, now and then, in his ordinary speech. What said the Puritan Divine? He answered, Sir, if your lord offends my Lord, then your lord ought to be offended and I cannot say less than I have said.

If any men are offended with the Gospel, it is because they offend God. It is almost invariably the case that when persons grow skeptical, who once professed to be religious, and begin picking at this and that, there is a secret evil in their lives which they thus try to cover from their own consciences. The devil tempts them to rail at the ministry because the Gospel presses hard upon their guilty consciences and makes them feel uneasy in their sins. If you are to hear Gods Word with pleasure and profit to yourselves, you must, lay aside all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, for these things will prejudice you against the Word of God and render you incapable of that lively appreciation of it which is so necessary to profiting thereby. God bless these words of mine and may many of you who have come carelessly here at different times, henceforth seek to come with preparedness into the assembly of Gods people.

II. Secondly, I will talk a little about DURING HEARING. How shall we act while listening to the Word? Receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls. The first thing, then, is receive. That word, receive, is a very instructive Gospel wordit is the door through which Gods Grace enters us. We are not saved by working, but by receivingnot by what we give to God, but by what God gives to us and we receive from Him. In the hearing of the Word, there should be a receiving of it, not into the ears only, but into the understanding, into the heart, into the conscience, together with a laying-up of this good treasure in the memory and the affections. You must receive the Word of God, or it cannot bless you. For, Sirs, the Word of God is a feast, but what comes of it if a man only looks at the banquet? Shall he not go away as empty as he came if he does not receive it? The preaching of the Word of God is as a shower from Heaven, but what happens to the soil if the raindrops fall but none are absorbed into the soil? Of what use is the shower if none is drunk in by the thirsty furrows? A medicine may have great healing power, but if it is not received, it does not purge the inward parts of the body. There must be a receiving of any good thing before the goodness of it can be ours.

I love, when I read the Bible, or hear the Word, to throw the doors of my soul wide openyes, and to open all the windows of my heart. My soul cries, Come in, most blessed Spirit; come in, Divine Life. You shall not say there is no room for You in the inn! Come, take possession of every chamber of this house of mine and be Master of it from now on and forever. I pray you, my Brothers and Sisters, do not block up your souls against the incoming tide of the Gospel! On the contrary, break down the dams and let the river flow into you till you are filled with it! Receive the Word of God! Many men are not profited by the Word because it does not penetrate them, but is like water flowing down a slab of marble. The Truth of God must soak into the heart if it is to bless the heart! May the blessed Spirit give us a sweet receptiveness of the Truth, for, otherwise, it is of no use to hear it.

Then it is added, receive with meekness. Many do not receive the Gospel because they are not of a meek and teachable spirit. They come up to Gods house, but the only seat they will occupy is the Judgment Seat. One would imagine them to be the god of God by their bold talk! Judge not the Word of God, I charge you! You may judge me as you likesmall matter shall that be to me, for we are not anxious as to mens judgment our judgment is with the living God. If the preacher truly declares the Word of God, woe unto the man who sits in judgment upon itthis same Word shall judge him at the Last Great Day! We stand at the bar to be tried by Gods Word, searched and siftedbut woe unto us if, rejecting every presence of meekness, we ascend the tribunal and summon God, Himself, before us! The spirit of critics ill becomes sinners when they seek the Lords mercy.

His message must be received with teachableness of mind. When you know it is Gods Word, it may upbraid you, but you must receive it with meekness. It may startle you with its denunciations, but receive it with meekness. It may be there is something about the Truth which, at the first blush, does not commend itself to your understanding. It is, perhaps, too high, too terrible, too deepreceive it with meekness. This is not the spirit of the present age, but it is the spirit which the living God requires of us. It is by receiving with meekness that we receive the Truth of God in the power of it and so it is able to save our souls. Unless you are converted and become as little children, you cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. The door of Heaven is open to those who sit at Jesus feet and learn of Him. You are not His servant unless He is your Master. You cannot be said to be His disciple if you question His teaching, for in the questioning of Christs teaching lies the rejection of His Person. To doubt Jesus is treason against the authority He claims over every human heart. Receive with meekness if you would be blessed with Divine Grace.

What is this which is to be received? Receive with meekness the engrafted Word. We are not bid to receive with meekness mens words, for they are many, and there is little in them. But receive with meekness Gods Word, for it is one, and there is power in each Word which proceeds out of His mouth. One Word of God created the heavens and the earth! By the Word of God, the heavens still stand! One Word of His shall, before long, shake not only earth but also Heaven! Therefore, hear with meekness that Word; that Word which testifies of sin and of its sure punishment; that Word which testifies of Grace most large and freeand of an Atonement provided by the Only-Begotten Son of the Fatherby which sin is put away in consistency with justice and holiness. Receive with meekness the Word of the Lord in its entirety and unity. Reject no part of it, but receive the whole.

Any little particle of Gods Word, so far as we know it, is precious, and should be highly esteemed by us. The odds and ends, and corners and fragments of the Divine Word are to be received by you and by meand there is a lack of meekness in us if we begin to pick and choose, and cut and carve the Divine Word. Who are we that we should say, This or that is not essential? Who are you, O man, that you should decide what is essential or otherwise? He who gave the Word did not write trifles! It is essential that you receive the Word of the Lord as supreme and perfect! And it is essential that you are

lost if you do willfully reject any portion of that which the Most High deigns to reveal to men. Receive with meekness the one, only, and indivisible Word of the Lord.

It is called the engrafted Word. The Revised Version has the implanted Word, which is, perhaps, more literal than the Authorized translation. And it puts in the margin, the inborn Word, which gives another idea and yet conveys the same sense. I will keep to our old and wellbeloved version and read it, engrafted Word. When a graft is to be made, the first thing is to make a cut or gash. Nobody ever received the Word of God into his heart, to be engrafted there, without being cut and wounded by the Truth of God. It needs two wounds to make a graftyou wound the tree and you wound that better tree which is to be grafted in. Is it not a blessed grafting when a wounded Savior comes into living contact with a wounded heart? When a bleeding heart is engrafted with a bleeding Savior? Engrafting implies that the heart is wounded and openedand then the living Word is laid in and received with meekness into the bleeding, wounded soul of the man. There is the gash and there is the space opened by it. Here comes the graftthe gardener must establish a union between the tree and the graft. This new life, this new branch, is inserted into the old stem, and they are to be livingly joined together.

At first they are bound together by the gardener and clay is placed about the points of junction. But soon they begin to grow into one another and only then is the grafting effectual. This new cutting grows into the old and it begins to suck up the life of the old and change it so that it makes new fruit. That branch, though it is in the grafted tree, is altogether of another sort. Now, we need the Word of God to be brought to us in a similar fashionour heart must be cut and openedand then the Word must be laid into the gash till the two adhere. Then the heart begins to hold to the Word, to believe in it, to hope in it, to love it, to grow to it, to grow into it and to bear fruit accordingly! Christ lives in me, said the Apostle. Is not that a wonderful thought? The daily Incarnation of Christ in the Believer, or, in other words, the new Eternal Life living in us and producing fruit after its own kind, while we live in itand the fruit is our own. Christ is come in all the newness of His life and is living in me! Oh, blessed grafting! Receive with meekness the engrafted Word.

Once more, you are to receive it by faith, for you are to regard the word as being able. Believe in the power of Gods Wordreceive it as being fully able to save your souls from beginning to end! Two ways it does thisby putting away your sin as you accept the blood and righteousness of Christand by changing your nature as you accept the Lord Jesus to be your Master and your Lord, your life and your all. There is such potency in the Word of God, that if it is received into the heart, it will effectually save the soul! It will not merely give you a hope of being saved, but really save yousave you now, save you through life, save you to all eternity! Oh, with what ears ought men to listen to a Word which can save their souls! With what open mouths ought they to drink in this Living Water! How wisely might we wish to be like sponges, to suck it all up, or like Gideons fleece, to be saturated with the dew of Heaven! How we ought to wish to be like the plowed ground which is broken up and pulverized, so that every drop that falls may soak into it! Oh, that the new life that is come to us would put out the old life of the flesh, so that our life should no longer be after the old fashion, but in all newness of power! Let us rejoice to have the Word engrafted in us.

This is how to behave at the sermon. Oh, what need have we of the Holy Spirit to help us to hear the Truth as well as to prepare us before we hear it!

III. Lastly, and very briefly, let us think of AFTER THE SERMON. Be you doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.   
First, the command is positiveBe you doers of the Word. Oh, dear Sirs, I come to this pulpit oftentimes and speak with you, but as I come here, my heart is more and more burdened with this desirethat mine may not be an unprofitable ministry to you! I shall be useless to you unless you are doers of the Word as well as hearers. Sirs, you have heard about repentance and the putting away of filthinessrepent, then, and let your filthiness be put away! May God the Holy Spirit lead you to do so not only to hear about itbut do it. You have heard us preach continually concerning faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and you know all about believingbut have you believed? Sirs, have you believed? If not, to what use is it for us to cry, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved? We are to admonish you concerning all those blessed duties which spring out of that living faith which works by lovebut it is nothing to hear about these virtues unless you possess them! Doing far surpasses hearing!   
I believe that with a very little knowledge and great doing of what we know, we may attain to a far higher degree of Grace than with great knowledge and little doing of what we know. The man who knows how to keep shop makes no profit by his knowledge if he does not keep a shop. The doctor who knows how to cure the sick is not, therefore, a healer if he never has a patient. The man who knows how to teach children, but never teaches them, is not an instructor of youth. If a schoolmaster teaches the little he does know, he may be a better teacher than a great philosopher who keeps all his wisdom to himself. We value clouds by their rain, and men by their actual doings! The world is always looking to the church, not so much to hear her teachings as to see her doings. Few ask, What is the doctrine taught at such a meeting house? The ungodly world cries, Forget the doctrine! What good is done there?   
If the people who attend there are mean, false and hypocritical, the world condemns the tree which yields such fruit! The bulk of men do not read the Bible, but they read youand if they do not come to hear the minister preach the Gospel, yet they say, These people who hear him are no better than other people, and why should we trouble to go and listen to him? The minister gets the blame which should rightly belong to those who are hearers but not doers of the Word of God! Oh, may the Eternal Spirit work in us all to will and to do of His own good pleasure! There is nothing done by these Sundays. There is nothing done by these pulpits! There is nothing done by these pews! There is nothing done by these vast gatherings unless our hearers are doers of the Word of God! Practice is the harvestthe rest is but the plowing and the sowing.   
Observe that the command is put negatively. The text says, not hearers only. Those who are hearers only are wasters of the Word. What poor creatures hearers are, for they have long ears and no hands! You have heard of him who, one day, was discoursing eloquently of philosophy to a crowd, who greatly applauded him. He thought he had made many disciples, but suddenly the market bell rang and not a single person remained! Gain was to be made and, in their opinion, no philosophy could be compared to personal profit! They were hearers till the market bell rang and then, as they had been hearers only, they quit the hearing, also! I fear it is so with our preachingif the devil rings the bell for sin, for pleasure, for worldly amusement, or evil gainour admirers leave us right speedily! The voice of the world drowns the voice of the Word! Those who are only hearers, are hearers but for a time. Some of those now before me are hearers only. We cannot mark your houses by putting a cross upon your doors and writing on them, Lord, have mercy upon us, but if I did so, London would seem to be smitten with the plague!   
Oh that you would cease from this mocking of God and ruining of yourselves! Remember, if any man will be lost, he will most surely be lost who heard the Gospel and refused it! Write that word in great capital lettersif any soul will be lost emphatically, it is he who has been, for years, a hearer only, a hearer where thousands have believed unto eternal life! Over the cell of such a man write, He knew his duty, but he did it not and that cell will be found to be built in the very center of Gehennait is the innermost prison of Hell. Willful rejection of Christ ensures woeful rejection from Christ! Take heed, you that deny Him entrance now, lest *How they deserve the deepest Hell   
That slight the joys above!   
What chains of vengeance must they feel   
Who break the bonds of love!*   
The text closes with this solemn worddeceiving yourselves. Whereupon says Bishop Brownrig, To deceive is bad, to deceive yourselves is worse, to deceive yourselves about your souls is worst of all. Alas, there are many in that sad condition! A syllogism may be bad and yet it may look like logicand such are the hopes which men fashion out of a bare hearing of the Word of God! It is very easy, when you get well accustomed to the Gospel, au fait at it, as they say, to be able to twist it so as to make it seem to favor you, though it condemns you. He who wills to be deceived can feign an acquittal out of a sentence of death! Many think it is all right with them, when it is all wrong with them. They always hear the Gospel how can they be castaways? They sit under a thoroughly evangelical Divinehow can they be reprobates? They know what is whatthey will not consent to hear false doctrinethey have a discriminating faculty and will not abide unorthodox teaching.   
I am very glad they will not, but they seem to make a god of this discernment. Alas, it is a mere idol! Hundreds believe that because their minister is unquestionably sound in the faith, therefore they are also sound. As they have the good sense to hear him, surely they are first-rate people and the Lord will overlook their faults! Oh, Sirs, be not such fools! Do not deceive yourselves in that way, for there is no truth in this comforting conclusion! The better that which you hear, the more guilty are you if you do not

practice it! And the plainer and more straight the Gospel which is taught you, the more inexcusable are you if you do not receive it! When the Gospel comes to you with a heavy knock at the door of your heart, the more terrible your crime if you bolt and bar your door against it, or say, When I have a more convenient season I will send for you.   
God grant to each one of us that when we go home we may attend to the doing of the sermon! You know the old storyI am half ashamed to repeat it, but it is so pat to the point. When Donald came out of church sooner than usual, Sandy said to him, What? Donald, is the sermon all done? No, said Donald, it is all said, but it is not begun to be done yet. Let my sermon be done in your chambers by prayer and in your lives by holiness! Let it be done all through the week by our, each one, seeking to put away all filthiness! Let us cling to the holy Christ, desiring to live His life and breathe His Spirit. God grant it may be so with you all, for Jesus Christs sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONJames 1.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK101, 652, 645.  
Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1467B Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

TWO SORTS OF HEARERS   
NO. 1467B

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON, AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

But be you doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if any is a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was. But whoever looks into the perfect Law of liberty, and continues therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.   
James 1:22-25.

JAMES has no speculations. By their fruits you shall know them, seems to have taken possession of his mind and he is always demanding practical holiness. He is not satisfied with the buds of hearinghe wants the fruits of obedience! We need more of his practical spirit in this age, for there are certain ministers who are not content with sowing the old seed, the same seed which, from the hand of Apostles, confessors, fathers, reformers and martyrs produced a harvest unto God. They spend their time in speculating as to whether the seed of tares grown under certain circumstances may not bring forth wheatwhether, at any rate, good wheat would not be the better for the admixture of just a little sprinkling of tare seed!

We need somebody to take these various theories, put them into a cauldron, boil them down and see what is the essential practical product of them. Some of you may have seen in the newspapers a short time ago an article which fastened itself upon my mindan article with regard to the moral state of Germany. The writer, himself a German, says that the skepticism of the professed preachers of the Word of God, the continual doubts which have been suggested by scientific men and more especially by professedly religious men as to Revelation, have now produced upon the German nation the most frightful consequences.

The picture which he gives makes us fear that our German friends are treading upon a volcano which may explode beneath their feet. The authority of the government has been so severely exercised that men are beginning to weary of it and, meanwhile, the authority of God has been put so much out of the question that the basis of society is undermined. I need not, however, ground my remarks upon that article, for the French Revolution at the end of the last century remains in history as an enduring warning as to the dread effects of philosophy when it has cast suspicion upon all religion and created a nation of infidels. I pray God that the same may not happen here, but the party of modern thought seem resolved upon repeating the experiment! So greatly is the just severity of God ignored and so trifling an evil is sin made out to be that if men were to be doers of what they hear and carry out what has been taught from certain professedly Christian pulpits, anarchy would be the result! Freethinking always leads that way. God keep us from it!

While preachers too often toy with preaching, how much there is among hearers of the same fashion? Hearing is often merely a critical exercise and the question after a sermon is not, How was that Truth of God fitted to your case? but, How did you like him? as if that had anything to do with it! When you hear music, do you ask, How did you like the trumpet? No, it is the musicnot the instrumentthat your mind thinks about! Yet many persons always consider the minister rather than his message. Many contrast one preacher with another when they should contrast themselves with the Divine Law. Thus hearing the Gospel is degraded into a pastime and judged to be little better than a theatrical entertainment.

Such things must not be! Preachers must preach as for eternity and look for fruitand hearers must carry out what they hear, or otherwise the sacred ordinance of preaching will cease to be the channel of blessing and will rather be an insult to God and a mockery to the souls of men! I shall, not, at great length, but I hope with much earnestness, speak of two classes of hearersthe unblessed class, and the second, the class who according to the text, are blessed in their deed.

I. First, THE UNBLESSED CLASS. They are hearers, but they are described as hearers who are not doers. They hearsome of them pretty regularly, others of them only now and then just to while away an hour and they hear with considerable attention because they appreciate good speaking. They are interested in doctrine, perhaps, having a little knowledge of the Christian system, and they like to discuss a point or two. Moreover, they are anxious to be able to say that they heard Such-andSuch preach, of whom his fame has gone abroad. But as to doing what they hear, that has not entered their minds.

They have heard a sermon on repentance, but they have not repented. They have heard the Gospel cry, Believe! but they have not believed. They know that he who believes purges himself from his old sins, yet they have had no purging, but abide as they were. Now, if I address such, let me say to themit is clear that you are and must be unblessed. Hearing of a feast will not fill you! Hearing of a brook will not quench your thirst! The information that there is gold in the Bank of England will not enrich youyou need cash in your own pocket. The knowledge that there is a shelter from the storm will not save the ship from the storm. The information that there is a cure for a disease will not make the sick man whole. No, gifts must be grasped, blessings must be appropriated and made use of if they are to be of any value to us. O Sirs, you know what you should do but you have not done it! You have been half-inclined to attend to eternal things, but you have let them go and so you are still among those unblessed hearers who hear in vain!

Next, these hearers are described as deceiving themselves. Deceiving yourselves, says James. What did they deceive themselves about? Why, probably they thought they were considerably better for being hearers much to be commended and sure to get a blessing! They would not have been happy if they had not heard the Word of God on Sunday and they look with disgust upon their neighbors who make nothing of the Sabbath. They, themselves, are very superior people because they are regular Church-goers or Chapel-goers. They have a sitting, a hymnbook and a Bibleis not that a good deal? If they stayed away from a place of worship for a month they would be very uneasy. But though they do not believe that going to a place of worship will save them, yet it quiets their conscience and they feel themselves more at ease.

I should like to feed you for a month on your theory. I would rattle the plates in your ears and see whether you would be fed. I would not accommodate you with a bed at night. Why should I? I would preach you a discourse upon the benefit of sleep. Nor need I even give you a room to occupyI would read you an eloquent dissertation upon domestic architecture and show you what a house should be! You would very soon quit my door and call me inhospitable if I gave you music instead of meat! And yet you deceive yourselves with the notion that merely hearing about Jesus and His great salvation has made you better men!

Or, perhaps, the deceit runs in another lineyou foster the idea that the stern Truths of God which you hear do not apply to you. Sinners? Yes, certainlythe preacher addresses sinners and they may get good out of itbut you are not a sinner, at least not in any special sense so as to need looking after. Repentance? Most people ought to repent, but you do not see any reason why you should repent! Looking to Christ for salvation? Excellent doctrine, you say, excellent doctrine! But, somehow, you do not look to Him for salvation. Here is the Scriptural verdict upon this opinion of yoursDeceiving yourselves. The Gospel does not deceive you! It tells you, You must be born again, you must believe in Jesus Christ or be lost. The preacher does not deceive you! He never said half a word to support the notion that coming to this place would be of any service to you unless you would yield your hearts to Christ! No, he has learned to speak plain English about such matters. You deceive yourselves if, being hearers and not doers, you derive comfort from that which you hear!

And then, again, according to our text, these people are superficial hearers. They are said to be as a man who sees his natural face in a glass. Now, even a casual hearer will often find the preaching of the Gospel to be like looking in a glass and seeing himself. When a glass was first exhibited to some fresh discovered Negro tribe, the chieftain, as he sees himself, is perfectly astonished. He looks and looks again and cannot make it out. So is it in the preaching of the Word of Godthe man says, Why, those are

my words! That is my way of feeling. I have often known hearers exclaim, Why, that is the very expression I used as I was coming along. They feel like she of old who said, Come, see a Man which told me all things that I ever did.

Such a person reads his Bible and he says, Come, see a Book which tells me all things that I ever did. Is not this Gods Book? The fact is that the Word of God is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. As you have seen hanging up in the butchers shop the carcasses of animals cut right down the center, so the Word of God is quick and powerful, piercing to the dividing of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow. It opens up a man to himself and makes him see himself. He is quite astonished and cannot make it out! I have no doubt many of you here who are unconverted have felt this under a searching sermon.

When you have been reading the Scriptures you have been perfectly astonished at the way in which you have been revealed to yourselvesbut it has been superficial work. If a man looks at himself in a glass and then puts down the mirror and goes his way, he has made but very poor use of it, for it was intended to lead him to remove spots and improve his personal appearance by washing. Looking in the glass and noticing a black mark on your forehead is mere childs play if you do not wash the spot away! To see yourself as God would have you see yourself in the glass of Scripture is something, but you must afterwards go to Christ for washing or your looking is very superficial work. God grant that if you are made to feel the revealing power of the Word of God you may at once come to the practical point and, wash and be clean.

The text accuses these persons of being hasty hearershe beholds himself and goes his way. They hear a sermon and they are off! They never give the Word time to operatethey are back to business, back to talk and idle chit-chat the moment the service ends. Enquirers Meetings are often eminently useful because they give people a little opportunity to think over what they have heardwhile much of hearing is not followed up with thought and so it is ineffectual. We get much more out of meditation than out of hearing. Like the cattle, we must chew the cud if we would get nutriment from spiritual food, but few do this.

It is a great mercy for us, considering the quantity of nonsense there is in the world, that we have two ears so that we can let idle words go in one ear and out the other! But it is a great pity that we should use those two ears in such a way in reference to the Word of God. Let it have a home, dear Friend! Do not let the Gospel come in one ear and out the other! How are you to prevent it? Why let it come in both ears! Let it have two roads right down to the soul and shut your ears when the Truth has thoroughly entered in and compel it to abide in the chamber of your soul. How much of blessing would come to men if they carried the Word of God home with them! How much a blessing they would receive if they took the text to pieces, weighed it, considered it and prayed for a personal application of it. Then they would become spiritually wise by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. But, alas, they are hasty hearersthey look in the glass and go their way.

One other thing is said about them, namely, that they are very forgetful hearersthey forget what manner of men they are. They have heard the discourse and that is the end of it. You know the story of Donalds coming home a little sooner from church than usual and his wife enquiring, What? Donald! Is the sermon all done? He replied, No, no, it is all said, but it has not begun to be done yet.

But while it has not begun to be done, it often happens that the sermon has ended with many hearers. They have listened to it, but it has ran through them like water through a sieve and they will remember no more of it till the Judgment Day. There is no sin in having a bad memory, but there is great sin in refusing at once to obey the Gospel. If you cannot remember the text, or even remember the subject tomorrow morning, I shall not blame you. But the remembrance of the spirit of the whole thing, the drinking in and absorption into yourself of the Truth of Godthat is the main matter and the carrying of the Truth into practice is the essence of the business.

That traveling dealer did well who, while listening to Mr. William Dawson, when he was speaking about dishonesty, stood up in the midst of the congregation and broke a certain yard measure with which he had been in the habit of cheating his customers. That woman did well who said that she forgot what the preacher talked about, but she remembered to burn her bushel when she got home, for that, too, had been short in measure! Never mind about remembering the sermon if you remember at once to practice it! You may forget the words in which the Truth of God was couched if you will but let it purify your life!

It reminds me of the gracious woman who used to earn her living by washing wool. When her minister called upon her and asked her about his sermon and she confessed that she had forgotten the text, he said, What good could it have done you? She took him into her back place where she was carrying on her trade. She put the wool into a sieve and then pumped on it. There, Sir, she said, your sermon is like that water. It runs through my mind, Sir, just as the water runs through the sieve. But, then the water washes the wool, Sir, and so the good Word of God washes my soul. David, in the 103rd Psalm speaks of those who remember the Lords commandments to do themand that is the best of memory! Mind that you have it.

Thus I have described certain hearers and I fear we have many such in all congregationsadmiring hearers, affectionate hearers, attached hearersbut all the while unblessed hearers because they are not doers of the work. We have wondered how it was that they never confessed themselves to be followers of Christ, but we suspect that they have never made such a confession because it would not be true. And yet they are very good, very kindhelpful to a good cause and their lives are very upright and commendablebut we grieve that they are not decided Christians. One thing they lackthey have no faith in Christ. It does surprise me how some of you can be so favorable to everything that has to do with Divine things and yet have no personal share in the good treasure.

What would you say of a cook who prepared dinners for other people and yet died of starvation? Foolish cook, you say. Foolish hearer, say I! Are you going to be like Solomons friends, the Tyrians, who helped to build the temple and yet went on worshipping their idols? Sirs, are you going to look on at the Table of Mercy, admire it and yet refuse its provisions? Does it give you a thrill of pleasure to see so many taken from the highways and the hedges and brought in and will you stand outside and never partake yourself? I always pity the poor little boys on a cold winter night who stand outside a steaming cook shop window and look in and see others feasting, but have none themselves. I cannot understand you! All things are ready and you are bid and persuaded to comeand yet you are content to perish with hunger! I pray you think of yourselves and I ask the Spirit of God to make you doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

II. But, now, a few minutes for those who are BLESSED HEARERS those who get the blessing. Who are they? They are described in the 25th verseBut whoever looks into the perfect Law of liberty, and continues therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. Now, notice that this hearer who is blessed is, first of all, an earnest, eager, humble hearer. Note the expression. He does not look upon the Law of liberty and go his way, but he looks into it. It is the same word which is used in the passage, which things the angels desire to look into, and the Greek seems to imply a sort of stooping down to look intently into a thing.

Thus is it with the hearer who obtains the blessinghe hears of the Gospel and he says, I will look into this. There is a something here worth attention. He stoops and becomes a little child that he may learn! He searches as men do who are looking after diamonds or gold. I will look into it, he says. My mother used to tell me that there was something charming in it and my father died triumphantly through the influence of itI will investigate it. It shall not be for lack of examination that I let it slip. Such an individual hears intently and earnestly, laying his soul open to the influences of the Truth of God, desiring to feel its holy power and to practice its Divine commands. That is the right kind of heareran earnest listener whose senses are all awakened to receive and retain all that can be learned.

It is implied, too, that he is a thoughtful, studious, searching hearerhe looks into the perfect Law. I call you back to the figure. As a man will put an insect under a glass and inspect it again and again through the microscopelooking at the wings; at each joint of the back and at every part of the creature under his eyeso a hearer who desires a blessing looks closely into the Word of God. He is sacredly curious! He enquires. He pries. He asks all those who should know. He likes to get with old Christians to hear of their experiences. He loves to compare spiritual things with spiritualto dissect a text and see how it stands in relation to anotherand to its own parts, for he is in earnest when he hears the Word.

Alas, dear Friends, as I have said before, many hearers are too superficial! They listen to what is said and that is the end of itthey never search for the marrow of the bones. The hearer who obtains a blessing, first gives his whole heart up to attention and afterwards keeps his heart saturated with the Truth by an earnest, diligent, searching study of it! And so, by the Spirits teaching, he discovers what is the mind of God to his soul. Then this hearer goes further. Looking so steadily

he discovers that the Gospel is a Law of libertyand, indeed, it is so! Blessed is the condition of those who are free from the Law of Moses and have come under Law to Christ who emancipates the soul from every form of bondage!

There is no joy like the joy of pardon! There is no release like release from the slavery of sin! There is no freedom like the liberty of holiness, the liberty to draw near to God! He who hears the Gospel aright soon discovers that there is that in it which will remove every fetter from his soul! He looks and looks, and at last loves that perfect Law of liberty which sets his heart at large to run in the way of Gods commands! Would God that all of you understood it and had a share in its benefits. This is the man who is

blessed while he hears!

But it is added that he continues therein. If you hear the Gospel and it does not bless you, hear it again. If you have read the Word of God and it has not saved you, read it again. It is able to save your soul! Have you been searching through one gracious, earnest Book and did it not seem to fit your case? Try another. Oh, if men would search for salvation as they search after hidden treasure it would not be long before they found it! I remember, when I was seeking Christ, how I read through Doddridges, Rise and Progress of Religion with an avidity such as I showed when as a boy I read some merry tale, for I devoured each page greedily.

When I had done with Doddridge, I read Baxters, Call to the Unconverted, which did me good, but yielded me no comfort. I read each page and drank in every word, though the book was exceedingly bitter to me. I needed Christ and if I could find Him and Eternal Life through Him, it did not matter to me how often my eyes grew weary with lack of sleep while reading! Oh, if you come to thatthat you must have Jesusyou shall have Him! If your soul is brought to feel that you will search Heaven and earth through, if necessary, but you will find the Savior, that Savior will soon appear to you! The hearer who gains salvation, looks into the perfect Law of liberty, and continues therein.

Lastly, it is added that this man is not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work and he shall be blessed in his deed. Is he bid to pray? He prays as best he can. Is he bid to repent? He asks God to enable him to repent. Is he bid to believe? He says, Lord, I believe: help my unbelief. He turns everything that he hears into practice. I wish that we had thousands of hearers of that sort. I remember reading of a certain person who heard of giving a 10th of our substance to God. Well, said he, that is right and I will do it. And he kept his promise. He heard that Daniel drew near to God three times a day in prayer. He said, That is right; I will do it. And he practiced a threefold approach to the Throne of Grace each day. He made it a rule every time he heard of something that was excellent, to practice it at once. Thus he formed holy habits and a noble character and became a blessed hearer of the Word.

Now, dear Friends, our text does not say that such a man is blessed for the deed, but it says that such a man is blessed in the deed. He who does what God bids him shall not be blessed for it, but he shall be blessed in it. The happy result will come to us in the act of obedience. May God grant you Grace, whenever the Gospel is preached, to stir yourself up with the energy which Gods Spirit infuses into you and say, I will do it. I will not dream about it, or talk about it, or question about it, or say I will do it and put it off, but now, at once, the act commanded shall be done. I finish with this practical suggestion. The remaining portion of life is short with some of you who hear me this day. Gray hairs are upon you here and there and, according to the course of nature, you must soon stand before your Judge.

Would it not be well that you thought about another world and considered how you shall face your Lord at the Last Great Day? The Gospel says, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, which, in other words, means, Trust Him. Repent. Confess your sin, forsake it and look to Christ for cleansing. That is the way of salvationHe that believes and is baptized shall be saved. You know all about the way of life. I am telling you a tale which you have heard a thousand times, but the question is, when is it going to be done? Soon, Sir, you say.

But were you not here when this Tabernacle was opened? Yes, you say, I think I was. You said, soon, then, and you say, soon now! You will say, soon, I expect, until that word, soon, will be met with the heavy sentenceToo late! Too late! You cannot enter now. Take heed that this is not your case before this day has ended! Some men die very suddenly. A sister came to me this morning and said, My father is dead. He was well in the morning He came home from the shop, seemed a little ill and died all of a sudden. Seeing that life is so precarious, would it not be best that you should immediately seek the Lord while He may be found and call upon Him while He is near?

I would suggest that you do not begin gossiping and talking on the way home, today, but that you get alone quietly for a little while. Do you reply that you have no place where you can be alonethis is not trueyou can find some place or other. I remember a sailor who used to find his prayer closet at the mastheadnobody came up there to disturb him. I knew a carpenter who used to get down in a sawpit to pray. There are many such places. The streets of London, when crowded, are about as lonely as anywhere and Cheapside may be as good as the mountain side if your heart desires real solitude.

Some of you, I fear, never think at all. As far as thinking goes, if your brains were taken out, many of you would get on almost as well without them. The brains of some people are only useful as a sort of salt to keep them from rotting by death. Little thinking is done by the great mass of the people except the thought, What shall we eat and what shall we drink? Do, I pray you, think a little! Pause and consider what God, the Lord, sets before you. Be a doer of the work. Do what God bids you. As He bids you repent, repent. As He bids you believe, believe! As He bids you be baptized, be baptized. As He bids you pray, pray. As He bids you accept His Grace, God helping you, do it. Oh, that it might be done at once and to the Lord shall be praise world without end! Amen.

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Sermon #1848 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE LOOKING GLASS

NO. 1848

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, JULY 5, 1885, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

For if anyone is a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholds himself, and goes his way, and   
straightway forgets what manner   
of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect Law of liberty, and continues in it, he being   
not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work,   
this man shall be blessed in his deed.   
James 1:23-25.

LAST Lords Day I tried to show the right way of hearing the Word of God. We spoke of how to behave before the sermon, at the sermon and after the sermon. May God grant that the word which I then spoke may continue in your minds and bring forth good fruit! At this time I shall draw a distinction between the true and blessed hearer of the Word and the person who misses the blessing because he hears to forget. You will forgive my coming back to this subject when I confess that I groan in my own heart with unutterable longings to be a channel of blessing to all who hear or read my discourses. To what purpose do I stand here so often and pour out my soul before you, if you are not the better for it? I am an unhappy sower if all the handfuls of seed which I scatter must fall upon unbroken soil, to be devoured of birds and never take root. Blessed be God, it is not altogether so! We, by His Grace, have reaped many harvests in this place. But still, our hearts ache for larger results!

There remain among us, still, those who are impervious to the Truth of God, in whom the Divine Word has taken no lodgingwill these never be saved? They still continue to listen and to listen with kindly respect, but they are not yet doers of the Word. Our lament is that of Paul, They have not all obeyed the Gospel. They have heard it and, in a measure, appreciated it, but they have not obeyed it. It has not come to them with power, compelling them to yield to its commands. It will be a sad thing if, when I give in my account, it shall be with grief and not with joyfor this will be as unprofitable for you as it will be grievous for me. I know that I shall meet my hearers at the Judgment Day and I know, also, that an account will be demanded of memuch more searching than any through which my conscience can put me even when it is most awake! How will you stand in that account? It will be read in the seven-fold light of that Great Day for which all other days were made! And what will the record be?

I earnestly desire to present you all as a chaste virgin unto Christ, but I fear it will not be so. Concerning some of you, I fear that I shall have run in vain and labored in vain. I am bowed with grief at such a prospect! O my Hearers, do not kill me by destroying your own souls! Oh, that you may now turn to our Lord Jesus and, in Him, find acceptance with the Lord in that day! The Lord grant it for His infinite mercys sake!

Two things are very obvious in the textthe first is the hearer of the Word who does not profit by it and is represented as looking into a glass. And then, secondly, we see the man who does profit by the Word, for he is represented as looking into the perfect Law. May the Holy Spirit help us to see these clearly!

I. First, then, here is LOOKING INTO A GLASS. Looking into a glass is a trivial business. In all areas men, not to say, women, have been fond of seeing themselves. In the earlier days they had no reflecting glasses as we now have, but they used mirrors made of brass and different metals, highly polished. These mirrors yielded a sufficiently clear image of the beholder. Albeit, the children of Israel came out of Egypt in a great hurry, yet we find that the women carried their looking glasses with them into the wilderness. (See Exodus 38:8). It was according to their womanly naturewhatever else they forgot, they must have the indispensable looking glass for the purpose of their toilet. It is to their praise, however, that in the desert their devotion overcame their vanity, for when the bronze laver was to be made in which the priests should wash, it was made of the looking glasses of the serving-women who were accustomed to meet at the door of the tabernacle.

Still, the use of the mirror must be ranked among the trifles of lifeI see that you are half-smiling at the playfulness which glitters around a glass. Is not this a hint at the light in which many regard the hearing of the Gospel? They crowd to hear a preacher if he has some sort of name not that they desire to get a blessing, but merely that they may say that they have heard himor that they may gratify their curiosity by seeing what he is like. Truly the burden of our lives is a pastime to some of you! Sirs, this reminds me of the fable of the frogs. When the boys stoned them, the poor creatures said, It may be sport to you, but it is death to us! You may hear me, this day, with the most idle curiosity and judge my message with the coldest criticism, but if you do not receive the blessings of the Gospel, it strikes a chill at my heart! Your unspiritual hearing is sport to you, but it is death to me! A deadly shadow like a Hell-mist hovers over my Spirit while I suppose it possible that I am, with all my earnestness, ministering to your condemnation!

Can it be that I am laboriously doing nothing? Worse than that, are my instructions, persuasions and entreaties to be so treated as to increase your responsibility and bury you under a heavier load of sin? As Gods servant, I tremble at so dreadful a prospect! We live if you live unto God but if you do not turn to God, we wish that we had never been born! It were better for us to plow the thankless sea than to utter Truth which will be a savor of death to you. O Sirs, to hear the Gospel will one day appear to be the most solemn of exercises! Indeed, it is not the trivial matter that many make of it! It is infinitely more than gazing into a mirror. How long will it be before you know this?

Upon my first head of looking into a glass, let me say that to every hearer, the true Word of God is as a mirror. Certain preachers dream that it is their business to paint pretty pictures, but it is not so. We are not to design and sketch, but simply to give the reflection of the Truth of God. We are to hold up the mirror to nature, in a moral and spiritual sense, and let men see themselves. We have not even to make the mirror, but only to hold it up! The thoughts of Godnot our own thoughtsare to be set before our hearers mindsthese allow a man to discover himself. The Word of the Lord is a revealer of secretsit shows a man his life, his thoughts, his heart, his inmost self.

A large proportion of hearers only look upon the surface of the Gospel and to their minds, the surface, alone, is operative. Yet, even that surface is sufficiently effectual to reflect the natural face which looks upon it and this may be of lasting service if rightly followed up. Brethren, the chief blessing cannot come to us by surface workhe that would be enriched by the Gospel must dig for itand must dig deep. He must sink shafts into its fathomless mines, that he may bring up the much fine gold. Let not our thoughts glide over the surface of the Word like swift birds that touch the crests of the waves, but let us plunge into the depths of Scripture like pearl-fishers who seek for hidden treasures.

The Scripture gives a truthful reflection of mans natureit lets the man see himself, not as others see him, for others make mistakes, nor as he would see himself, for he is very apt to be partial to his own soulbut the Scripture makes him see himself as God sees him. Look at the Scriptural portrait of a sinner. That is you, O man! Look at the depraved heart, the rebellious will, the darkened understandingthat heart, will and understanding are yours, O my Brother! What a sight it is which meets the sinners eyes when he is hearing the faithful Word! I thought, he says, as he looks into the Word, that I was much more comely than this. I had never dreamed of these freckles and spots! I was not aware that I suffered from such a twist of features, such an exaggeration of one and such a deficiency in another.

The Bible does not flatter human nature, neither does the true preacher attempt so base a workbut in plain and downright honesty of truth the witness is given, They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one. When conscience is awakened and the man sees himself as the Revelation of God declares him to be, he can hardly think that this can be the same self with which he was upon such excellent terms! If God blesses the sight, he is led to abhor himself and to seek for cleansing and renewal! But if not, the man has at least seen himself and has had the opportunity of knowing his true state.

The reflection of self in the Word is very like life. You have, perhaps, seen a dog so astonished at his image in the glass that he has barked fiercely at himself. A parrot will mistake its reflection for a rival. Well may the creature wonder, since every one of its movements is so accurately copiedit thinks itself to be mocked. Under a true preacher, men are often so thoroughly unearthed and laid bare that even the details of their lives are reported. Not only is the portrait drawn to the life, but it is an actually living portrait which is given in the mirror of the Word. There is little need to point the finger and say, You are the man, for the hearer perceives on his own that he is spoken of. As the image in the glass moves and alters its countenance, and changes its appearance, so does the Word of the Lord set forth man in his many phases, moods and conditions.

The Scripture of Truth knows all about him and it tells him what it knows. Many a time the hearer has said, Somebody has told the preacher. Yes, somebody has told himthat which you do in your bedchamber the Lord has revealed unto His servant. The Holy Spirit aides our hands wittingly, so that we lay them upon the right heads. I have sometimes said to you that people frequently wish that the preacher knew their experience in order that he could preach to it. But it is not necessary to tell Gods sent servant anything about it, for he will speak to you with all the more power because he does not know! You may go in to hear the sermonand be wearing a disguisebut even a blind Prophet will find you out and say, Come in, you wife of Jeroboam, why do you feign yourself to be another woman? I have heavy tidings from the Lord for you. The Chaldean soothsayers said to King Nebuchadnezzar, Tell your servants the dream and we will show the interpretationbut Daniel knew the dream and the interpretation, also, and that marked him out as being sent of God! When the preachers description of the mans heart is true to life and yet no human mouth has whispered it into his ears, then the man cries, This is the finger of God! A great part of the self-evidencing power of the Gospel lies in the way in which it discovers to our minds that which, before, lay within our bosoms, hidden, even, from ourselves!

The glass of the Word is not like our ordinary looking glass, which merely shows us our external features, but, according to the Greek of our text, the man sees in it the face of his birth, that is, the face of his nature. He that reads and hears the Word may see not only his actions, there, but his motives, his desires, his inward condition. As the butcher cuts down the carcass and reveals all the innards, which never could have been seen but for his knife, so is the Word of God quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The secrets of the man are opened up to himself and he is astonished to see his inward depravity, his carnal tendencies and his corrupt inclinations. As a man sees his outward self in the looking glass, so may he see his inward self in the Word of God. But if this is all, to what purpose is it?

Secondly, many a hearer does see himself in the mirror of the Word. We are told so twice in the textHe is like a man beholding his natural face in a glass, for he beholds himself. He really does see himself, for he cannot help doing so. He is not such a careless hearer as to be utterly blind to the Revelation of Godhe beholdshe beholds himself. He beholds the face of his birth. He is thoughtful during the discourse. He spies out the application of the Truth of God to himself and marks his own spots and blemishes.

Oftentimes he sees himself so plainly that he grows astonished at what he sees. He cries, like the woman of SamariaCome, see a Man that told me all things that ever I did. Barbarous people, when they first of all see looking glasses, are quite taken aback. How can these things be? is their first question. Now, have not you, dear Hearers, who are unconverted, been often staggered at the home-thrusts of the Word? You have seen yourselves so unmistakably that you have been unable to escape from the truth, but have been filled with wonder at it. But what is the use of this if it goes no farther?

Such observers have been known to praise the excellence of the mirror and speak well of its faithfulness. You may hear them say, The man is a true servant of God and preaches in all honesty and courage. So far so good. But, alas, there are many preachers who will win no such praise! As I have seen glasses which have elongated my face or broadened itso that it was by no means my true imageso have I known ministers whose description of human nature is flattering and false. But after all, if the face is not to be washed, to what purpose is it that the mirror faithfully shows the smuts and stains which are upon it? O my Hearers, I desire to be always faithful to you, but how will my faithfulness benefit you if you are not faithful to yourselves?! Why should I show you your blots if you do not seek the Lord Jesus to have them removed?

Many of our hearers go somewhat further, for they are driven to make solemn resolutions after looking at themselves. Yes, they will break off their sins by righteousness; they will repent; they will believe on the Lord Jesusand yet their firm resolves are blown away like smoke and come to nothing! The sight of their natural face leads to a natural resolve but the strength of nature suffices not to carry the resolution into practice. O Sirs, you must be born again! And, for lack of that new birth, your goodness is as a morning cloud and as the early dew! Both of these soon vanish and so do your fine feelings and resolutions! What a multitude of dead resolutionss fall in this House of Prayer! The blossoms upon our fruit trees give great promise of a heavy crop of fruit, but, alas, the most of them do not knit, but drop from the tree and powder the ground as with snow! So the flowers of promise are upon our Hearers, but they come not to real soulfruit. O Spirit of God, make it otherwise with my congregation! Save them from their own inconstancy! Let them not resolve and re-resolve and yet die in their sins!

But what follows? Observe, He beholds himself, and goes his way. Many hearers go away from what they have seen in the Word. There are two, ands, in the text, following quickly one after the other, but they have a force which I cannot very well convey to you. They show that the man looks at himself hurriedly and, as it were, in passing, and so goes his way, straightway forgetting what manner of man he was, because his glance was hasty, casual and soon over. He heard the Word and that was the end of itno echoes lingered in his soul. The sermon was over when it was over. Many a man, having seen himself in the glass of the Word, has no time for any further thought about himself. Tomorrow morning he will be over head and ears in businessthe shutters will be down from his shop windows, but they will be put up to the windows of his soul. His office needs him and, therefore, his prayer closet cannot have him! His ledger falls like an avalanche over his Bible. The man has no time to seek the true richespassing trifles monopolize his mind! Sirs, you call earthly things, business, but the salvation or the damnation of your souls is such a biding matter that any stray hour will suffice for it. Is it not so? Do you not propose to put off the Lord till your last gasp? The Lord deliver you from this madness! Oh, that you would no more allow your earthly business to crush your souls!

Others have no particular business to engross them, but, having seen themselves in the glass of the Word with some degree of interest, they go their way to their amusements. Their principal difficulty is how to kill time and spin the weary hours away. What will become of some of you who are going down to Perdition with all your time to spare? You will not be able to say that you went your way to your farm, or to your merchandise, for you have neither farm nor merchandise and do not know what to do with your time. And yet, for all that, you cannot spare an hour to think upon your souls and upon your God. Oh, that it were not so! May infinite mercy make men wiser than to go their way while their souls are going down to Hell!

Alas, there are some who go their way to sin. It is not mere pleasure, or business, but it is an overt act of transgression to which they go! It is an awful thing, to my mind, that men go from hearing the Word of God to speaking the word of the devilthey go from Gods House to the house of sin! They go straight away from the holy to the profane, from the pure to the foul. They go from the Mercy Seat to the seat of the scorner. I do not wonder that no good comes of such hearing as this! When a man sees his face in the glass and then goes his way to defile that face more and more, of what use is the glass to him? If you return to sin, to procrastinate, to live in willful neglect of God and eternity, you would derive no benefit from such hearing, though all the Apostles should, in turn, preach to you, or even their Master, Himself!

This going is always followed by forgetting all they have seen. This forgetfulness is, indeed, very mischievous. How different is this from that word of David, I will never forget Your precepts! The wicked forget God, but the favored of the Lord remember His commandments to do them. Forget the words of man, but be zealous to remember the Word of the Lord, for forgetfulness leads to inaction. Those who forget, forget to do! They follow not the Lords command in the Book of NumbersRemember to do all My commandments. In Purchas Pilgrim, we read of certain Spaniards of the olden time who were often pinched with hunger and yet immense shoals of fish passed along their shores. They saw the fish, but were too idle to take them! Are there not many Hearers of that kind? The Truth of God shines by them unappropriated, unused, unpracticedand all because they take no earnest heed to make it their own by personal obedience to it. They say, I go, Sir, but they forget to go. They see the pearl of great price, but forget to buy it. They are mere players with the Lords message and never come to honest dealing with it.

Forgetfulness of the Word leads to self-satisfaction. Looking in the glass, the man felt a little startled that he was such an ugly fellow, but he went his way, mingled with the crowd and forgot what manner of man he was and, therefore, he felt quite easy again. The sweep thinks he is as clean as his neighbors, for he has forgotten the soot upon his face. By the force of sheer ignorance a man can climb to a desperately false assurance of his own excellence. He can cry, Peace, peace, when there is no peace, till, at last, a blast of trumpets will not alarm him! What can be more fatal than this? One may as well not know, as only learn and straightway forget!

This forgetfulness leads to a growing carelessness. A man who has once looked in the glass and afterwards has not washed, is very apt to go and look in the glass, again, and continue in his filthiness. He who thinks his conscience has cried, wolf, in mere sport, will think the same till he takes no heed when it cries in earnest. When men get to playing with the Word of God, they are near to destruction. Beware of hearing the Gospel as a pastimeit is the next stage to eternal ruin! When that which God designs to be to our salvation becomes a pastime to us, then, in all likelihood, that it will save us is gone. He who sports with Heaven and Hell will soon lose all hope of the oneand be hurried down to the other.

Yes, but let me remark that this forgetfulness of the Word leads to increased sin, for we do not hear the Word of God without some result coming of it. As I am responsible for preaching, so are you for hearing. O unconverted Hearers, you to whom the Gospel has come as a revealer of yourselves, but not as a renewer of your hearts, you have grown harder in sin and you have sinned against more Light and against more knowledgeand thus your sin grows blacker!

Thus have I sketched the hearer of the Word who is not a doer of it. I do not wish, personally, to apply this to anyone here, but I beg that every person who does not know the Lord will make a personal application of it to his own conscience and I pray God, the Holy Spirit, Himself, would now come and press these Truths upon each conscience. O, my dear Friends, will you not invite His sacred operations? You have seen your faces in the mirror of the Worddo you not desire to have them cleansed and beautified? You know your impuritydo you not wish to be cleansed by the blood of Jesus from all sin? Will you go your ways as if there were no Law to accuse you, no Gospel to invite you, no Christ to forgive you? Will you live and die as if there were no Heaven, no Hell, no eternity, no God? May the Lord deliver you from being triflers with the Word and forgetters of it, lest, at the end, your religion should turn out to be vain and you should find yourselves accursed by that which might have been a blessing to you!

II. May I have your further attention while I speak upon the true and blessed hearer? He does not look into the glass, but he is represented as LOOKING INTO THE LAWWho looks into the perfect Law of liberty, and continues in it, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

The picture I have in my minds eye at this moment is that of the cherubim upon the Mercy Seatthese are models for us. Their standing is upon the golden Mercy Seat and our standing is the Propitiation of our Lordthere is the resting place of our feet and, like the cherubs, we are joined there and, therefore, continue therein. They stand with their eyes looking downward upon the Mercy Seat, as if they desired to look into the perfect Law of God which was treasured within the ark. Even so do we look through the Atonement of our Lord Jesus, which is, to us, as pure gold like unto transparent glass, and we behold the Law, as a perfect Law of liberty, in the Person of our Mediator. Like the cherubim, we are in happy company and, like they, we look towards each other by mutual love. Our common standing is the Atonement; our common study is the Law in the Person of Christ and our common posture is that of angels with outstretched wings prepared to fly at the Masters bidding. Oh, that we might, in this sense, be as the cherubim and like they, abide in the secret place of the Most High, where the light is the Light of God and the Glory is the Divine Presence! We are not to look casually at the Word as though it were a mere looking glass, but we are to gaze earnestly upon it as our law under the New Covenant. As the Apostles stooped down and looked into the sepulcher, so are we to search diligently into the blessed Law of the Lord and delight in it after the inner man.

Note well that the Law of God is worth looking into. I understand by the, Law, here, not merely the Law of the Ten Commandments, but the Law as it is condensed, fulfilled and exhibited in Christ Jesus. The Gospel Law, the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, that Gospel which we are called upon to obey, is worthy of deep meditation! I mean that holy Law which the Lord has promised to put into our inward parts and write upon our heartsthe Law of faith and not of self-righteousnesseven the command of Grace which bids us believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and obey His commands. A law is always worth considering, for we may break the law unwittingly, and involve ourselves in penalties which we might have avoided. An unknown law is a pitfall into which a man may fall without knowing it. It is the duty of all loyal subjects to learn the law, that they may obey it.

Better still, it is a perfect Law. All human laws are imperfect, but the Law of the Lord is perfect. The Law in the hand of Christ is perfect in itself, having no excess and no deficiency. And it is a Law which makes those perfect who obey it. It is a Law which is set forth in the Person of the perfect Christ and worked in us by the perfect Spirit. It is a Law which touches our whole nature and works it unto perfect beauty. Who would not wish to look into a Law which, like its Author, is love and purity itself?

It is called the perfect Law of liberty. Now, the Law under the Old Covenant genders to bondage, but the Law in the hand of Christ is liberty. We never walk in liberty till we walk in the Lords commands! He that wears the yoke of Christ is the Lords free man. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, I do trust our eyes will be turned to the perfect Law of liberty, for freedom is a jewel and none have it but those who are conformed to the mind and will of our God!

The true hearer looks into this perfect Law of liberty with all his soul, heart and understanding till he knows it and feels the force of it in his own character. He is the prince of hearers, who delights to know what Gods will is and finds his joy in acting out the same. He sees the Law in its height of purity, breadth of comprehensiveness and depth of spirituality. And the more he sees, the more he admires. He cannot have too much of it, but meditates on it both day and night and, therefore, he cries, Oh, how I love Your Law! It is my meditation all the day. His most frequent prayer is that he may be conformed unto that perfect Law in all respects. And in proportion as his prayer is heard, he enters into perfect rest. I pause and ask you whether you belong to the blessed company who look into the crystal glass of the Law. If you can answer that you are such, then please follow me for a minute or two.

As I stand here, I look into the mirror of the Word and see myself. But this is not enough for meI will look till I see more. I continue looking into the mystic glass until, to my great surprise, I see another form appearing. Evidently some mysterious Person is reflected in this mirror. How beautiful and majestic is the Strangers visage! I look till the image of my countenance melts into the reflection of His countenance and He, alone, is seen. I only appear in Him. Is He not lovely? Indeed, He is the Chief among ten thousand! Now I see the meaning of that word, We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

*This is the thankful glass,   
That mends the lookers eyes;   
This is the well   
That washes what it shows.*

Surely this is the mirror that Mercy, in The Pilgrims Progress, longed for! Does not Master Bunyan say of it, Now the glass was one of a thousand. It would present a man one way, with his own features exactly, but turning it another way, it would show one the very face and similitude of the Prince of Pilgrims, Himself. Yes, I have talked with them that can tell and they have said that they have seen the very crown of thorns upon His head by looking in that glass. They have therein also seen the holes in His hands, in His feet and His side?

A man looks into the Law of liberty and he sees all perfection in Christhe looks and looks till, by a strange miracle of Grace, his own image dissolves into the image of Jesus! Surely this is a thing worth looking into and infinitely superior to any looking into a glass merely to see yourselves! We are compelled to say, Come, see a Word which tells me all things that I ever did: did not this come from God? No, more! We said this at first, but now we see Jesus and we cry, Come, see a Man that told me all things that I ever did: is not this the Christ?

He that looks into the perfect Law of liberty will not only see Christ, but he will begin to see the Eternal Spirit of God bearing witness with that Law of liberty and operating by that witness upon his own soul. Oh, says he, this is a blessed Law, indeed, now, for I have it written upon the prepared tablets of my heart! What a sight is that which lets us see the Holy Spirit working in us to will and to do of His own good pleasureand making us conformable to the Law of His own declaring!

Yes, and he that looks into that perfect Law will, by-and-by, see God the Fatherfor the pure in heart shall see God. Those who love and live the Law of God become like unto Godthey are imitators of God as dear children. They that are familiar with Gods will, love it and study it, gradually receive the likeness of God their Father till they are called the children of God! Thus the sacred Trinity are seen and known by those who do the will of the Father in Heaven. Is not this a joy, to have our fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ? Oh, to prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God!

Dear Friends, I cannot speak to you as I should like to this morning my theme masters me. I cannot make you see all that I see, myself, but you must look into it for yourselves in the Light of God. Look, and look again, till what you see in the Word is also to be seen in yourself. Transformation of character will follow upon meditation upon the Truth of God, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit.

Note carefully that our text says, He continueswho looks into the perfect Law of liberty and continues. Our translators insert the word, therein, but it is not in the Greek text. And continuesthat is, he continues to meditate in the Law and he continues to own his allegiance to it. The Law of the Lord is always Law to him. He also continues to practice ithe does not begin and then turn aside, but he continues to make advances in holy living and gracious conformity to the Lords statutesand he continues by a final perseverance to follow on. This is the hearer that shall win the blessingnot you who make a profession one day and then disgrace it the next! Not you who are all hot for Christ today and lukewarm tomorrow. The man who obtains the blessing of the Lord is, by Gods Grace, made to continue in it! I have heard of a famous King of Poland who did brave deeds in his day and confessed that he owed his excellent character to a secret habit which he had formed. He was the son of a noble father and he carried with him a miniature portrait of his father and often looked upon it. Whenever he went to battle, he would look upon the picture of his father and nerve himself to valor, When he sat in the council chamber, he would secretly look upon the image of his father and behave himself right royally, for, he said, I will do nothing that can dishonor my fathers name.

Now, this is the grand thing for a Christian to do, to carry with him the will of God in his heart, and then in every action to consult that will. We ought to askWhat shall I do, as a child of God? What course shall I follow as a man of God, bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ? It is thought, by some, that you cannot always continue in the will of God they dream that you are to hear a sermon and then be very piousor go to a Prayer Meeting and then be very devout. But they think that this piety and devotion cannot remain with us all day. Brothers and Sisters, we must continue in the Law of the Lord or we have no true religion! Living godliness is for the shop, for the kitchen, for the parlor and for the streetit is a continuous struggle for holiness. Looking at the perfect will of God is for every day and all day! We are to believe for holiness; looking to the Lord to become like the Lord. I would gladly have my Saviors image painted on my eyeballs so that I could not see except I saw everything through Him! It is well to have Christs portrait hung up in every chamber of your soulI do not say of your housethat might lead to idolatry, but in every chamber of your mind and heart!

I once saw a room so covered with mirrors, that when I looked, I saw myself some 15 times, certainly, to my taste, 14 times too often. But oh, I would have my whole being to be such, that whenever Jesus comes into it, He may see Himself everywhereabove, below, to the right, to the left and on all sides! Oh, to have Him shining even into the innermost closet of our nature so as to have no dark part! Oh, to become new editions of the life of Christ! We would not only look into the mirror, but we would be our mirrors reflecting the beauties of the holy Lord Jesus! But remember, this must not be occasional, but continual, for the true heart continues looking into the perfect Law of liberty.

To concludeyou notice how it says, this man shall be blessed in his deed. Markthis man, this man. These demonstrative pronouns act like fingers. A man has gone up to the Temple to pray. What a fine gentleman he is! He wears a striking phylactery between his eyes and he boasts a broad blue hem on his garment. He is a very superior person! You can see that at a glance. He stands in a prominent place in the Temple and he most pompously cries, God, I thank You that I am not as other men are. Curious that the Bible does not make much account of him. But yonder is a poor weeping creature who does not dare to come into a prominent position, nor even to lift up his eyes towards Heaven. Every now and then he beats upon his breast as if very much depressed. At last he cries, God be merciful to me, a sinner!

Look! The Savior points out the publican and says, this manthis man went down to his house justified rather than the other. He lays His hand on him as one near to Him and says, this man. In my text there is a person who has seen himself in the glass and he has gone his way, but we need not mind about himhe is of no account. But here is a man who has been looking into the Law and has continued to look into itand the Holy Spirit has selected him from all others and marked him as, this man. This man is blessed! Perhaps he does not wear the best broadcloth. Perhaps he is arrayed in a fustian jacket, but he is selected and distinguished as, this man! Perhaps he has received no elaborate education you will not see him at the Athenaeum, or hear him discussing Evolution with the learned, yet he is this man. This man, says the text, is blessed. Where is this man? Where is this woman? Judge whether you are the persons thus called and chosenwhether you are abiding in love to that Law which has won your heart.

This man shall be blessed in his deed. Oh, says one, I do not see the blessedness of true religion! No, my Friend, you are not likely to see it, because you do not do it. This man is blessed in his deed. In keeping His commandments there is great reward. Much of the blessedness of godliness lies in the practice of godliness. Not in consideration of doctrine, but the blessing lies in obedience to precept. This man shall be blessed in his deed. In the very act of serving his Lord and Master, he shall be blessednot for it but in it. The doing of the obedient deed is the evidence that God has blessed the doer from before the foundation of the world! His practical godliness is the evidence of his election; his actual holiness is the evidence of his redemption; his keeping close to the will of God is the evidence of his adoption. Holiness is the witness that its possessor shall be blessed in the day when Christ shall glorify His people!

You who do not get a blessing by hearing the Gospel may now see why it is so. You glance into a looking glass and that is all. Much good may it do you! After having seen your pretty selves, you go your ways into the world to live as you lived before and, therefore, you get no blessing. If you had gone to the Divine Law, that heavenly mirror of the will and mind of the Most High, it had been better for you. If, instead of making the Word a mirror to look at, you had made it a window to look throughand you had seen God in Christ and perfect holiness in Himand had put your trust in Jesus, He would have given you a higher and better life, so that you would have become like Jesus! Then you would have been blessed in your deed!

Behold I set before you, this morning, as they did of old upon Ebal and Gerizim, blessing and cursethe curse for those who peek into the looking glass, but do no morethe blessing for those who attentively look into the perfect Law of liberty and continue to do so until they are transformed into the image of the Lord! Which shall it be? May God the Eternal Spirit decide that question by leading you, now, solemnly, seriously, earnestly, to close in with Christ and His perfect Law of liberty. And to Him be glory forever and ever! Amen and amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONMatthew 7:13-29.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK132, 641, 459.  
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CHARITY AND PURITY   
NO. 2313

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, JUNE 18, 1893. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
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Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. James 1:27.

THERE is a great deal said, a great deal written, a great deal of zeal on the one side and of anger on the other, expended upon the externals of religion. Some think that they should be very fine, not to say gaudy, very impressive, not to say imposing. They like what they call, bright services, though we might call them by another name. But the great question with many people is, What are to be the externals of religion? What dress is religion to wear? Shall it be robed in the plainness of Quakerdom, or shall it be adorned with all the brilliance of Romanism? Which shall it be?

Well, dear Friends, after all, we may spend much time over that question and find no satisfactory answer to it. But the Biblical Ritualism, the pure external worship, the true embodiment of the inward principles of religion is to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. Charity and purity are the two great garments of Christianity. Charity was once cried up by the Romanists to an extreme pointalmsgiving seeming to be, to manythe beginning and the end of piety. It was an almsgiving which had a great deal that was excellent about it and which I cannot regard, as some do, altogether with abhorrencean almsgiving which covered this land with houses of entertainment for the poor, so that they journeyed from one halting-place to anotherand were freely lodged and housed. And we had, at least, no poor law, or workhouse, with all (I was about to say) the horrors which accompany the present system.

But, unfortunately, charity was thought to be everything, and purity was too much neglected, so that even those houses which were originally built to be the abode of those who should help the poor and needy, and instruct the ignorant, became, to a sad degree, the haunts of luxury and vice! The monastery, which should have been a place of pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father, as it entertained the fatherless and the widows, was not famed for being unspotted by the worlds sins, but, on the contrary, it was famous or infamous for its foulness! I have no doubt that this was a great deal exaggerated, but, at any rate, the accusation did seem to lie, to a very sad extent, against it, that those who were supposed to be dedicated to God were not such consecrated men as they professed to be. Purity went down and charity went up.

Well, in these days, I sometimes fear lest we should by no means insist too much on purity, but should certainly insist too little upon charity! The visitation of the fatherless and widows in their affliction is not left optional. It is not to be the privilege of a few worldly men who give all their substance to orphanages. Every Christian is bound to wear his part of the external dress of religion, that is, charity! This charity is to be manifested especially to those who need it most, whose need cannot be a matter of imposture, but must be real. These are the fatherless and widows during the time of their destitution and afflictionwhen the orphans are not able to earn the bread that perishesand the mother has her children weeping around her and pining in poverty. Not only may this charity be shown, but it must be manifested if we would have pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father. The increase of charity, of careful and discreet consideration for the poor and needy, would bring a great blessing with it, and is what is greatly needed, even in these times, when, perhaps, we fancy that we are doing almost enough in this direction, although we certainly are not.

Yet charity without purity will be of no use. In vain should we give all our substance to the poor and give our bodies to be burned if we do not walk in the way of holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. If we do not come out from the world and keep ourselves from its polluting influence, we have not yet learned what pure and undefiled religion really is! We may be very orthodox in creed, or we may be very far advanced in our knowledge of religious matters. We may think ourselves to be Hebrews of the Hebrews, Pharisees of the Pharisees, and as touching the righteousness which is of the Law, blameless. But we are, in the sight of God, only as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal, unless, by Divine Grace, we have learned to keep ourselves unspotted from the world!

Without forgetting what I have said to you about charity, we will examine those words in our text which especially speak of purity and, in doing so, I notice, first, that they indicate separation. Look below their surface and they certainly indicate that. Secondly, they impress upon us spotlessnessto keep ourselves unspotted from the world. And, thirdly, they insist upon careful self-watching.

I. First, then, beloved Friends, if you look below the surface of the words here, you will see that THEY INDICATE SEPARATION.   
To keep ourselves unspotted from the world, implies that we are not a part of the world. We are in it, but evidently not of it. We are one thing and the world is another thingand we are so much apart from the world that even a spot from the pools of the world would defile us. We are to be quite outside the world even while we are in it. Those of you who were here on Monday night must have been greatly amused and also instructed by what was said by a young seller of religious tracts. He was a little fellowyou remember him! He was going along with his pack on his back and a big man accosted him in this way, Well, my little fellow, do you belong to the Militia? No, Sir, I do not, but I belong to the Kings Own. You little fool, said the man, why, there is not any king in this country, so you cannot belong to the Kings Own. The lad replied, I dont know that I am a fool any more for that, for, do you know, I belong to another country? What do you mean by saying that you belong to another country? You are not a foreigner. Well, I wont say that I am a foreigner, but I can say that I am a stranger in this land, and I belong, as I have already told you, to another country. And that I am not a fool is quite certain, for in the country to which I belong there is a King, and I am in His army. And if you would like to know how to enlist in it, I have a book in my pack which you can buy, and in which you can read all about my King and His army.

It was well put and it also expressed nothing more than the real truth. Here, in the midst of this world, you and I, if we are truly born again from above, are strangers and pilgrims. We have come into this land as gypsies might have comepitching our tent here and therebut having no abiding city anywhere. We are in this world as Abraham was in Canaan. We are not related to any of the Canaanites among whom we dwell. We are of another country, to wit, a heavenly oneand we are looking for a city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. There are some professing Christians who also try to be worldly, but a worldly Christian is an anomaly and a contradiction!   
No, beloved Friends, if we are truly the Lords, we are severed from the world. I will mention two or three of the many ways in which we are thus separated.   
The first is by Divine Election. The Lord Jesus Christ had a people given to Hima people whom He received of His Father, as He said Yours they were, and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your Word. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which You have given Me. These are they whom God chose in Christ Jesus from before the foundation of the world, having predestinated them, according to the good pleasure of His will, that they should be holy and without blame before Him in lovefor whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the First-Born among many brethren. Now this eternal choice of God has severed Believers from the rest of mankind and they stand apart as much as Israel stood apart in Egypt, even in the midst of the plagues. Thus Gods chosen ones constitute a people that shall dwell alonethey shall not be numbered among the nations. He has made them to be His portion, for the Lords portion is His people. Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.   
This Truth of God, some of you may say, leads us into the great mysteries of the Kingdom of God. Well, in due time, our separation from the world is the result of Divine calling as well as Divine election, for the Apostle writes, moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called. There is a people in this world who have been called out from the world and they make up the ecclesia, the called-out assembly, the people to whom a Voice has come which others have not spiritually heard. They are the people who have been drawn by Christ and have run after Christthe people who were dead and who have been quickenedthe people who were slumbering and who have been awakened. They are the people who were afar off and who have been brought near, the people who have been brought out of darkness into Christs marvelous light, the people whom He has separated unto Himselfand who shall show forth His praise. Do you know anything about this calling, my dear Hearers? Were you ever led, by conviction of sin, repentance and faith, to fly to Jesus? Have you come to Him? If so, in that wondrous calling out, you have one evidence that you are distinct from the world that lies in the Wicked One.   
Another clear distinguishing mark is redemption. The blood of the paschal lamb was on the lintel and the two side posts of the house of every family of Israel. It was not on the houses of the Egyptians and to their dwellings the Destroying Angel came with swift, sure, unerring blow, killing the first-born in every house throughout the land. It was the bloodmark that distinguished Israel from all the rest of the people! And today, only those who are sheltered by the sprinkled blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God, are safe! Christ has redeemed His people from among men. He loved His Church and gave Himself for herand He has redeemed that Church and brought her out of the Egyptian bondage of sin with a high hand and an outstretched arm, redeeming her by power as well as by priceand she shall be His forever. Has He not espoused her unto Himself and will He not have her of whom His soul was eternally enamored and to whom, in the Covenant of old, He was joined by bonds of everlasting wedlock? Yes, verily, He will have her to be His own bride, world without end! This is another mark of our separation from the worldthe blood-red mark of redemption, effectual redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ.   
Then, Beloved, in due time, separation from the world comes out, externally, more fully in sanctification. There is a people in this world who have another nature from that of the men of this world. Would to God there were more of them! But there has come, by Divine Grace, a work of Christ in their heart which has changed their entire nature, aspirations, loves, hatestheir whole selvesand made the whole world to become new to them because they are totally new to it. When this great change is worked in the heart of a man, it crucifies him to the world and the world to him. And he becomes a member of a community as much above the common race of humanity as a man is above a horse or a dog! He becomes possessed of a higher nature which was born in him by regeneration and which lifts him up into familiarity with God, so that he becomes a partaker of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. So says this Book on which we rest and I beseech you to believe that it speaks the Truth of God.   
Sanctification is the great open separator of Christians from the world! And they are so separate and so distinct that they will never be mixed together, not even in that day when their bones shall lie mingled in the same cemeterywhen grave by grave the righteous shall sleep side by side with the wicked! There shall be a distinction in that day of resurrection when the dead in Christ shall rise firstThe rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. There shall be a distinction in that day when the Kings words, Come, you blessed, or, Depart, you cursed, shall make an everlasting division between themand all the universe shall know that the Lord does put a difference between Israel and Egypt!   
Now, Beloved, you can judge for yourselves, tonightI pray you to do itwhether you are separate from the world. If you are not, you will be judged with the world. If this day there falls to your lot, special Grace, as well as special joyif you have a new life and a heavenly experience all your own, then, inasmuch as you are not of the world, hear again the words of my text and keep yourselves unspotted from the world.   
Now, I want you to notice, before I leave this point, that, inasmuch as there is an evident separation between the people of God and the world, we make it a part of worship to manifest that separation. Observe what the text saysPure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this...To keep ourselves unspotted from the world. Religion does not consist simply in meeting together for prayer, in singing hymns and hearing sermons. There is much of this that is profitable and glorifies God, but there is something more needed to complete real worship of God.   
When you and I live daily with the fear of God before our eyes, in the presence of men of the world who care not whether there is a God or not, then are we truly manifesting pure and undefiled religion. When we judge all our conduct by thinking how it will appear in the sight of God. When, assailed by temptation, we say to ourselves, How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? When we keep ourselves apart from every evil thing that might fascinate and entice us, saying, So did not I, because of the fear of God, this is true worship! It is quite as real worship as the hymns we sing and the prayers we offer.   
Abstinence from evil and seeking that which is right will manifest our separation from the world, especially if the Glory of God is our one great objective in life. I like that word of my dear friend, Mr. George Muller, when he says, Never begin a day without feeling joy in the Lord. I think that is a very blessed ruleto live constantly walking in such a way that you and God are on close terms of happy fellowship so that all that you do you do heartily as unto the Lord! Your common service as a domestic servant, or your public service as a preacher, you do in the Presence, not of the great Taskmaster, but of your great Father and Friend, of whom you have become an adopted child and to whom you are separated to be a priest serving Him every day! If everything is done, from the taking down of the shop shutters on the Monday morning to the putting of them up on Saturday night, as well as what is done on Sundayif all is done for Gods Glory, this will make a great gulf between you and the man of the world who lives for baser ends.   
Thus I have tried very plainly to show that the words in our text indicate separation.   
II. Now, in the second place, THEY IMPRESS UPON US SPOTLESSNESSTo keep ourselves unspotted from the world.   
We learn from this, first, that the Christian never expects to get any good from the world. He is to keep himself from the world, specially from the spots of the world. Dr. Watts wisely asks

*Is this vile world a friend to Grace,*

*To help me on to God?*   
No, it never is. It never was. It will never be. There is enmity, today, between the Seed of the woman and the seed of the serpentand so there will be to the end of the chapter. You will never get anything out of the serpent, even though you stand and listen to his philosophical questions and his new explanations of Gods Word. You will get nothing more out of him now than mother Eve did when she got from him a curse to all her posterity. You can get no good out of the world, nor out of the Prince of this world.

It is implied in our text, also, that we cannot go and wallow in the worlds filth. If there is any man here who is a professor of religion and who can go, tonight, and indulge himself in vice, or who can find himself at home with the world, well, he belongs to the world. Where you find your pleasure, there your heart is! Do not pretend to belong to the Church and to the world as well. I like the honesty of the man who finds that his life is not consistent with the life of Christ and, therefore, gives up his professionthat is plain sailing. But do not pretend that you can wallow in the mire of open sin or secret sin and yet belong to Christ, for that cannot be! Keep yourselves unspotted from the worlds puddles.

In particular, we must keep ourselves unspotted from the lepers of the world. There is a certain number of leprous men in the world. You can tell them by their conversation and, sometimes you cannot help going very near where they are. But if you hear them cry, Unclean! just give them a very wide berth. I wish that Christians were more careful about this leprosy in the matter of books. As soon as ever you see that there is leprosy there, do not go and play with it, and examine it, and look at it. You will catch it if you are not careful! Keep clear of it! Keep yourselves unspotted from the lepers of the world. Well, that is easy enough, you say. Perhaps it is not as easy as you think.

But, further, we are to keep ourselves from all spots of the world when we have to mingle with it. Notice, there are spots which come from your circumstances. Are you wealthy? Well, use your wealth for God, but mind that it does not spot you. There is a great deal of rust about riches. Mind that it does not eat into your soul as does a canker. Are you poor? Does your poverty compel you to live in a very low neighborhood with people of groveling tastes? Well, the poverty will not necessarily hurt you any more than the wealth will, but keep yourselves unspotted from it. You will need a deal of Divine Grace to live in some parts of London and not be spotted, even, by the people who have apartments in the house where you live.

And not only will your circumstances be likely to spot you, but the favors and honors of the world will spot you. So you have received a degree, or you have had a rise in business and the people all speak well of you, do they? And there is that thoroughly worldly lady who has a secret admiration for you. Well, well, well, be careful! Joseph had the favor of Potiphar and of Pharaoh in Egypt, but he kept himself unspotted. Mind that the worlds favor does not spot you. Ah, says one, I dont get much of that! I get all frowns. Very wellpersecution, slander and frowning need not spot you, but they may, you know. There are many who cannot bear the cold atmosphere and biting frosts of persecution. Mind that you are not spotted in that way.

Then we may be spotted, dear Friends, in trade. I suppose that a man has good need to be wide awake in order to stay honest. A man can soon do a wrong thing in business by simple negligence and, unless he keeps both his eyes open, his very servants may be doing, in his name, that which will be injurious to the honor of their master. Dear Friends, trade away all you cango and prosper in itbut mind that you do not get spotted! Then there are politics. You know what party politics are. We are all trying to got in another set of maggots to eat the cheese! That is about all it amounts tofirst turn out one lot and then turn in another. It comes to little more than that! Even in the pursuit of really good matters of policy, do you know any Christian who goes into politics who is the better for it? If I find such a man, I will have him stuffed if I can, for I have never seen such a specimen yet! I will not say, do not attend to politics, but I do say, do not let them spot you.

Then there are the societies of life. A man goes in with his neighbors and he sits at their feast. The Savior sat at a feast with a Pharisee, but mind that it does not spot youit did not spot Him, but it may spot you, so beware! And as to your ordinary conversation with men of the world, are you not conscious, when you go home at night, that you need washing? After shaking hands with a good many men of the world and talking with them, do you not feel that you are apt to get spotted? And the literature, the common literature of the world. I do not mean that which we should censure, and condemn, and burnbut the common literature that is all around youmind that it does not spot you, Brothers and Sisters.

If we would be spotless, we must beware of the vanities and pleasures of the world, the thoughts and the tendencies of the world. It is supposed to be something wonderful to see the tendency of the age, the current of the age, the set of thought. It is all pollution and nothing else! Instead of wishing to be abreast of it, I only desire to be abreast of it in stemming it and, by opposing it, to drive it back. That is the only position for a Christian! If you go with the current of the age, you are swimming the wrong way, for all that is of the world comes of evil even to this day. There is no change in the Scripture and there is no change in the world. If you love the world, the love of the Father is not in you. The current of human opinion always was, is and will be, till Christ shall come, an evil current that will bear you the wrong way if you yield to it.

I might thus enlarge, but I will not, and will only say that we must keep ourselves unspotted from the sins of the world. What are they? Well, one of them is atheism. Keep yourselves unspotted from that horrible crime, hatred of Deity! Doubt of every kind is in the airthis is the day of doubt. Keep yourselves unspotted from the worlds unbelief. This is the age of compromisesto many people, the Truth of God is not a matter of great importance, nowadays, and principle is of no account. They snip and cut and mar the Scriptures as Jehudi cut the Prophets rollthey have no care as to what God has said. Avoid compromises and be unspotted of the world! This is the age of trifling! There is more money spent on recreation, today, than ever was since the world began, unless it was that day in which God swept all away by the Flood! Keep yourselves unspotted by the world! It is the age of hollowness and gigantic shams and bubbles. Be real! Be true! Keep yourselves unspotted from the world. This subject is endless. God give us Grace to carry it out!

III. I must finish by noticing, in the third place, that the words in our text INSIST UPON CAREFUL SELF-WATCHING.   
Do you understand that it is your very person, your soul, your heart, your very self that is to be kept unspotted? What a man is, the man, before long, does. But keep yourselves clean, unspotted, my Brothers and Sisters. Do you say, O Lord, how can I do this? It is plain from the text that I am not to sit down, and say, The Lord will do it, the Lord will do it and the Lord must do it, for I cannot. The language of the text is such that it calls the Christian, himself, to watchfulness and care. What must he do, then?   
Brethren, first, let us go and wash. We were washed once, many years ago. Jesus washed us and made us clean. But now, today, we have been going through the world and our feet have become muddied. Let us come to Him, again, tonight, before we go to rest. Dear Master, wash our feet, again, from any spots of the world which we have acquired by going along these dusty pathways! The fairest lily in the gardens near London gets spotted by the soot of this great cityyou cannot help seeing its defilement! But the shower comes and the dew falls, and the lily washes its fair face, and its loveliness is restored. Let us go to our Lord, again, to be washed in His precious blood. It is never supposed in the Scriptures that we shall be without sin to confess, but it is written, If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship, one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. We still need cleansing, even when we are walking in the Light of God! Let us get away to Christ, then, and say, Lord, I would be, myself, unspotted. I come to You for washing.   
That done, avoid careless walking if you wish not to be spotted. In going home, after a shower, if you have to cross a road, it is very difficult to keep from being spotted. And if you run carelessly, you will plunge into a puddle and there will be splashes of mud all over you, before you know it! Now, do not run into the puddlewalk circumspectly. There is a clean way and it is called the way of holinessthe unclean shall not pass over it. The Lord help us to watch every action and, more than that, every thought and every word! I would like to be able to take my words out of my mouth and look at them before I speak themand to have all the actions of my life done as under the watchful eye of God, to see whether they will look right in the Day of Judgment. If you cannot sleep over a thing, do not do it. As the good man said to his boy, My boy, pay as you go. Suppose I cannot pay, Father. Then, dont go. So would I say to you, examine your life as you go. If you dare not examine an action, or look at it, then do not do it! When you do not know whether it is right, then it is always best to feel sure that it is wrong. Even though it might be right to another, it will be wrong to you if you have not faith that it is right, for, whatever is not of faith is sin. If any question arises about moral conduct, that question makes it evil to you.   
Next, I would say that, as you would avoid careless walking, also avoid careless walkers. Very frequently, when I am riding alone, and I am not getting into any mud, an omnibus comes by and splashes me all over. It is no fault of mine, but then it is somebody near me that does it. As you walk along the street, you are very careful, but if your neighbor puts his foot in a puddle, the splash may come over you. So mind what company you keep! And when you find people getting rather fast, or rather loose, leave themget away from them! You do not need to be muddied, so keep yourself unspotted from the world.   
Above all, cry to God to preserve you from evil. If you go out every day, covered and protected by Divine Grace, then, and then only, can you be kept unspotted from the world. I would like to see a Christian not kept in a glass case away from trial and temptation, but yet covered with an invisible shield, so that, wherever he went, he would be guarded and protected from the evil influences that are in the world in almost every place.   
Thus I have spoken to Gods people, but I have said very little to sinners. Although I have not addressed them especially, tonight, if you, the people of God, will go and live godly lives, you will preach to sinners better than I shall. I have to say to you who fear God, keep yourselves unspotted from the world, but what am I to say to those who are not only

in the world, but also of the world? Do you not know that the earth, also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up? What will become of you, then? And you who belong to the world and have your portion in this lifeand your joy in this worldin that great day when the elements shall melt with fervent heat, where will you be? Then you may call to the rocks to hide you, but you will call in vain! If your portion is in this life, what will you do in the life to come?   
Some of you are living within the boundaries of this mortal existence and that is your all. Poor Soul! Poor Soul! Poor soul! Poor Soul! The Lord in His mercy bring you to know the life eternal! And when you once get that, your great desire will be to be delivered from the power of sin and to keep yourself unspotted from the world! The Lord bless you, for Christs sake! Amen!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON. **JAMES 1.**

Verse 1. James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. Where are the lost ten tribes? asks somebody. They never were lost. That is a mere piece of nonsense! There were, and there still are, 12 tribes of Israel, as much one as the other. Ask any Jew if it is not so. James writes to all his compatriots by nature and to all the fellow citizens of the saints by Grace, and greets them. What a strange greeting it is!

2. My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations. Or trials. Do not be sorry about it, be thankful for it. The gold should be glad to be put into the cruciblethe Christian should rejoice to be tested and tried. Not only count it joy, but count it, all joy when you fall into divers temptations.

3, 4. Knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, needing nothing. You need to growyou will not grow without trials. You need to learnyou will not learn without affliction. It is Gods school for you. Be thankful, therefore, when these afflictions come. They are the rumbling wagons of your Father, in which He sends you choice treasure. They are black ships that come from afar, loaded with precious things. But mind that you get this patience and, that when you have it, you have still more of itLet patience have her perfect work.

5. If any of you lack wisdom. Ah, James, you need not say, If any of you lack wisdom, for we all lack it! We are all poor, foolish creaturesIf any of you lack wisdom.

5. Let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him. The Lord might very well upbraid us for our folly and say, Poor child, I will give you wisdom; yet you are very foolish. But He does not say that. He gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not. Let him who lacks wisdom ask of God, and it shall be given him. Can the Lord give wisdom? Surely we must study, learn, and gain experience before we can know and then, afterwards, knowledge, rightly used, grows into wisdom. Can God give us wisdom ready made? Ah, yes, He can! He gives wisdom if we ask for it.

6. But let him ask in faith. A man who has no wisdom can have faith. Let him use his faith to get wisdomLet him ask in faith.  
6, 7. Nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. He may receive something of the Lord, but he may not think that he shall. It may come as a spontaneous gift of Sovereign Grace, but we have no right to expect an answer to prayer when we pray in a wavering style.   
8. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. He sees double. He runs after two objects and, therefore, he staggers across the streethe is unstable in all his ways.   
9. Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted. Being lifted up by the Grace of God to sit among the princes of Israel!  
10. But the rich, in that he is made low. Hard work, this! Still, the child of God should rejoice in it, for now that he is stripped of earthly things, he finds his all in God.   
10-12. Because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withers the grass, and the flower thereof falls, and the beauty of the fashion of it perishes: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways. Blessed is the man that endures temptation. Or, endures trial. Blessed is the man who is tried and tested, and who lives through itwho conquers, notwithstanding all the battle and struggle through which he passes. We would say, Blessed is the man who is not tried, but it is not so. He who, bearing the heavy load, receives gracious strength to sustain him under it, gets a greater blessing than the man who escapes the burden.   
12, 13, For when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love Him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God. That would be nonsense and falsehood! When a man is seduced to evil, when evil casts its attractive spell over him, let him not blame God!   
13, 14. For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts He any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. God tries men. God does not, in the sense in which the word is here used, tempt men. Satan temptsGod tries. But the same trial may be both a temptation and a trialand it may be a trial from Gods side, and a temptation from Satans side, just as Job suffered from Satan and it was a temptation. But he also suffered from God through Satan, and so it was a trial to him.   
15. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. That is the pedigree of sinit is born of lust, and it brings forth dust. Any sin, whatever it is, if we cling to it and love it, will bring forth deathrest assured of that! The only hope we can have of eternal life is by being parted from sin. That must be taken away from us; for there shall never enter into Heaven anything that defiles. We have, from day to day, to fight against sin till it is utterly put away from us.   
16, 17. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. God never turns from us, nor, in any way whatever, changes. He is the same God, ready always to bless us, ready to save us tonight as much as any other Thursday night! Ah, dear Friends, what variableness we have! The other day we were frostbitten and crying out with the cold. And now, tonight, perhaps, we feel dull, stupid and heavy because it is so hot! Yet, what a mercy it is that God has no variableness, neither shadow of a turning, and we may come to Him, tonight, and say, Lord, visit us as You are known to do! Revive us and refresh us. Put us into a lively, brisk, happy frame of mind tonight and send us on our way rejoicing.   
18. Of His own will He begat us with the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures. We are His creatures, but we are better than His other creatures, for he has made us twice over! We are his twice-born creatures and we are the first ripe fruit of His creation, dedicated to His praise, gathered to His Glorya kind of first fruits of His creatures. Oh, that God would help us to honor Him and to live truly consecrated to Him!   
19. Therefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear. It is a great thing to have an open ear. Some are very slow to hear, especially to hear the Word of God and the voice of God speaking that Word. Oh, to have our ears unstopped that we may hear every syllable of the Truth of God gladly, cheerfully, retentively! God grant us that swiftness of hearing tonight!   
19. Slow to speak, slow to wrath. For, sometimes, when men are very quick to speak, they are also very quick in other respects as welland volubility may be accompanied by a tendency to heat or passion. Slow to speak, slow to wrath.   
20. For the wrath of man works not the righteousness of God. Satan does not cast out Satan! Anger does not overcome evil. We may think we do well to be angry, but that will very seldom be the case.   
21. Therefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted Word of God which is able to save your souls. Perhaps you have seen a man grafting a tree. What a gash he makes in the tree before he puts in the graft! How he wounds it to make the sap flow into the new wood! If the Lord has made any of your hearts bleed, tonight, by the sharp cutting of His Spirit, we are not sorry, if it shall the better prepare you for receiving the grafts of His own Nature, and His own Word.   
22. But be you doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. It is a pity when a man deceives himselfhe must be an archdeceiver!  
23-25. For if any is a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was. But whoso looks into the perfect Law of liberty, and continues therein. Perseverance to the end is neededContinues therein.   
25. He being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. The blessedness of true religion lies very much in the practical effect of it. Hearing is pleasant, but doing is the effectual proof of Grace.   
26. If any man among you seems to be religious, and bridles not his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this mans religion is vain. James settles that matter off very peremptorily. An unbridled tongue indicates a godless heart.   
27. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. This is not the secret part of religion. Of that we read elsewhere. But this is the very dress that true religion puts oncharitably caring for the most destitute of our fellow creatures, and holy walking, that we are not as the men of the world arePure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.

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FRUITLESS FAITH   
NO. 3434

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 1914.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 21, 1861.

Even so faith, if it has not works, is dead, being alone. James 2:17.

WHATEVER the statement of James may be, it could never have been his intention to contradict the Gospel! It could never be possible that the Holy Spirit would say one thing, in one place, and another in another. Statements of Paul and of James must be reconciled, and if they were not, I would sooner be prepared to throw overboard the statement of James than that of Paul. Luther did so, I think, most unjustifiably. If you ask me, then, how I dare to say I would sooner do so, my reply is, I said I would sooner throw overboard James than Paul for this reason, because, at any rate, we must keep to the Master, Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ. We ought never to raise any questions about differences of Inspiration, since they are all equally Inspired, but if such questions could be raised and were allowable, it were wisdom to stick fastest to those who cling closest to Christ. Now the last words of the Lord Jesus, before He was taken up, were these, Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, and what was this Gospel? He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. To that, then, we must always cling, and Jesus Christ has given a promise of salvation to the baptized Believer, for He has said, As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, and whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

Here it is clear He promises everlasting life to all who believe in Him, to all who trust in Him. Now from the Masters words we will not stir, but close to His own declaration we will stand. Be assured that the Gospel of your salvation as a Believer, with a simple confidence in Jesus Christ, whom God raised from the dead, will save your soula simple and undiluted reliance upon the life, death, resurrection, merit and Person of Jesus Christ, will ensure to you everlasting life. Let nothing move you from this confidenceit has great recompense of reward! Heaven and earth may pass away, but from this grand fundamental Truth of God not one jot or tittle shall ever be moved! He that believes in Him is not condemned, but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed on the Son of God.

The fact is, James and Paul are perfectly reconcilablethey are just viewing a Truth of God from different standpoints. Whatever James may mean, I am quite confident about what Paul means, and confident about the truth of the two.

A second remark. James never intended, for a moment, nor do any of his words lead us into such a belief, that there can be any merit whatever in any good works of ours. After we have done all, if we could do all, we would only have done what we were bound to do! Surely there is no merit in a mans paying what he owesno great merit in a servant who has his wages for doing what he is paid to do. The question of merit between the creature and his Creator is not to be raisedHe has a right to us. He has the right of creation, the right of preservation, the right of Infinite Sovereignty and, whatever He should exact of us, we should require nothing from Him in return! And, having sinned as we all have, for us to talk of salvation by meritby our own worksis worse than vanity! It is an impertinence which God will never endure

*Talk they of morals, O You bleeding Lamb! The best morality is love of You.*

Talk of salvation by works and Cowpers reply seems apt   
*Perish the virtue, as it ought, abhorred,   
And the fool with it, who insults his Lord.*

What James does mean, however, is this, no doubt, in brief and short that while faith saves, it is faith of a certain kind. No man is saved by persuading himself that he is saved! Nobody is saved by believing Jesus Christ died for him. That may be, or may not be true in the sense in which he understands it. In a certain sense Christ died for all men, but since it is evident that many men are lost, Christs dying for all men is not at all a ground upon which any man may hope to be saved. Christ died for some men, in another sense, in a peculiar and special sense. No man has a right to believe that Christ peculiarly and specially died for him until he has an evidence of it in casting himself upon Christ, trusting in Jesus and bringing forth suitable works to evince the reality of his faith. The faith that saves is not a historical faith, not a faith that simply believes a creed and certain factsI have no doubt devils are very orthodoxI do not know which church they belong to, though there are some in all churches! There was one in Christs Church when He was on earth, for He said one was filled with devilsand there are some in all churches. Devils believe all the facts of Revelation. I do not believe they have a doubtthey have suffered too much from the hand of God to doubt His existence! They have felt too much the terror of His wrath to doubt the righteousness of His government! They are stern believers, but they are not savedand such a faith, if it is in us, will not, cannot save usbut will remain to all intents and purposes, a dead, inoperative faith! It is a faith which produces works which saves us. The works do not save us. And a faith which does not produce works is a faith that will only deceiveand cannot lead us into Heaven. Now this evening we shall first speak a few words upon

I. WHAT KIND OF WORKS ARE NECESSARY TO PROVE OUR FAITH IF IT IS A SAVING FAITH.

The works which are absolutely necessary are, in brief, theseFirst, there must be fruits meet for repentance, works of repentance. It is wrong to tell a man he must repent before he may trust Christ, but it is right to tell him that, having trusted Christ, it is not possible for him to remain impenitent. There never was in this world such a thing as an impenitent Believer in Jesus Christ, and there never can be! Faith and repentance are born in a spiritual life together and they grow up together! The moment a man believes, he repents, and while he believes, he both believes and repents, and until he shall have done with faith, he will not have done with repenting. If you have believed, but have never repented of your sins, then beware of your believing! If you pretend, now, to be a child of God, and if you have never clothed yourself in dust and ashes. If you have never hated the sins which once you lovedif you do not now hate them and endeavor to be rid of them, if you do not humble yourself before God on account of themas the Lord lives, you know nothing about saving faith! For faith puts a distance between us and sin! In a moment it leads us away from the distance between us and Christ nearer to Christ, we are now far off from sin! But he who loves his sin, thinks little of his sin, goes into it with levity, speaks of sin as though it were a trifle, has the faith of devilsbut the faith of Gods elect he never knew! True faith purges the soul, since the man now hunts after sin that he might find out the traitor that lurks within his nature. And though a Believer is not perfect, yet the drift of faith is to make him perfectand if it is faith to be perfected, the Believer shall be perfectedand then he shall be caught up to dwell before the Throne of God! Judge yourselves, my Hearers! Have you brought forth the fruits of repentance? If not, your faith without them is dead!

Works of secret piety are also essential to true faith. Does a man say, I believe that Jesus died for me, and I hope to be saved, and does he live in a constant neglect of private prayer? Is the Word of God never read? Does he never lift up his eyes in secret with, My Father, be You the guide of my youth? Has he no secret regard in his heart to the Lord his God and does he hold no communion with Christ, his Savior, and is there no fellowship with the Holy Spirit? Then how can faith dwell in such a man? As well say that a man is alive when he does not breathe, and in whom the blood does not circulate, as to say that a man is a Believer with living faith who does not draw near to God in prayer, that does not live, indeed, under the awe and fear of the Most High God as ever present and seeing Him in all places! Judge yourselves, you professorsare you neglecting prayer? Have you no secret spiritual life? If so, away with your notion about saving faith! You are not justified by such a faith as that! There is no life in it! It is not a faith that leads to the Lamb and brings salvation! If it were, it would show itself by driving you to your knees and making you lift up your heart to the Most High!

Another set of works are those which I may call works of obedience. When a man trusts in Jesus, he accepts Jesus as his Master. He says, Show me what You would have me to do. The Father shows Christ what He would have Him to do. He does not set up His own will and judgment, but He is obedient to His Fathers will. I will not tonight speak of those who know not their Lords will, who shall be beaten with few stripes, but I do fear there are some professors who are living in willful neglect of known Christian duties, and yet suppose themselves to be the partakers of saving faith. Now a duty may be neglected, and yet a man may be saved, but a duty persistently and willfully neglected may be the leak that will sink the ship! Or the neglect of any one of such duties for the surrender of a true heart to Christ does not go such-and-such a length and then stop! Christ will save no heart upon terms and conditionsit must be an unconditional surrender to His government if you would be saved by Him. Now, some will draw a line here, and some will draw a line there, up to this and say, I will be Christs servant. That is to say, Sir, you will be your own master, for that is the English of it! But the true heart that has really believed says, I will make haste and delay not to keep Your commandments. Make straight the path before my feet, for Your commandments are not grievous. I have delighted in Your commandments more than in fine gold. Now, sons and daughters of sin, professedly, what do you say about this? Have you an eye to the Master, as servants keep their eyes to their mistress? Do you ever ask yourselves what would Christ have you to do? Or do you live habitually in the neglect of Christs Law and wills? Do you go to places where Christ would not meet you, and where you would not like to meet with Him? Are some of you in the habit of professing maxims and customs upon which you know your Lord would never set His seal? You say you believe, you have faith in Him? Ah, Sirs, if it is a

living faith, it will be an obedient faith!

Living faith produces what I shall call separating works. When a man believes in Jesus, he is not what he was, nor will he consort with those who were once his familiars. Our Lord has said, You are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Now Christ was not an asceticHe ate and drank as other men do so that they even said of Him that He was a gluttonous Man and a winebibber because He mingled with the rest of mankind. But was there ever a more unearthly life than the life of Christ? He seems to go through all the world a complete Man in all that is necessary to manliness, but His Presence is like the presence of a seraph among sinners! You can discover at once that He is not of their mold, nor of their spirit, but harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. Now such will the Believer be if his faith is genuine. This is a sharp cut to some professors, but not a whit more sharp than the Scripture warrants! If we are of the world, what can we expect but the worlds doom in the day of the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ? If you find your pleasure with the world, you shall meet your condemnation with the world! If with the world you live, with the world you shall dieand with the world you shall live again foreverlost! Where there is no separation, there is no Grace! If we are conformed to this world, how dare we talk about Grace being in our souls! And if there is no distinguishing difference between us and worldlings, what vanity it is, what trifling, what hypocrisy, what a delusion for us to come to the Lords Table talking about being the Lords sons when we are none of His! Faith without the works which denote the difference between a Believer and a worldling is a dead, unsaving faith!

Now I have not said that any Believer is perfect. I have never thought so, but I have said that if a Believer could be a Believer altogether, and faith could have her perfect work, he would be perfect, and that in proportion as he is truly a Believer, in that proportion he will bring forth fruit that shall magnify God and prove the sincerity of his faith.

One other set of works will be necessary to prove the vitality of his faith, namely, works of love. He that loves Christ feels that the love of Christ compels himhe endeavors to spread abroad the knowledge of Christ! He longs to win jewels for Christs crown. He endeavors to extend the boundaries of Christs and Messiahs Kingdomand I will not give a farthing for the loftiest profession coupled with the most flowing words that never shows itself in direct deeds of Christian service. If you love Christ, you cannot help serving Him! If you believe in Him, there is such potency in what you believe, such power in the Grace which comes with believing, that you must serve Christ! And if you serve Him not, you are not His!

This proof, before we leave it, might be illustrated in various ways. We will just give one. A tree has been planted Now the source of life to that tree is at the root, whether it has apples on it or not. The apples would not give it life, but the whole of the life of the tree will come from its root. But if that tree stands in the orchard, and when the springtime comes there are no buds, and when the summer comes there are no leaves and no fruit. And the next year, and the next, it stands there without bud or blossom, or leaf or fruit, you would say it is deadand you are correct it is dead. It is not that the leaves could have made it live, but that the absence of the leaves is a proof that it is dead! So, too, is it with the professor. If he has life, that life must give fruits. If not fruits, works. If his faith has a root, but if there are no works, then depend upon it, the inference that he is spiritually dead is certainly a correct one! When the telegraph cable flashed no message across to America. When they tried to telegraph again and again, but the only result following was dead earththey felt persuaded that there was a fracture, and well they might! And when there is nothing produced in the life by the supposed Divine Grace which we have, and nothing is telegraphed to the world but, dead earth, we may rest assured that the link of connection between the soul and Christ does not exist!

I need not enlarge. We should just put it into that one sentence Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Bring forth, therefore, works meet for repentance! And now we turn to the second point with more brevity

II. SOME FACTS THAT BACK UP THE DOCTRINE THAT FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD.   
These facts show that it is evident to all observers that many professors of faith without works are not saved. It would be very ludicrous, if it were not very miserable, to think of some who wrap themselves in the conceit that they are saved about whose salvation nobody but themselves can have any question. I remember a professor who used to talk of being justified by faith who was most assured about it when he had consumed much beer. Such professors are not at all uncommon, sad to say! They seem at the moment, when their condemnation seems written on their very brow to all who know them, to be most confident that they, themselves, are saved! Now, Brothers and Sisters, if such cases are convincing and you entertain no doubt but decide in their case, apply the same rule to yourselves, for although you may not plunge into the grosser vices, yet if you make your homes wretched by your selfishness, if you fall into constant habits of vicious temper, if you never strive against these sins, and the Grace of God never leads you out of themif you can live in private sin and yet pacify your conscience and remain just as you were before your pretended conversionwhen you sit in judgment and pronounce the verdict on others, feel that you pronounce it upon yourself, for surely for one sin that is openly indulged in, which is manifested to you in the dissipation of your fellow creatures, it is not hard for you to believe that any other sin, if it is constantly indulged and is loved, will do the same to you as it does to him! You know men who have not faith, but have a sort of faith, are not saved. It must be true, or else where were the Saviors words, Straight is the gate and narrow the way, and few there are that find it? For this is no straight gate and no narrow way, merely to be orthodox and hold a creed and say, I believe Jesus died for me. No, it is a very narrow gate so to believe as to become practically Christs servants, so to trust as to give up that which Christ hates! Truths which Jesus bids us believe are all Truths which if believed, must have an effect upon the daily life.   
A man cannot really believe that Jesus Christ has taken away his sin by such sufferings as those of the Cross, and yet trifle with sin! A man is a liar who says, I believe that yonder bleeding Savior suffered on account of my sins, and yet holds good fellowship with the very sins that put Christ to death! Oh, Sirs, a faith in the bleeding Savior is a faith that craves for vengeance upon every form of sin! The Christian religion makes us believe that we are the sons of God when we trust in Christ. Will a man believe that he is really the son of God, and then daily and willfully go and live like a child of the devil? Do you expect to see members of the royal court playing with beggars in the street? When a man believes himself to possess a certain station of life, that belief leads him to a certain carriage and conversationand when I am led to believe I am elected of God, that I am redeemed by blood, that Heaven is secured to me by the Covenant of Grace, that I am Gods priest, made a king in Christ Jesus, I cannot, if I believe, unless I am more monstrous than human nature, itself, seems capable of beinggo back to live after just the same fashion, to run in the same course as others and live as the sons of Belial live! We constantly see in Scripture, and all the saints affirm it, that faith is linked with Divine Graceand that where faith is, the Grace of God isbut how can there be the gift of God reigning in the soul and yet a love of sin and a neglect of holiness? I cannot understand Grace reigning and vice ruling over the living and incorruptible Seed which abides forever in the inner manand for this man to give himself up to be a slave of Satan is a thing impossible!   
Faith, again, is always in connection with regeneration. Now regeneration is making of the old thing new. It is infusing a new nature into a man. The new birth is not a mere reformation, but an entire renovation and revolution! It is making the man a new creation in Christ Jesus. But a new creature, if he has no repentance, if he has no good works, no private prayer, no charity, no holiness of any kindregeneration will be a football for scorn! The new birth would be a thing to be ridiculed if it did not really produce a hatred of sin and a love of holiness. That kind of new birth which is dispensed by the Church of Rome, and also by some in the Church of England, is a kind of new birth which ought to excite the derision of all mankind, for children are said to be born-again certified to be born-again, made members of Christ and children of God and afterwards they grow up, in many casesin most caseslet me say, to forget their baptismal vows and live in sin as others do! Evidently it has had no effect upon them! But regeneration such as we read of in the Bible changes the nature of man, makes him hate the things he loved, and love the things he hated! This is regeneration! This is regeneration which is worth the seeking! It always comes with faith, and consequently good works must come with faith, too. But we pass on to the last matter, which is this   
III. WHAT OF THOSE MEN WHO HAVE FAITH, BUT WHO HAVE NO GOOD WORKS?   
Then what about them? Why, this about themthat their supposed faith generally makes them very careless and indifferent, and ultimately hardened and depraved men! I dread beyond measure that any one of us should have a name to live when we are dead, for an ordinary sinner who makes no profession may be converted, but it is extremely rare that a sinner who makes a profession of being what he is not is ever converted! It is a miserable thing to find a person discovering that his profession has been a lie. A man sits down and he says, Why, I believe, and as he walks he is careful, because he is afraid of what others might say. Byand-by, he begins to indulge a little. He says, This is not of works. I may do this and yet get forgiveness. Then he goes a little further away. I do not say that, perhaps, at first he goes to the theater, but he goes next door to it. He does not get drunk, but he likes jovial company. A little further and he gets confirmed in the belief that he is a saved one, and he gets so much confirmed in that idea that he thinks he can do just as he likes! Having sported on the brink without falling over, he thinks he will try againand he goes a little further and further until I may venture to say, if Satan needs raw material of which to make the worst of men, he generally takes those who profess to be the best! And I have questioned whether such a valuable servant of Satan as Judas was, could ever have been made of any other material than an apostate Apostle. If he had not lived near to Christ, he never could have become such a traitor as he was! You must have a good knowledge of religion to be a thorough-faced hypocrite! And you must become high in Christs Church before you can become fit tools for Satans worst works. Oh, but why do men do this? Oh, what is the use of maintaining such a faith? I think if we do not care to get the vitality of religion, I would never burden myself with the husks of it, for such people get the

chains of godliness without getting the comforts of godliness. They dare not do this, they dare not do thatif they do, they feel hampered. Why dont they give up professingthey would at least be free! They would have the sin without the millstone about their neck! Surely there can be no excuse for men who mean to perish coming to cover themselves with a mask of godliness! Why cannot they perish as they are? Why add sin to sin by insulting the Church through the Cross of Christ?   
When men make a profession of religion, and yet their works do not follow their faith, what about them? Why, this about them. They have dishonored the Church and, of all others, these are the people who make the world point to the Church and say, Where is your religion? That is your religion, is it? So it is when they find a man who professes to be in Christ and yet walks not as Christ walked. These give the Church her wounds! She receives them in the house of her friends! These make the true ministers of God go to their closets with broken hearts, crying out, Oh, Lord, why have You sent us to this people to speak and minister among them, that they should play the hypocrite before You? These are they who prevent the coming in of others, for others take knowledge of them, as they think religion is hypocrisy, and they are hindered. And, if not seriously, they get, at any rate, comfort in their sin from the iniquity of these professors! What their judgment will be when Christ appears, it is not for my tongue to say. In that day when, with tongue of fire, Christ shall search every heart and call on all men to receive their judgment, what must be the lot of the base-born professor who prostituted his profession to his own honor and gain? He sought not the glory of God. What shall be the thunder bolt that shall pursue his guilty soul in its timorous flight to Hell? And what the chains that are reserved in blackness and darkness forever for those who are wells without water and clouds without rain? I cannot tell, and may God grant that you may never know! Oh, may we all tonight go to Christ Jesus humbly and freely, confessing our sins and take Christ to be our complete Savior in very deed and truth! Then shall we be saved! And then, being saved, we shall seek to serve Christ with heart, and soul, and strength!  
Lest I have missed my mark, this one illustration shall suffice and I have done. There is a vessel drifting. She will soon be on the shore, but a pilot has come on board. He is standing on the deck and he says to the captain and crew, I promise and undertake that if you will solely and alone trust me, I will save your vessel. Do you promise it? Do you believe in me? They believe in him. They say they believe the pilot can save the vessel and they trust the vessel implicitly to his care. Now listen to him. Now, he says, you at that helm there! He does not stir. At the helm there! Cant you hear? He does not stir! He does not stir! Well but, Jack, havent you confidence in the pilot? Oh, yes. Oh, yes, I have faith in him, he says, he will save the vessel if I have faith in him. Dont you hear the pilot, as he says, have faith in me and you wont touch the helm? Now, you aloft there! Reef that sail. He does not stir, but lets the wind still blow into the sail and drift the vessel on to the coast Now then, some of you, look alive and reef that sail! But they do not stir! Why, Captain, what shall I do? These fellows wont stir or move a peg. Oh, says the captain; I have every confidence in you, Pilot. I believe you will save the vessel. Then why dont you attend to the tiller, and all that? Oh, no, says he, I have great confidence in you. I dont mean to do anything. Now when that ship goes down amid the boiling surges, and each man sinks to his doom, I will ask youhad they faith in the pilot? Hadnt they a mimicking, mocking sort of faith, and only that? For if they had been really anxious to have the vessel rescued and have trusted in the pilot, it would be the pilot who had saved them, and they could never have been saved without him. They would have proved their faith by their works! Their faith would have been made perfect, and the vessel would have been secured.   
I call upon every man here to do what Christ bids him! I call upon you, first of all, to prove that you believe in Christ by being baptized! He that believes in Christ and is baptized shall be saved. The first proof that you believe in Christ is to be given by yielding to the much despised ordinance of Believers Baptism and then, having done that, going on to the other means of which I have spoken. Oh, I charge you by your souls salvation, neglect nothing Christ commands, however trivial it may seem to your reason! Whatever He says to you, do it, for only by a childlike obedience to every bidding of Christ can you expect to have the promise fulfilled, They that trust in Him shall be saved. The Lord bless these words, for His names sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **JAMES 1:1-26.**

Verse 1. James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was an Apostle and he was the Lords brother, yet he mentions not these greater things, but he takes the lowly title, in which, no doubt, he felt the highest honorand calls himself, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. Happy is that man who serves the Lord, whose whole life is not that of an independent master of himself, but of one who is fully submissive to the Divine command! Where is the fiction of the ten lost tribes? He writes to the twelve tribes that were scattered abroad, and gives them greeting, so that this Epistle is first directed to the seed of Israel, and then, as in all things, to all the Church of God, seeing all the saints of God are the true seed of believing Abraham, the father of Believers.

2. My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers trials. Do not sorrow over your trials, do not look upon them as misfortunes and calamitiesthey are black vessels, but they are loaded with gold! Your choicest mercies come to you disguised as your sharpest trials. Welcome them! Do not sorrow over them, but rejoice in them!

3, 4. Knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. Endure everything. Suffer everything that God sends you. Bathe yourself in this rough sea till, by Gods blessing, it has strengthened you and cleansed you, for to that end He sends it, that it may perfect you by discipline, educating all your spiritual faculties and bringing out all your powers for His Glory. Shrink not, then, seek not to escape by any wrong means from trial, but go through with it, have perfect endurance of it, that you may be perfect and whole, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, and that is the point where you are most likely not to be perfect and entire

5. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men, liberally and unbraids not; and it shall be given him. We are so apt, when we give anything, to diminish the value of it by some unkind remarks. But God does not soHe gives, as He bids us give, with simplicity. There is the gift and He will not detract from it by upbraiding us. Why, some will upbraid the poor while they help themHow did you come to be in such a condition? But God says not so to usthe gift is given in pure liberality without any upbraiding. Wisdom is a gift! The best wisdom is not that which we acquire by study, but that which is the distinct gift of God in answer to prayer!

6. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. Now on the shore, now sinking back, now driving fearlessly ahead, then sinking down. This is not the kind of man that prevails with God in prayer! It is not the kind of faith we ought to have in Goda faith that is very brilliant on Sunday, but very dull on the Mondaya faith that is triumphant after a sermon, but which seems to be defeated when we get into actual trouble.

7, 8. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. Unstable in everything! Till you get a single heart, till your whole soul is bound up in confidence in God, you cannot expect to be stable in your ways. Unite my heart to fear Your name, and then I shall not be a double-minded man.

9. Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted. The lowness of his estate is an exaltation! He shall find in his troubles a double blessinghe shall be made greater by being so little. But let the rich rejoice in that he is made low, so that what would have been foolish pomp and pride is taken away from him and, by the Grace of God, he is kept low.Because as the flower of the grass, he shall pass away.

10, 11. But the rich, in that he is made low, because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withers the grass, and the flower thereof falls, and the grace of the fashion of it perishes, so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways. Oh, to be delivered from all glorying in such uncertain riches! Whatever God gives you, He may soon take away from you. If He takes it not away, He may take away your power to enjoy it! It is poor, slippery stuff at the very best. Rejoice that you have something better, something lasting!

12. Blessed is the man who endures temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love Him. It is promised to love, but it is given to endurance! It is the love of God which spies out our love and rewards it, but rewards it partly by trying it and then ultimately by bringing forth the stephanos, the crown. Men ran for a crown in the Greek games, and could not win the crown without the running. So does God give to them that run, a crown, but not without the running. He gives to them, first, the privilege of suffering for His names sakeand then of being rewarded for it.

13. Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts He any man. God tries men, but the motive of a trial is that which differentiates it from a temptation. In a temptation we try a man with a view of inducing him to do wrong, but God tries men to better them, that they may, by finding out their weakness, be saved from doing wrong. He never inclines a heart to evil. While He does all things, and is in all things, yet not so that He, Himself, does evil, or can be charged therewith.

14. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. This is the wanton harlot that deceives the heart of man his own desire, grown strong and hot till it comes to be a lustingthis draws a man away. It baits the hook and man swallows it and is thus entrapped and enticed.

15. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. There is the history and pedigree of sin! God save us from having any connection with the desire to sin, lest from that we be led into sin and then, from sin, descend into death!

16, 17. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above. All good from God, all evil from ourselves!  
17. And comes down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. There is variableness and there is the shadow of turning in the sun, but in that greater Father of Lights there is neither parallax nor tropicHe is always the same and we may go to Him with unwavering confidence because He is the same. Oh, what a blessing to such changing creatures as we are to have an unchanging God! Of His own will. If you want to know the power of Gods will, it never goes towards evil.   
18. Of His own will He brought us forth with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures. The best and noblest part of His Creation, the twice-begotten, the immortals that shall be the bodyguard of His Son, that shall stand about His bed, which is Solomons, each man with his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night. What a privilege it is to be begotten of God, to be the first fruits of His creatures!   
19. Therefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear. Because it is by the Word that we are begottenlet us be swift to hear it. Slow to speak, because there is so much sin in us that the less we speak, the better. In the multitude of words there lacks not sin. Great talkativeness is seldom dissociated from great sinfulness. Slow to wrath.   
20. Slow to speak, slow to wrath. For the wrath of man works not the righteousness of God. There is a tendency to grow angry with those who do not see the Truth of God, but is it not a foolish thing to be angry with blind men because they do not see? What if you see yourself? Who opened your eyes? Give God the praise for what you see, and never think that your anger, your indignation, your hot temper can ever work the righteousness of God! It is contrary thereto and cannot work towards it.   
21-23. Therefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness and receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls. But be you doers of the word, and not hearers, only, deceiving your own selves. For if any is a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass. It is a good thing for him to do that, to see himself as others see him. Beholding his natural face, even as men in looking into the Word of God behold the face of their naturethey see what they are like as they look into the mirror.   
24-26. For he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was. But who so looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall blessed in his deed. If any man among you seems to be religious and bridles not his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this mans religion is vain.

Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.   
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1061 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

RAHAB   
NO. 1061

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, JULY 21, 1872, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies in peace.   
Hebrews 11:31.**

**Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? James 2:25.**

THESE are two New Testament summaries of the life of Rahab and they are equally honorable to her. Paul puts her among the great worthies who, by faith, worked wonders. The 11th chapter of Hebrews is a triumphal arch to the soldiers of faith and among the illustrious names inscribed there are the name of this harlot of Jericho. We are not, however, so much surprised at that, for she was evidently an instance of great faithbut we are somewhat surprised, I think, to find her name recorded by James because he is an eminently practical writerand was writing of good works rather than of faith. His object is to show that the faith which justifies the soul is a faith which produces good works, and therefore he looks for instances of holy service of God.

We should not have thought that he would have singled out Rahab, but he has done so and this is the more remarkable because the only other person whom he mentions is AbrahamAbraham the Father of the Faithful, the Friend of God, a perfect and an upright man! James cites Abraham as standing for the one sex and Rahab the harlot for the other. I have no doubt that James knew what he was doing and that the Inspiration which guided him was infallible. Possibly Rahab was chosen to represent the Gentiles in connection with the founder of Israel who fitly stood for the Jews. While Abraham possessed a faith which manifested itself by works, so also did Rahab, the daughter of the Gentiles descended from a race doomed to destructiona Gentile of the Gentiles.

But possibly another reason for mentioning her may be that as Abraham renounced his own kindred at the call of God and came forth from Ur of the Chaldees, separated unto the Most High, so did this woman leave all her associations with Jericho, practically renouncing her nationality, forsaking her country and leaving it to its destiny and doom while she took her part with Israel to be a partaker with the people of God in the promised inheritance. It is no small honor, then, to this remarkable woman that she has her name recorded, not only with the heroes of faith, but also that she is selected by the great practical Apostle as one of two remarkable instances of the works which result from faith.

Let us consider her faith and her character all the more attentively because of this high position which the Holy Spirit has accorded to her. With the commendation of Paul and the praise of James, backed as they both were by the witness of the Spirit of God, this womans character is well worthy of attentive consideration. May the Spirit of God bless our meditation to our profit.

I. Our first observation upon her shall be that she possessed SINGULAR FAITH. This will be apparent if we reflect that she received no instruction from her parents. Birth-right membership was not a question which touched the case of Rahab. Her parents were of the condemned race of the Canaanites. They had no faith in God, themselves, and could not inculcate it. She did not become a worshipper of Jehovah because the family had always been so. They had no family pew in the sanctuary, no Prophets chamber in the house, no name to keep up among the Lords people. She was the first and only one of her race called out by Grace. God had chosen her as one of a family by His electing love, and though we hope that Grace continued in the household for many generations, yet it first of all came by her.

Now we do not so much wonder, though I believe in many respects it is equally to Gods Glory when we see the children of godly parents becoming Believers in Christfor we remember the many prayers offered for them, the instructions which they have received, the affectionate admonitions which they have heardand above all the godly examples which they have seen. We do not so much wonder, though indeed, even in that case it is a work of the Spirit of God as much as in any other if the conversion is genuine. But we do marvel, and we cannot help it, when we see one rising out of a family in which no true religion had ever been seen before! Here we see a lone palm in the desert, a solitary life among the tombs.

It is a struggle, as some of you know, to stand in the position of a lonely witness for God in a family. When in seeing enquirers I have to talk to young persons who are the only ones of the family attending the House of God at allthe only ones who make any pretensions to godlinessI feel great sympathy with them because I know they will have much to put up with and a heavy cross to carry. Such converts are not plants in the conservatory, but flowers exposed to the winters cold. Yet it is right to add that I have often observed that these have become among the strongest and most decided Christians that I have ever met! Even as Rahab, though her faith was solitary and was like a lily among thorns, yet was her faith none the less strong and perhaps, all the more unwavering.

Reflect again that her faith was singular because she was not in a believing country. Not only within doors had she none to sympathize with her, but in the whole city of Jericho, so far as we know, she was the only believer in Jehovah. It is right to conclude that if there had been other Believers there, either the city would have been spared for the sake of ten righteous, or else there would have been means found for their preservationbut she was the only one there. If we could have taken a birds-eye view of the city of Jericho and had been informed that there was one Believer there, I assure you we would not have looked to Rahabs house! She would have been about the

last person that we should have supposed had been a possessor of faith in the true God.

God has a people where we little dream of it and He has chosen ones among a sort of people whom we dare not hope for. Who would think that Grace could grow in the heart of one who was a harlot by name, as though her sin was openly known to all? Yet it grew there, like a fair flower blooming upon a dunghill, or a bright star glittering on the brow of night. There her faith grew and brought forth glory to God! I know not what god they worshipped at Jericho, but the whole city was full of idolatry and Rahab, alone, looked to the living God! The whole city was full of filthiness, and, bad as she had been, her faith must have made her loathe the sin. Jericho was neighbor to Sodom, not only as to locality but as to condition, and bad as this woman had been, it is probable that her sin was among the least of the offenses practiced there.

It is a shame even to speak of the loathsome crimes which defiled Jericho. When reclaimed by Sovereign Grace Rahab must have found herself as much alone in Jericho as Lot had found himself alone in Sodom. She was the one and only Believer amidst an idolatrous and depraved generation. May we not have hope, dear Friends, that from the lowest slums of our vast city there may come other Rahabs? Why not a Rahab in the Haymarket as well as in Jericho? May we not trust that among those who have been in our prisons, there yet may arise believers in the Lord God of Israel? May we not even hope that the fame of the Gospel may have been carried by rumor into cities unvisited by missionaries and that here and there Rahabs in unknown cities may be seeking after the Lord? There is no telling what Divine Grace may be silently doing throughout the world in culling out the ones and twos whom God has chosen! Israel dreamed not of finding an ally within her enemys walls, yet the Lord would have it so, and so it was.

Remember, too, that Rahabs faith was remarkable because her means of knowledge were very slender and, therefore, the food of her faith was comparatively scant. She had no book inspired of God to read. She had been instructed by no Prophetno Elijah had spoken to her in the name of Godno Jonah had gone through the streets of her city, warning men to repent. What information she had obtained she had gathered by odds and ends. She had put together the talk of the marketplace, the chat at the well and the gossip outside the city gates. And she had concluded that a nation had come out of Egypt, and that for their sakes and by their God, Jehovah, the Egyptian king had been destroyed at the Red Seathat Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, had been overthrown in battle by this peopleand that it was certain they were on their way to take the whole of Palestine to themselves because their God had given it to them.

Out of these common reports this woman had gathered evidence sufficient for faith to rest upon. The proverb has it that common fame is a common liar, but in this case the general panic with which her countrymen had been seized convinced her that the reports were true. The terms in which the advance of Israel was everywhere described convinced her that a terrible calamity hung like a cloud over the country. A cloud that paralyzed the court, the army and the people. She saw that the ground of fear was that a living God was with this people and she said within herself, Verily, there is one God, and her conscience within responded to that declaration. She felt it was so and light streamed in upon her spirit. She believed in Jehovah, the God of Israel, and she began to worship Him, expecting that the cause which He espoused would be successful and that those who were His enemies would certainly come to destruction. Slender, I say, was the basisstrong enough in itselfbut far inferior to that line upon line, precept upon precept, which we have so long received.

Many here present have the whole of Gods Book before them and yet do not believe! They have the testimony of His saints by the thousands and yet do not believe! They are earnestly entreated by living witnesses, yet do not believe! But this poor woman, with her few opportunities, became a believer in Jehovah! Take heed lest in the day of judgment she should rise up against you! She believed with far less testimonyhow will you be able to excuse your own persistent unbelief? I pray you, dear Hearers, think of this! Perhaps the most wonderful thing about her faith was that she should be a woman of such a character. She was apparently the most unlikely person to become a believer in Jehovah. She was

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harlot, a woman that was a sinner and universally known to be such!

Desperate attempts have been made to find some other meaning for the word rendered harlot, but they have been utterly fruitless. Both Paul and James declare, concerning her, that she was what we commonly call her. The idea that she was a hostess or tavern keeper is absurd because such a thing as an innkeeper was not known in those days, as everybody knows. To foist such an interpretation as that upon the original Hebrew is not to translate, but to misinterpretand no one has ever attempted it with the Greek! She had doubtless been a great sinnerit is no use trying to mince the matter. Let the glory be to Divine Grace! Why should we wish to rob God of His honor in having delivered such a woman from her sin?

But after she became a believer in Jehovah, it strikes me she forsook her sin and became another character though she was still known by her old title. We read that she hid the spies among the stalks of flax. For what purpose had she stalks of flax upon her roof if she had not begun to be an industrious working woman? A little thing will often indicate character. A straw shows which way the wind blows and it seems to me to be most probable that she had forsaken her unhallowed life. And then, since hospitality had come to be forgotten in Jericho and the other Canaanite cities, she, being a follower of Jehovah and knowing that hospitality was His delight, would go to the city gate every now and then, just as Lot had been accustomed to do, and watch for strangers to see if she could entertain them.

She was under no suspicion in doing this, because her old name would stick to her and give her a license to do what others might not attempt without being suspected of treason against the crown by entertaining aliens and as such, adversaries. So I doubt not she most honestly entertained strangers and the reason why, on this occasion the spies came to her was because she was generally on the lookout to receive wayfarers who else perhaps would have received bad treatment at the hands of her wicked townsmen. So the generous spirit which true religion gave her brought her into contact with the Israelites who came to spy the land and they became, in Gods hands, the means of her safety when the city was destroyed.

The Grace of God had, even before these men came, lifted her up out of her former self! And though her old name stuck to her, I think I see reason to believe that her old character was gone and she had become a new creature through the power of faith. However, she was a harlot once and the wonder is that she became a Believer! Wonders of Grace are Gods delight! He loves, for Jesus sake, to call unto Himself the lowest of the low and the vilest of the vile. The Lord still works in the same manner. Let us rest assured that Jesus still receives sinners and that publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of Heaven before the selfrighteous and captious! It is very remarkable that in the pedigree of Christ there should be so many women with blotted charactersthat there should be an incestuous Tamar, a harlot Rahab, an idolatrous Ruth and an adulterous Bathshebaso that Jesus Christ, the Savior of sinners, has descended His earthly parentage from the loins of sinners and so is nearly akin to them! O the depths of the Grace of God! How matchless is the condescension of the Redeemer!

Once more, Rahabs faith was singular because the subject of it was difficult. What was it she had to believe? Was it not thisthat Israel would destroy Jericho? Now, between Jericho and the tribes flowed the Jordan and the Israelites had no means of crossing it. Only a miracle could divide that overflowing river. Did Rahabs faith expect a miracle? If so, it was remarkably strong. Around Jericho stood a gigantic wall. There was no likelihood of the assailants scaling it or making a breach in it. Did Rahab think that those walls would fall flat to the ground? Or did she leave the way of the capture with God, firmly believing that it would be conquered? If so, she was a woman of no small faith! I have known intelligent Christians whose faith could neither have divided a flood nor leaped over a wallbut this poor womans faith in God did both!

She was sure that the God of the Red Sea would be the God of the Jordan and that He who smote Og, king of Bashan, could strike the king of Jericho, too! Her faith was special because it was strong and stronger than faith often is in those who have far more of a basis on which to rest it. Now, let each one of us say, as we think of this womans strange faith, Why should not I have the same faith in the living God? God can give it to me. Though my past life may have been greatly defiled with sin, yet why should I not put my trust in the Lord, the Savior? Is not faith the very Grace which best becomes a sinner and does most for a sinner? Has not God sent Jesus Christ into the world to redeem men from sin? Has He not redeemed many already by the power of His Spirit and the application of His precious blood? I will believe in Jesus.

Oh, may the Holy Spirit give you faith at this moment! May Gods electing love single out some here who have been, if not actually yet in heart, as bad as Rahaband may they be led by infinite mercy, having followed her in sinto imitate her in faith! Come, you fallen, Jesus can raise you! Come, you filthy, Jesus can cleanse you! Believe and eternal life is yours!

II. In the second place RAHABS FAITH WAS ACTIVE. It was not a sleeping faith, or a dead faithit was an operative faith. It was active first, mentally. When she believed, she began to think. Some persons get converted at revivals and wild excitement and seem to me as if they either have no brains or else their heads were never entered by Grace. You have always to keep up a great excitement or you will miss them. They have no well-considered principles. If you asked them what they believe they would not know, nor would they be able to tell why they believe.

They probably believe because other people believethe minister is earnest and they had a good time in general, hence their faithbut reasonable reason they have none. The best Believers to wear and endure are the thoughtful ones, men of principle, men who weigh and judge. They, of course have their conflicts all the more for their thoughtfulness, but then, on the other hand, they gather strength by the mental exercise and these are the men who are not carried about with every wind of doctrine, but who stand fast in the trying hour. Would to God we had a large army of thoughtful Believers, for then Ritualism and Rationalism would do far less mischief!

Rahab was a thoughtful woman and had quite a system of theology of her own. She knew the pastshe knew the story of the Red Sea and of Og and Sihon. She knew something about Gods having promised by Covenant to give the country to the Israelites and from that she gathered the present. Notice her doctrine upon present things, The Lord Jehovah, He is God in Heaven above and in earth beneath. She laid that down as a certain fact that the Lord Jehovah who had done so much must be the God in Heaven above and in the earth beneath! And then from that she drew her inference as to the future. She believed that God would give the country into Israels hand and she asked that when the Lord did actually do so, they would deal kindly and truly with her.

So she had a doctrine about the present, the past and the future and she had it all arranged in her own mind. Her thought was not only so active that she became a doctrinalistone commentator even calls her a semi-prophetessshe was active in her mind as to her decision for the Lord. She said, I belong to this town. I have citizen privileges in Jericho, but I will give them all up. God is against this city and it will be destroyedand I shall be destroyed in it if I am against God. But He is the true GodI, therefore, side with Him and take part with His people. If He will but have me, I will put myself beneath the shadow of His wings and ask Him to cast the skirt of His garment over me. Henceforth I am no citizen of JerichoI disavow my allegiance to its king.

When the spies came she knew her course of action. She did not regard herself as bound to take any part in the defense of the city by sending word to the king that spies had come. She considered herself as an Israelite and acted as such. Oh, I wish that some professors were half as decided as this! They know the Truth of God but they do not stand up for it! They will hear it laughed at and ill words thrown at it, yet their blood never boils with indignation against the adversaries of God! They keep very quiet and perhaps one reason is that they have nothing to say. They have not learned Christthey have no reason for the hope that is in them and therefore they cannot give it with meekness and fearand so their religion appears to be a dead letter as far as their mind is concerned. God deliver us from such a faith as that! May we have a faith which thrills our entire manhood, moves our judgment, enlightens our understanding and makes us decide for the Truth of God and righteousness in whatever company we may be thrown!

But next came another form of activity. Her faith was active in her own sphere. As I have already conjectured that she became willing to entertain strangers, so when she saw the servants of God in the form of the two spies she knew at once what to do. She took them home and she did her best to hide them. She did not set up to be a heroine and say, Now I am a follower of Jehovah I must be doing something extraordinary. She did not pack up her clothes and start off to some distant place where she could find more glittering service for Jehovahshe stopped where she was and served God there! She minded her own guests and kept her own house. I believe that home duties are one of the very best forms of the activity of faithour business is not to do what we fancy but what the Lord appoints for us.

Of many a Christian woman it is best to have it said, as of Sarah, when they said, Where is Sarah? and the answer was, In her tent. It is a good thing when a Christian feels he will not choose his work but will take the work God chooses for himhe resolves not to be somebody else, but to follow the special path which the Lord marks out for him. Now Rahab was not to anticipate Joel, and drive a tent pin through the head of the King of Jericho, nor to be a Deborah and call some Barak to the battle. She had work at home ready to hand and what her hand found to do she did with all her might. May we see in all of you who are Christians the faith which works in its own sphere! May you exhibit the religion of common things.

Do not believe in knight-errantry. Do not be spiritual Don Quixotes. God has made you what you are, a mother, or a daughtera husband, a servant, or a masterserve God as such. There is something for you to do in your position. Extraordinary calls may come and I pray they may come to some here present, but they are not likely to be given to those who cannot use their present everyday opportunities. We may be called to very special service and have special Grace given, but it is best for us, till such calls are felt, to mind our business in the station of life in which God has placed us. Moses kept sheep till he was bid to deliver Israel. Gideon was threshing when the angel appeared to him. And the disciples were fishing when Jesus called them. They used diligence in their callings and then threw their hearts into their higher calling.

And so did Rahab. The spies came to her; she received them in peace; she hid them and after she hid them she led them down by a rope from her house on the wallwhich perhaps she did before to very different characters. Then she gave them the best advice she could and was thus the means of preserving their lives. She fulfilled a very necessary part in Israelite history. Her faith was truly active and is to be commended. And let me say that she did all this to the best of her ability and used her common sense. She covered them up with flaxshe put them on the housetopshe let them down after it was dark. She told them to go to the mountain. She recommended them wait three days till the heat of the search was overshe acted prudently. She did all she could and she did it with remarkable tact and shrewdness.

I never could see why true religion should be so often associated with stupidity and yet I have remarked that some gracious people either affect a babyish simplicity, or else the Lord has, indeed, chosen the foolish things of this world. If you have faith surely you are not, therefore, to act as if you had lost your reason! It seems to me that faith is common sense spiritualizedcarried into the affairs of religion and that it is quite consistentthere is no imperative upon us to discontinue common sense in our ordinary affairs. We are to be wise as serpents, as well as harmless as doves.

Does not the Apostle say, In understanding be you men? Oh, if men had their wits as much about them when they serve God as they have when they are looking for guineas, how much more would be done in the Church and the world! But there is often a blundering in the management of Christian societies and Christian Churches which would not be tolerated for a moment in a house of businessand men are allowed to be head and foremost in Christian enterprises who would not be reckoned worth their salt for selling pins or driving pigs! We ought to be as thoughtful, as careful, as prudent, as quick, as enterprisingwhat if I say as go-a-headin the service of God as we should be in the pursuits of life.

I commend Rahabs faith because while she was thoroughly active, she was active in the way in which she could best serve the Church of God, and brought all her wits and abilities into full play. Rahab was also active at great risk. Rahabs faith made her run the risk of being put to death, for if the spies had been discovered there would have been short work of Rahab. The king of Jerichos sword would soon have taken off the head of the woman who dared to conceal the enemies of her country! She gladly staked all upon the Truth of God and ran all risks to save the servants of the Lord. In this she was being far superior to those, today, who will not risk their employment, their situation, their good name or even the love of a single relative for Jesus Christs sake.

She was thus possessed of an active faith and we may say as James does, Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers and had sent them out another way? Did not her works go with her faith? Was not the faith which justified her a faith which produced works? Did not the Holy Spirit work in her a manifest activity which justified her faith by proving it to be real, and justified her by showing that she was sincere?

III. RAHABS FAITH WAS MARRED WITH GROSS WEAKNESS. She lied to the men who came to the door to seize the spies. She said that two strangers had come to her but she did not know from where they came, which was a lieand she did not know where they were gone and they had departed some time ago, and they had better be pursuedthis was another falsehood and is altogether inexcusable. But at the same time, please remember that she did not know it was wrong to lie.

There were, no doubt, in her conscience, indistinct glimmerings of an idea that to lie was an evil thing, but, nevertheless, her surroundings prevented her clearly knowing it as we know it. To this very day among many Orientals it is far more usual to lie than to speak the truth. In fact, a thoroughbred aboriginal eastern never speaks the truth unless by mistake, and he would be very sorry for it if he knew he had done so, even by accident! Among the Hindus men cannot readily be believed upon their oaths in courts of justice. We despise a great liar, but the Easterns consider him a genius! Sad it is, but it has always been so and this very much accounts for our finding such men as Abraham and Isaac deliberately saying, under certain trying circumstances, a thing that was not.

You must judge individuals from their own standpoint, and consider their circumstances, or you may do them an injustice. I am not going to excuse Rahabs lie. A lie in Rahab, or in Abraham, is as bad as in anyone elsebut in this case there is this to be saidshe had not been taught, as most of us have been, that a lie is a degrading sin. Nobody had ever said to her, To deceive is contrary to the Law of God, for His Spirit teaches us not to lie to one another, seeing we have put off the old man with his deeds. There is one thing else to be said. I have often tried to put myself in Rahabs place, and have said, Now suppose I had been hiding two servants of God during the old days of Claverhouses dragoons. For instance, if I had Alexander Peden and Cameron in the back room and two dragoons should ride up to my door and demand, Are the ministers here? I have tried to imagine what I would say and I have never yet been able to make up my mind.

I suppose I have more light than Rahab and certainly I have had more leisure to consider the case, and yet I do not see my way. I do not wonder, therefore, that she blundered. And I am not much astonished that she said what she did say, for it would most readily suggest itself to her ignorant and anxious mind. I have turned over a great many schemes of what I would have said. I do not see how I could have said, Yes, they are indoors. That would be to betray Gods servants and that I would not do. I have concocted a great many pretty-looking plans, but I confess that, upon examination, they appear to be more or less tinctured with the deceit which tries to justify or conceal deceitand therefore I have had to abandon them as being no better than falsehood and perhaps not quite so good.

I am not sure whether Rahabs lie was not more honest and outspoken than many an evasion which has suggested itself to very clever people. In fact, as a rule, things which are not obvious and need cleverness to suggest them, are rather suspicious. Strip a Russian and you find a Tartar, and if you strip these clever plans, they peel into falsehoods, after all. I do not need to say a word of apology for the falsehoodfar from it. It is wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, altogether wrong! But, for all that, before you condemn Rahab be quite sure that you do not condemn yourself, and ask yourself first, what you would have said, or what you would have done under the circumstances. To tell the truth is always right. Consequences are not so much to be thought of as the claims of the God of Truth. Sometimes plain truth has had a very wonderful effect and doubtless it would, in every case, be the best policy.

I have heard of a man, a Mr. Story, who had been brought up before Judge Jeffreys to be tried for rebellion against King James II, and there was always very faint hope of a man escaping who had once been introduced to that monster. By some means, Story had gained a great repute for honesty and Jeffrey brought him before the king to speak for himself. As I remember the history it ran somewhat in this wayThe king said, Well, Mr. Story, you were in Monmouths army, were you not? Yes, please your majesty. And you were a commissary there, were you not? Yes, please your majesty. Did you not preach and make speeches to the crowd? Yes, your majesty. Pray, said the king, If you have not forgot what you said, let us have a taste of your fine florid speechgive us some flowers of your rhetoric and a few of the main points on which you insisted.

I told them, your Majesty, that it was you that set fire to the City of London. Upon my word, said the king, and pray, what else did you tell them? I said you poisoned your brother and that you were determined to make us all papists and slaves. By this time the king had heard enough and asked him what he would say if, after all this, he should grant him his life and a free pardon. Mr. Story there upon declared that he should, in such an unlikely case, become a right loyal subjectwhereupon he received a free pardon as an honest, though mistaken man. In his case plain speaking did what falsehood could not have done, and if, in all cases, it did not turn out so, yet our duty is clear, and, therefore, we must be prepared to do it and take the consequences.

I suppose if Rahab had possessed great faith she would have said, It is my business to serve God but not to break Gods Laws, and as it will be breaking Gods Laws to lie, I will not do it. I will take care of His servants as far as possible, but it is His business to take care of them, after all, and I must not do evil that good may come. Though that would have been the best course, Rahab was not yet so instructed as to have thought of it and I fear that a great many here would not have thought of it either. Her fault was by no means one which we can afford to throw stones atavoid it carefullybut do not censure it self-complacently.

IV. Rahabs was A FAITH THAT WAS NOT ABOVE THE USE OF OUTWARD SIGNS AND SEALS. Please note this. There are persons in the world who altogether despise the outward ordinances. They may be good but they are not wise. Rahab, first of all, required from these spies an oath that they would preserve her and next they gave her a token, a scarlet line, which was to be hung in her window. This was the blood red flag of Israel. Was it not hoisted on the Passover night so that the angel might pass by and deliver the people?

She felt great comfort when she had placed the token in her window. She was not superstitiousshe did not believe that anything mystical was in the red cordbut she put it there because she had been told to do so. Now, the highest faith in Christ is perfectly consistent with the obedient use of Christian ordinances. We are resting on the precious blood of Christ, not upon sacraments! God forbid we should ever build our hope upon Baptism or on the Lords Supper. What are these things in themselves but very vanity if we repose confidence in them? At the same time the Lord has given us Baptism as the emblem of His death, His burial and His resurrection. If we believe we have been buried with Him and are risen with Him, let us hang this scarlet cord in our window.

He has given us the ordinance of the Lords Supper to be the emblem of His deathlet us eat the bread and drink the wine in memory of Him. We do not trust in the emblems in the slightest degree. We abhor the idea! Still, we put the scarlet cord in our window and thus let all men know that we believe in Jesus. We are not ashamed to show His death till He come. Yes, and we enter the house, that is the Church, and we delight to dwell there, numbered among Gods people! We are not ashamed to be known to be members of the Brotherhood of the Lord Jesus Christ! Do not seek to get a faith that would cast off the assistance which Gods Spirit appoints you! Everything that is of mans invention put asidebut that which is of Gods ordaining is for your benefitand you are bound to hold to it even though it is little as a scarlet line in the window.

V. HER FAITH WAS SAVING FAITH. I have shown how it was grievously marred but it was effectual, notwithstanding. She was saved when all the city wall went down. Her house was on the wall but there it stood. Must it not have seemed strange? The walls began to rock and shake and then down they fell with a thundering sound, and upward flew dense clouds of dustbut above all there stood the piece of the wall on which was Rahabs houselike an island in the midst of a tempestuous sea!

The Israelites dashed over the ruins of the wall, pursued the doomed men with fury and slew them, for they had been ordained of God to be their executioners. Not one escaped! But no sword came near to Rahabs bosom. No death took away one of her kindred! She was saved! She was taken out of her house with her friends and put outside the camp of the Israelites BUT afterwards received into it. She was married to Salmon, a prince of Judah, and afterwards had the high dignity of being one of the ancestors of our Lord Jesus Christ!

So, dear Brothers and Sisters, true faith in Christ, despite its weakness will save us! It separates us from the world, joins us unto Gods Israel, marries us to the true Prince of Judah, gives us kinship with the Lord Jesus Christand what higher dignity is there to receive?

IV. With this I shall close when I have mentioned the last point, and that is HER FAITH BECAME ACCEPTABLE WITH GOD SO THAT SHE WAS THE MEANS OF THE SALVATION OF OTHERS. Oh, I like this in Rahab, that she did not bargain for her own safety, alone! Her sin had not hardened her heart as sin does in many cases. She thought of her father, her mother and her brothers and her sisters. Now, wherever there is a real child of God there will be anxiety for his family. If you do not want to have your children saved you are not saved yourself!

I have seen professors who thought it quite enough if they, alone, went to Heaven. I knew a man who would walk 20 miles on Sunday to hear the truthnobody preached it but at one place. But when he was asked where his family went, he said that it was no business of hisGod would save His own elect. Such people are not the children of God, because Gods children are not worse than heathen men and publicans, for they care for their own households. Rahab was a good daughterwith all her wrong she loved her father and her mother. She was a good sister and desired her brother and sisters to be saved.

O you Christian people, seek to be good in your relationships at home! I wont give a penny for you if you are not a good husband or a good wife. Away with your Christianity if it makes you a bad child. A domineering, surly fathera rebellious child, a gossiping wife, an idle servant, a tyrannical masterthese may belong to Satan, but God will not own them! Rahab, with all that was wrong about her, had an intense love for her kindred. But notice, love them as she might, she could not save them unless she got them under the red flag. If any of them stopped in the streets when the Israelites were slaying the people, they might say, We belong to Rahab, but the reply would be, We cannot help that, the oath we took was to spare all in the house where the red line was in the window, and if you are not there you cannot be spared.

It will be of no use, when you die, to say, Spare me, O avenging Angel, my mother prayed for me! My sister agonized for my conversion. No, you must personally get into Christ yourself and have a real faith in Him or no prayers of others can be of any use for you. But the mercy was that somehow Rahab was helped by God to bring all her family in. Her father did not say, No, my Girl, I do not believe in it. Some of you have fathers who say that. Pray hard for them! And the mother did not say, My Child you are mad. I have always thought you a little affected in the brain. Do not come teaching your mother. No, but mother came, too.

When the Israelites marched round the city the six days and the people of Jericho laughed and said what fools they were to think they were going to make the walls tumble down by walking round them, she still confided in Godand I dare say she had some difficulty in persuading her lively sisters and her argumentative brothers to believe, too. They would say, Rahab, are you quite clear about this? Is it not all a mere farce? Somehow, such was the influence God gave her, such was the power of her faiththat they all remained in the house and with their families were saved.

The house, I dare say, was filled as full as could be from top to bottom and glad was Rahab to see it. God grant I may have all my family thus preserved! I am sure every child of God here is breathing the same prayerGod of Rahab, give me my father and my mother and my brothers and my sisters and all my kindred. The Lord hear your prayers, and bless you for Jesus Christs sake. Amen.

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Sermon #3226 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FIGS AND OLIVES   
NO. 3226

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1910.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 11, 1879.

Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olives?   
James 3:12.

[This is one of the series of Sermons upon the olive tree that Mr. Spurgeon had intended to make into a volume if he had been spared long enough. Others which have been already published are #s 1569, Volume 26THE GOLDEN LAMP AND ITS GOODLY LESSONS; #Olive 1, Volume 55THE BEAUTY OF THE OLIVE TREE and #3208, Volume 56THE FAITHFUL OLIVE TREE

Read/download all the sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

THERE is only one answer to the question, of course, the fig tree can do nothing of the kind. It would be quite contrary to its nature and, therefore, the Apostle argues that Christians ought to act according to their nature. If we are, indeed, the children of God, we should act as His children and always act as His children. We are not consistent if at one time we speak as heirs of Heaven should speak and at another time speak as the heirs of wrath speak! James truly tells us that a fountain cannot, at the same time pour forth sweet water and bitter, salt water and fresh and he, therefore, rightly argues that from the same mouth there must not proceed blessing and cursingthere must be consistency of conduct in those who are the Lords.

I am going, in the first place, to take the question of our text out of its literal context. And in the second place to come closer to it. And, perhaps, in the third place to come still closer!

I. So, first, can the fig tree, my Brothers and Sisters, bear olives? No. And IT IS VERY UNDESIRABLE THAT IT SHOULD! There is no need for it to do so, and there would be no gain if it should do so! I am, of course, taking the question altogether apart from its context. A fig tree is better employed in bearing figs than it would be in bearing olives. The olive tree is meant to bear olives and the fig tree to bear figs. And it would not be any advantage if it were to leave off bearing figs and begin bearing olives, or if it alternately bore figs and olives.

Now, beloved Friends, all of us that are as trees of the Lords righthand planting are bringing forth fruit to His praise and glory. If we are carrying out His great purpose concerning us, we are producing the peaceable fruits of righteousness, the fruit of the Spirit, fruit unto holinessbut this fruit does not always take the same shape in every one of us. We cannot all do the same work! And even when our work is similar, we have various ways of doing it. I cannot do your work, my Brother or Sister, and you cannot do mineand the two of us together cannot do a third persons work! There is a certain tree that produces a particular kind of fruit and a certain plant on which a special sort of seed is found, but no tree produces all kinds of fruit and no plant bears all sorts of seeds. So it is in the Church of Godall true Believers are members of the mystical body of Christ, but all the members have not the same office. It would be very foolish if any one member of the body were to attempt to perform the work of all the organs of the body or, indeed, of any beside its own. The best thing is for the eye to see and let the ear do the hearing, for the ear to hear and let the mouth do the speaking, for the feet to carry the body wherever the brain directs, and for the hands to perform their own special handicraft and not to usurp the office of the organs of locomotion!

But why is it that the fig tree cannot bear olives and that one Christian cannot do all kinds of work? I answer, first, because the variety is, itself, charming. If anybody had the power to destroy all the fruit trees in the world and then to make a tree that would bear all the fruits at once what a pity it would be! It is much better to have three trees to bear figs, olives and grapes than to have one tree bearing figs on one branch, olives on another and grapes on a third. It might seem a fine thing to have Christians who could do everythingmen who could preach and pray and sing, who could be entrusted with great wealth and great talents, who could lead the Church and who could, at the same time, control the world, but that is not Gods plan for any of His children! There is a beautiful variety in the Church of Godone exercises this gift and another exercises that. One is entrusted with one form of Grace and another is entrusted with equal Grace but in quite a different form. It would be no improvement if all flowers were of one color, or if all precious stones were of equal brilliance or if all stars gave exactly the same amount of light. Variety is a great part of beauty and God delights to have it so.

We have here, in the next place, a display of Divine Sovereignty . It is Gods will that makes yon bird that looks the sun in the face into an eagle! And that other whom sits moodily on the ivy-mantled tower into an owl! It is He who makes one of His creatures into an archangel and another into an aphid crawling on a rose leaf. None may ask Him why He acts thus, for He has the right to do as He pleases and, as Elihu said to Job, He gives no account of any of His matters. Or, as Paul put it to the Romans, Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? It is quite certain that there are great differences among men. In the very size and shape of our bodies and in the natural conformation of our minds, we are not all alike. Let us say what we may, there are differences of capacity which are with us from our birth, even as God intended that there should be. He is in this matter, as in everything else, both Lord and Kingso what folly and sin it is for us to quarrel with Him about our condition, or to attempt to arraign Him before our judgment seat! If God makes some other Brother to be like the fruitful tree that bears olives, shall I be jealous of him if my fruit is of another kind? Shall I not rather be thankful to resemble the tree that bears figs? And if we two see another Brother whose fruit is like the grapes of Eshcol, shall we envy him because we cannot bring forth such welcome clusters? Oh no! But let us all three bless the Lord for the sweetness of the figs, the fatness of the olives and the lusciousness of the grapes that He enables us severally to produce to His praise and glory!

Further, these diversities of gifts should excite in us humility. What if the olive tree does bear its rich purple berries? It cannot bear sweet figs and sweet as the figs are, they cannot supply the oil which gives a relish to the peasants bread, feeds the lamp which lights his cottage in the evening hours and furnishes the medicine which heals him when he is sick or wounded. When the Lord entrusts you with talents, my Brother, you are naturally inclined to be proud. But when you hear of another whom the Lord has honored far more, do not quarrel either with the Lord or with your Brother, but rejoice that there is someone whose Master thinks he may be trusted to a very high degree! And remember that the responsibilities of your own position are quite sufficient for you. I am often amazed at the stupidity of certain Christians. They will not do what they can doand they want to do what they cannot do! They are not satisfied with walking, so they take up Davids cry, Oh that I had wings like a dove! The Lord knew that they would not make a proper use of wings so He did not give them any! No doubt they think, if they had wings, they would fly away and be at rest, but I question whether they would be able to rest if they flew away from their right place and the work God has committed to their charge! Many a man is a first-rate Sunday school teacher, but that does not satisfy his ambitionhe must be a preacher! When he gets into the pulpit, the only part of his discourse that is appreciated by his hearers is the end of ityet he says that he must preach! Many a good worker has been spoiled through imbibing the notion that he must do something for which God has not fitted him. There is a humbling truth that we cannot do some things which others can do well, just as the fig tree cannot bear olives though the olive tree growing close beside it is laden with the precious oily berries!

This fact ought also to promote in us brotherly admiration. It is one of the most beautiful exhibitions of a Christian spirit when a Christian man admires the gifts and graces of others more than he admires his own! When, instead of thinking of anything in which he excels others, he delights in those things in which they excel him. We ought to emulate the spirit of that noble Roman who, when he was beaten at an election, said he was glad that his country had so many better men than himself. It is not always easy to feel, I am happy in knowing of a Brother who is so much more brilliant than I am, for the world sadly needs far more light than I can give. It is not always easy to play the least important instrument in the band and to rejoice that somebody else can beat the big drum, or blow the silver cornet, yet that ought to be our feeling. You remember how prettily Bunyan speaks of Christiana and Mercy admiring each other after they had been in the bathThey could not see that glory, each one on herself, which they could see in each other. Now, therefore, they began to esteem each other better than themselves. For you are fairer than I am, said one. And you are more comely than I am, said another. So should Christians see and admire the work of the Spirit in other Christians and should bless God that there are such gracious men and women in the world! While those who are thus admired should, in their turn, see greater excellence in others than they see in themselves.

And once more, this variety of gifts and graces helps to foster fellowship. I often feel, when I am conversing with some of the poorest and feeblest members of this Church, that I am greatly profited by what they say to me. They usually speak very kindly concerning the comfort they receive from my preaching and the advice I am able to give them when they come to see me. But I am certain that I derive benefit from them! It is impossible for two Christian men or women who are in a right state of heart, to converse with one another about the things of God without both of them being thereby spiritually enriched! As different countries have different products, and one nation sends its produce to supply the needs of another nation and thus, by mutual exchange, commerce is created and each nations wealth is increased, so is it in spiritual things. You with your olives and this Brother with his figs, and that other Brother with his clusters of grapes will interchange your various fruits and all of you will benefit by the transaction! It is a great blessing for a bold and confident Believer to have a talk with a trembling, desponding Christianand the poor timid soul will be strengthened by coming into contact with the more fully established saint. The man who has a very sweet disposition is apt to develop a sugariness which is most nauseating, so it will do him good to meet with a Christian who is very straightforward and outspokenwhile that Brotherby associating with the more gentle spirit, may be kept from becoming too rough and coarse. I need not multiply instances of this helpful fellowship beyond just reminding you of how often, in Gods mercy, a Christian husband and wife are the counterpart and complement of one another, so that what is lacking in one of them is supplied by the other and vice versaand thus they both become the better, the holier, the happier and the more useful in the service of their Lord!

II. Now, in the second place I am going to take the text more nearly in the way in which it was used by the Apostle. Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olives? No. IT WOULD BE ALTOGETHER CONTRARY TO ITS NATURE.

It would be a monstrosity, a thing to be wondered at and stared at as unnatural and absurd if a fig tree started bearing olives! And it is just as unnatural for a Christian to live in sin. Can he so live as to bear the fruits of iniquity instead of the fruits of righteousness? God forbid that it should be so! If the fig tree should ever bring forth olives, we might have good reason to question whether it was a fig tree, for a tree is known by its fruits. So, when one who professes to be a Christian lives as worldings live, there is grave reason to fear that he is a worldling, notwithstanding his profession! If we are to know him by his fruits, which is our Lords Infallible test, how can we imagine that he is a partaker of the Divine Life when he acts as he does? Inconsistency of life casts a very serious doubt upon many who call themselves the children of God. No wonder they are, themselves, often the subjects of doubts and fearsas they ought to be for if they judge themselves by their fruits, they may well question whether they have ever been born-again! Those who are new creatures in Christ Jesus seek to live as He lived as far as it is possible for them to do so.

Besides, if a man for a while brings forth the fruits of righteousness and then bears the fruits of iniquity, he casts a slur upon all his former goodness. Suppose I saw a fig tree bearing olives and its owner assured me that it bore figs last year? I would say, Well, I should not think the figs were worth much to judge from the look of those olives. So, when a man is in a passion and makes use of very strong language, perhaps even cursing and swearing as Peter did, one naturally asks, Can that man ever have been a Christian? Well, says someone who knows him, he used to speak very kindly and lovingly, and seemed to be a sincere Christian. That may have been the case with him, but it is a poor sort of Christianity that can even occasionally produce such iniquity! May God save all of us from bearing two kinds of fruit in this unnatural and dishonoring fashion! Suppose the whole Church of God should act thus and at one time be eminent for holiness and at another time be notorious for sinwhat would be the consequence? Suppose, for instance, that certain people were very particular about their attendance at public worship and yet were known to frequent the theater? Would it not be a strange state of things? Should we judge them to be Christians or worldlings? If a man is sometimes a sinner and sometimes a saint, we would need to have an almanac to tell us which he was likely to be, or a tide-table to let us know whether, like the tides of the sea, he was ebbing or flowing! Think, too, what the consequences would be to such a man if he were to dieor if the Lord were to come just when he was bearing the fruits of unrighteousness!

I am only imagining a monstrous casesuch a case as must not be ours. O my dear Friends, let it never be so with you! If God is God, serve Him and follow Him! Or if the devil is God, serve himbut to try to serve God and the devil at the same time is to attempt a compromise that God abhors and which even Satan is not mean enough to approve! Even his disciples laugh to scorn those inconsistent professors who seek to serve God and mammon and to walk, at the same time, in the narrow way that leads unto life and in the broad road that leads to destruction! The other day I saw a man trying to walk on both sides of the street at once. Of course, he was drunk and whenever I see a man trying, spiritually, to do the same sort of thingattempting to serve God and to serve the devil, tooI know that he is intoxicated, or infatuated under a fatal delusion, or he would never imagine that such a combination could be possible! Oil and water will not mix, nor light and darkness, nor saintliness and worldlinessyou must have one or the other, you cannot have both at once, so choose this day whom you will serve, Christ or Belialyou cannot serve both, for no servant can serve two masters. The true Church of Christ is fair as the moon, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners. But an inconsistent church, a double-dealing church, a worldly church, (what an anomaly)a church that holds with the hare and runs with the hounds, a church that makes a great profession but has little or nothing worth having in possessionsuch a church is the scorn of the world, a mere blown-up football for men and devils to kick wherever they will!

An unholy man or woman who pretends to be a Christian is a stench in the nostrils of the thrice-holy God and a by-word and reproach among those who make no pretense of being the Lords. How can you rebuke sin in others while you are living in it, yourself? How can you preach the Christ whom you dishonor in your daily life? How can you reprove worldliness when you are, yourself, worldly? We speak with contempt of Satan rebuking sin and of the pot calling the kettle black, so if in any degree any of us have been guilty of this great crime against God, may we now sincerely repent of our sin and may the sanctifying Grace of the Holy Spirit preserve us from such evil walking for all time to come!

III. Now, thirdlyand this is the point upon which I want most strongly to insistIT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR A FIG TREE TO BEAR OLIVESand it is impossible for an unconverted man to produce the fruits of righteousness! That is a task which is altogether beyond his power. The real text of this last division of my sermon is this

YOU MUST BE BORN-AGAIN.   
Unless you are regenerated, born from above by a new and heavenly birth, you are not Christians, whatever you may be called, and you cannot produce the fruit which is acceptable to God any more than a fig tree can produce olives.

Let us suppose that we are in the South of France and that we are standing by a fine fig tree. We want to make it bring forth olives and we will, for the sake of my argument, imagine that it is quite willing to do sohow shall we go to work?

Well, first, let us label the fig tree, OLIVE TREE. Get a label, write the word, olive tree, on it and hang it on the fig tree. We have done that, entered its name on the list of olive trees, and when the next olive season comes round, we will bring our basket and gather the olives. At the appointed time, we do come, but what do we find? I cannot see an olive on the tree! There are fig leaves and figs, but nothing else. Ah, but we called it an olive tree! Yes, but calling it an olive tree did not change its nature, for it is still a fig tree! And calling a person a child of God will never make that person really be a child of God! I remember reading of someone being taught to speak of my Baptism wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven. And if I recollect, rightly, that expression is often used by those who do not show any sign of having been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and adopted into the family of God! It is just a case of hanging a label on themtheir nature remains the same as it was when they were born and, by nature they are children of wrath! Persons are said to be Christians because they were born in a Christian country. I have often heard and read that England is a Christian country, but I have never seen any evidence of the truth of that title! Though there are some Christians in England, as there are some in India, China, Africa and other countries which no one regards as Christian! Yet according to some people, all Englishman are Christians, though some of them never enter a place of worship and others are drunk every night in the weekand many do not even believe in the existence of God! To call a horse an angel will not make him an angel. And to call a man a Christian will not make him a Christian. You may label, enroll, number the unsaved as much as you like, but you will not make even one of them a Christian by that process any more than putting the name, olive tree, on a fig tree will change its nature and make it produce olives!

As re-naming the fig tree is no use, let us try to trim it to the shape of an olive tree. That will not be an easy task, for the two trees bear very slight resemblance to one another. Still, we will see what we can do with axe, knife and shears, to make the fig tree look like an olive tree. When we come again, at the proper season, to gather the olives, how many shall we find? Not one, though we search diligently from the trunk to the topmost branch. If we have not ruined the tree by our cutting and shaping, we may find figs on it, but we shall gather no olives! So we may be very careful in trying to shape our childrens lives and characters. We may teach them to be truthful, honest, upright, amiable, heroic and so onand we may succeed so far that some of them may even look like young Christians! But if the Grace of God has not made them to be new creatures in Christ Jesus, all our training, trimming, shaping and directing will leave them unsaved and we shall then search in vain to find in them, the fruit of the Spirit. There is far more needed than anything we can do! There must be a deeper, more enduring work than making them look and act like Christiansthere must be a Divine work in the heart, a complete change of nature which can only be worked by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit!

In our next attempt to get olives from the fig tree, we will treat the fig tree as if it were an olive tree. When at Mentone, I have often noticed the men in the olive gardens digging a trench all round the trees and filling it with old rags and, somehow, the trees seem to draw suitable nutriment out of that strange sort of manure. Very well then, let us treat our fig tree in the same fashion and dig about it and fertilize it with all the old rags we can find. We do so and wait patiently for the resultand then we discover that we have wasted all those precious bales of rags which might have made the olive trees bring forth an abundant crop, for there is not an olive on the fig tree and probably even fewer figs than it would have produced if we had given it the nourishment suited to its nature! So you may take your young people and treat them as if they were Christians and do all that you can to nourish the Divine Life that has not yet entered their soulsbut all your efforts will be in vain, for you cannot give them new naturesyou cannot make the children of Adam into the children of God! You will do far more lasting good by entreating the Lord to accomplish the great work of Grace which is altogether beyond your powerand by teaching each unsaved one, old or young, to pray Davids prayerCreate in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Here is our fig tree without a single olive on it! Now let us surround it with olive trees and see what a change that will make in it. The tree is very lonely where it is, so we will see what helpful associations will do for it. It will be another difficult task for us, but we will not shirk it, for we are determined to transplant it right into the middle of an olive garden and we will tie it up to a fruitful olive tree and then, when it has no other trees near it, surely it must bear olives! But will it? Oh nowhen the time of figs arrives, it will bear figs unless we have destroyed its fruitbearing power by disturbing itbut there will be no olives on it except those that fall among its branches when the tree by its side is beaten to yield up its thousands of purple, oily berries. So here is an unconverted man right in the midst of Christian people! He is not very comfortable, for he feels that he is out of his element. He would be much more at home in a public house or at a music hall, or at home reading a novel or the newspaperyet here he is surrounded by Christians. Possibly, like the fig tree tied to an olive tree, the man is united to a godly wife, yet it is not enough to make him a Christian. He has a gracious, loving daughter she has persuaded him to come with her tonight in the hope that he may get a blessing here, as I most sincerely hope he may. But, my dear Friend, let me tell you that it is not sufficient for you to have a Christian wife, or Christian children, or Christian parents unless there is a work of Grace within your own heartunless your very nature is changed by the Holy Spirit so that you are made a new creature in Christ Jesus! All these hallowed relationships and associations will only increase your condemnation! I must repeat to you Pauls message to the Philippian jailor, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. And very likely it will then be possible to add in your case as in his, and your house. God grant that it may be so!

Now suppose we take that fig tree to the top of a hill, like the Mount of Olives, and plant it there? It is still a fig tree and it brings forth nothing but figs! Yes, and if the Lord were to take an unconverted man up to Heaven, just as he is, he would remain unconverted even there. Unless and until he was born-again, the mere change of place, even from earth to Heaven, would not make him acceptable to God! He would be like that man without the wedding garmentand the King would say to his servants, Bind him, hand and foot, and take him away and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Perhaps someone asks, But, Sir, what is it to be born-again? Well, it is not a mere outward change of life. It is not simply a giving up of certain sins and a desire to possess certain virtues. It is as great a work as if you were to be annihilatedto pass absolutely out of existenceand God were to make a new man in your place! Everyone who is in Christ Jesus is a new creationold things have passed away and all things have become new.

But can such a change as that be worked? asks an anxious enquirer. It would be a glorious thing for me if it could be worked in me. Yes, my Friend, it can be done by the Almighty Spirit and if you are ever to be found in the Presence of God in Glory, this change must be worked in you! I am speaking to some of you who have been very moral and admirable from your youth up, yet you have never experienced a saving change of heart, so to you I must repeat those solemn words of the Lord Jesus, Except you are converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Well, says some self-satisfied person, I feel quite good enough already. Ah, that is the very strongest possible proof that you are not good enough. Do you remember the people, in our Lords lifetime on earth, who thought they were good enough, and do you recollect what Jesus said concerning their righteousness? I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. And that is what He says to you who think you are good enough. The man who has been born-again confesses with sorrow and shame that he has no goodness of his ownand he ascribes all that is good in him to the Almighty Grace of God, alone. With Toplady, he sings

*Because Your Sovereign Love   
Was bent the worst to save   
Jesus who reigns enthroned above,   
The free salvation gave.*

Ah, says another friend, but if that is true, it makes my case so hopeless. That is just what I want you to feel, so that you may look right away from yourself and look alone unto Jesus! You cannot regenerate yourself any more than that which is not in existence can create itself! It must be a work that is accomplished by Omnipotence and, therefore, no power less than that which is Divine can accomplish it. So you are obliged to acknowledge your absolute dependence upon the Grace of God. If He leaves you to yourself, you will be most certainly lostand He is not bound by anything but the love of His own heart to interpose to rescue you. Therefore if, in His Infinite Sovereignty, as King of Mercy and of Grace, He deigns to smile upon you and to create you anew in Christ Jesus, you will have reason to praise and bless Him forever and ever, will you not? That is the point to which I want to bring you so that you will admit that if you are ever saved, it will be all of Gods Grace and all Gods work from first to last!

Oh, that I had this new birth! cries one. That very wish, if it is the sincere desire and prayer of your heart, may be the first evidence that you have already been born-again, even as the Lords testimony concerning Saul of Tarsus, Behold, he prays, proved that he had already uttered the first cry of a newborn child of God! Remember that text which the Lord blessed to my conversion so many years ago, Look unto Me, and be you saved all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none elseand do as I did, thenlook and live! Look this very instant, by faith, to Jesus hanging on the Cross of Calvary, for

*There is life for a look at the Crucified One! There is life at this moment for thee   
Then look, Sinnerlook unto Him and be saved Unto Him who was nailed to the tree.*

If you will do this, that faith-look of yours will be the evidence that this new life is already pulsating within you! And as this life is everlasting life, you have received that life which neither devils nor men can ever take away from you. He that believes on the Son has everlasting life, and no man ever truly believed on Jesus and yet remained unregenerate! Faith in Christ is one of the first signs and tokens of the new life within the soul. If I find on you even one olive, I know that it has the oil of Grace within it and that is proof positive that you are one of the good olive trees in the garden of the Lord! If I found figs on you, I would know that you were a fig tree. But if I find only one little olive, I know that the hidden life that can produce one olive can produce bushels of the same sort and even larger and richer ones, to the praise and glory of the great Owner of the olive garden in which you have been planted by His own right hand! The little feeble faith that You have already exercised is the gift of God and under the gracious nurture of His Ever-Blessed Spirit, it will grow until you are, like Abraham, strong in faith, giving glory to God.

May the Lord enable you to have done with yourself and to have begun with Him! The end of the creature is the beginning of the Creator. When you acknowledge that you cannot save yourself and trust Him to save you, He will do it! Cast yourself upon Him this very moment and then, by an act of Almighty Grace, the fig tree shall be changed into a fruitful olive tree and your fruit shall be unto holinessand the end everlasting life!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 56; 57.**

Psalm 56:1. Be merciful unto me, O God, for man would swallow me up. Fighting all day he oppresses me. Man has no mercy upon me, but, O God, be You merciful to me! If Your Justice does for a while let my enemies loose upon me, let Your mercy diminish their power over me, for they are very cruel. They would make a complete end of me if they could, utterly devouring me.

2-4. My enemies would daily swallow me up: for they are many that fight against me, O most High. What time I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God I will praise His Word. David means, Through His Grace, I will praise His Word, for we cannot rightly praise God unless He gives us the Grace to do it. To receive from God is most easy for us, but to return gratitude to God is impossible except as His Grace enables us to do it. In God I will praise His Word.

4, 5. In God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do to me. Every day they twist my words. This is a common calamity of Gods servants and a common crime of the oppressors of Gods people in all ages They twist my words.

5, 6. All their thoughts are against me for evil. They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps when they wait for my soul. They watch to see if they can find some matter of accusation against me, or some opportunity for tempting me to turn aside from my God. They mark my steps, as the huntsman follows the trail of the lion he seeks to kill, so they follow my tracks to see if by any means they may slay me.

7, 8. Shall they escape by iniquity? In Your anger cast down the people, O God. You number my wanderings. Davids was a life of wandering, from the sheep-folds to his fathers house, then to the palace of Saul, then to the camp of Israel, then to the palace, again, then to the cave Adullam, then among the PhilistinesI scarcely remember all the places where he went, but there were at least 12 great changes in Davids life. And God had them all written down and so He has all yours, you who believe in Jesusall your wanderings are recorded because God sets a high value upon everything that happens to you! Not a sparrow falls to the ground without being noticed by Him, and not a single step is taken by you without being noted by Him.

8. Put You my tears into Your bottle. This is thought by some to have been an allusion to an old Roman custom of catching the tears of the friends of the dying in a lachrymatory, or small bottle, and then burying them in their tomb. I see no reason to believe that David meant anything so absurd! There is probably a very much better meaning than that to be attached to these words. Bottles, large capacious bottles, were used to catch the copious drops which streamed forth from the wine-press and David felt that his tears would be, in Gods sight, as precious and as plentiful as the grape drops, and that a great bottle would be needed to hold themsuch a bottle as the Jews used for holding milk or wine. Though his soul suffered much sorrow, he believed God would treasure it all upPut You my tears into Your bottle.

8. Are they not in Your Book? Are they not all duly recorded there?   
9. When I cry unto You, then shall my enemies turn back. When I cry, they shall fly, so swift is prayer to reach the ear and heart of God! And so kind is God to me.   
9-12. This I know; for God is for me. In God will I praise His Word: in the LORD will I praise His Word. In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me. Your vows are upon me, O God. I am bound to praise You, I am bound to love You and I will, come what may.

12, 13. I will render praises unto You. For You have delivered my soul from death: will You not deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?

Psalm 57:1. Be merciful unto me, O God. He begins with the same note as in the last Psalm. It is a note that cannot be too often on the Believers tongueBe merciful unto me, O God.

1. Be merciful unto me. As an old writer says, The tongue of the bell strikes on both sides, and the note is the same in each case, Be merciful unto me, be merciful unto me. You cannot have that petition offered too often! David feels his deep need of mercy and the great value of mercy and, therefore, he prays again and again, Be merciful unto me, be merciful unto me.

1, 2. For my soul trusts in You: yes, in the shadow of Your wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities have passed over me. I will cry unto God Most High; unto God that performs all things for me. That perfects all things for me, so it may be read. That perfects all His mercies, all His promisesand who will perfect all that concerns me whatever it may beunto this God will I cry.

3-5. He shall send from Heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth His mercy and His truth. My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword. Be You exalted, O God, above the heavens; let Your Glory be above all the earth. Exalt Yourself by overcoming all Your enemies. If they are very great, be You greater still. If they are mighty, be You the more mighty in my defense and so glorify Your holy name.

6-11. They have prepared a net for my steps, my soul is bowed down: they have dug a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. Selah. My heart is fixed. God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise. Awake, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early. I will praise You, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto You among the nations. For Your mercy is great unto the heavens and Your truth unto the clouds. Be You exalted, O God, above the heavens; let Your Glory be above all the earth.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1682 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

ASK AND HAVE   
NO. 1682

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 1, 1882, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

You lust, and have not: you kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: you fight and war, yet you have not, because you ask not. You ask, and receive not,   
because you ask amiss, that you may   
consume it upon your lusts.   
James 4:2, 3.

MAY these striking words be made profitable to us by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Man is a creature abounding in needs and ever restless and, therefore, his heart is full of desires. I can hardly imagine a man existing who has not many desires of some kind or another. Man is comparable to the sea anemone with its multitude of tentacles which are always hunting in the water for food; or like certain plants which send out tendrils, seeking after the means of climbing. The poet says, Man never is, but always wishes to be, blest. He steers for which he thinks to be his port, but, as yet, he is tossed about on the waves. One of these days he hopes to find his hearts delight and he continues to desire with more, or less, expectancy.

This fact appertains both to the worst of men and the best of men. In bad men, desires corrupt into luststhey long after that which is selfish, sensual and, consequently, evil. The current of their desires sets strongly in a wrong direction. These lusts, in many cases, become extremely intensethey make the man their slave. They domineer over his judgment; they stir him up to violencehe fights and warsperhaps he literally kills. In Gods sight, who counts anger, murder, he does kill often. Such is the strength of his desires that they are commonly called passions. And when these passions are fully excited, then the man, himself, struggles vehemently, so that the kingdom of the devil suffers violence and the violent take it by force!

Meanwhile, in gracious men there are also desires. To rob the saints of their desires would be to injure them greatly, for by these they rise out of their lower selves. The desires of the gracious are after the best things things pure and peaceable, laudable and elevating. They desire Gods Glory and, therefore, their desires spring from higher motives than those which inflame the unrenewed mind. Such desires in Christian men are frequently very fervent and forcible. They ought always to be so. Those desires begotten of the Spirit of God stir the renewed nature, exciting and stimulating it, and making the man to groan and to be ill in anguish and in travail until he can attain that which God has taught him to long for. The lusting of the wicked and the holy desiring of the righteous have their own ways of seeking gratification. The lusting of the wicked develops itself in contentionit kills and desires to have its fights and it wars. While, on the other hand, the desire of the righteous, when rightly guided, betakes itself to a far hotter course for achieving its purpose, for it expresses itself in fervent and importunate prayer. The godly man, when full of desire, asks and receives at the hands of God.

At this time, I shall, by Gods help, try to set forth from our text, first, the poverty of lustingYou lust and have not. Secondly, I shall sadly show the poverty of many professing Christians in spiritual things, especially in their Church capacitythey also long for and have not. Thirdly, we shall speak, in closing, upon the wealth with which holy desires will be rewarded if we will but use the right means. If we ask we shall receive.

I. First, consider THE POVERTY OF LUSTINGYou lust, and have not. Carnal lusts, however strong they may be, do not, in many cases, obtain that which they seek after. As says the text, You desire to have, and cannot obtain. The man longs to be happy, but he is not. He pines to be great, but he grows meaner every day. He aspires after this and after that which he thinks will content him, but he is still unsatisfied. He is like the troubled sea which cannot rest. One way or another, his life is disappointment. He labors as in the very fire, but the result is vanity and vexation of spirit. How can it be otherwise? If we sow the wind, must we not reap the whirlwind and nothing else?

Or, if, perhaps, the strong lusts of an active, talented, persevering man do give him what he seeks after, yet how soon he loses it! He has it so that he has it not. The pursuit is toilsome, but the possession is a dream. He sits down to eat and lo! the feast is snatched away, the cup vanishes when it is at his lips! He wins to lose! He builds and his sandy foundation slips from under his tower and his efforts lie in ruins. He that conquered kingdoms, died discontented on a lone rock in mid ocean and he who revived his empire, fell never to rise again. As Jonahs gourd withered in a night, so have empires fallen on a sudden, and their lords have died in exile. What men obtain by warring and fighting is an estate with a short lease the obtaining is so temporary that it still stands true, they lust, and have not.

Or if such men have gifts and power enough to retain that which they have won, yet in another sense they have it not while they have it, for the pleasure which they looked for in it is not there. They pluck the apple and it turns out to be one of those Dead Sea apples which crumble to ashes in the hand. The man is rich, but God takes away from him the power to enjoy his wealth. By his lusts and warring the licentious man, at last, obtains the objective of his cravings and, after a moments gratification, he loathes that which he so passionately lusted for! He longs for the tempting pleasure, seizes it and crushes it by his eager grasp!

Watch the boy hunting the butterfly which flits from flower to flower while he pursues it ardently. At last it is within reach and with his cap he knocks it down! But when he picks up the poor remains, he finds the painted fly spoiled by the act which won it! Thus may it be said of multitudes of the sons of menYou lust, and have not. Their poverty is set forth in a threefold manner. You kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain, You have not, because you ask not. You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss. If the lusters fail, it is not because they did not set to work to gain their ends, for, according to their nature, they used the most practical means within their reach and used them eagerly, too!

According to the mind of the flesh, the only way to obtain a thing is to fight for it and James sets this down as the reason of all fighting. Why come wars and fighting among you? Come they not, therefore, even of your lusts that war in your members? This is the form of effort of which we read, You fight and war, yet you have not. To this mode of operation men cling from age to age. If a man is to get along in this world, they tell me, he must contend with his neighbors, and push them from their vantage ground. He must not be particular how they are to thrive, but he must mind the main chance on his own account and take care to rise, no matter how many he may tread upon. He cannot expect to get on if he loves his neighbor as himself! It is a fair fight and every man must look to himself!

Do you think I am satirical? I may be, but I have heard this sort of talk from men who meant it. So they take to fighting and that fighting is often victorious, for, according to the text, you killthat is to say, they so fight that they overthrow their adversary and there is an end of him. They are men of great strength, young lions that can go forth and tear their prey to pieces and yet, it is said of them, that they lack and suffer hunger. But they that wait upon the Lord shall not need any good thing, while these lusters are unrestrained in their efforts to gain their point! They stop at nothing, they kill and desire to have.

Moreover, they fight with great perseverance, for the text says, You fight and war. Now, war is a continuation of the act of fighting, prolonging it from campaign to campaign and conducting it by the rules of military art till the victory is won. Multitudes of men are living for themselves, competing here and warring there, fighting for their own hand with the utmost perseverance. They have little choice as to how they will do it. Conscience is not allowed to interfere in their transactions, but the old advice rings in their ears, Get money! Get money honestly, if you can, but by any means get money. No matter though body and soul are ruined and others are deluged with miseryfight onfor there is no discharge in this war! If you are to win, you must fightand everything is fair in war!

So they muster their forces, they struggle with their fellows, they make the battle of life hotter and hotter, they banish love and brand tenderness as follyand yet, with all their schemes, they obtain not the end of life in any true sense. Well says James, You kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; you fight and war, yet you have not. When men who are greatly set upon their selfish purposes do not succeed, they may possibly hear that the reason of their non-success is Because you ask not. Is, then, success to be achieved by asking? So the text seems to hintand so the righteous find it. Why does not this man of intense desires take to asking? The reason is, first, because it is unnatural to the natural man to pray as well expect him to fly!

He despises the idea of supplication. Pray? he says. No, I want to be at work. I cannot waste time on devotions; prayers are not practical. I want to fight my way. While you are praying, I shall have beaten my opponent. I go to my counting house and leave you to your Bibles and your prayers. He has no mind for asking of God. He declares that none but canting hypocrites care to pray, thus confessing that if he were to pray, he would be a canting hypocrite! As for him, his praying is of quite another sort, and woe to those who come into his clutches! They will find that with him, business is business, and pretty sharp business, too. He will never stoop to pray, He is too proud. Gods reliance he does not understand self-reliance is his word! Self is his god and to his god he looks for success!

He is so proud that he reckons himself to be his own Providence! His own right hand and his active arm shall get him the victory. When he is very liberal in his views, he admits that though he does not pray, yet there may be some good in it, for it quiets peoples minds and makes them more comfortable. But as to any answer ever coming from prayer, he laughs at the idea and talks both philosophically and theologically about the absurdity of supposing that God alters His course of conduct out of respect to the prayers of men and women. Ridiculous, he says, utterly ridiculous! And, therefore, in his own great wisdom, he returns to his fighting and his warring, for by such means he hopes to attain his end. Yet he obtains not!

The whole history of mankind shows the failure of evil lusts to obtain their objective. For a while the carnal man goes on fighting and warring, but, by-and-by, he changes his mind, for he is ill, or frightened. His purpose is the same, but if it cannot be achieved one way, he will try another. If he must ask, well, he will askhe will become religious and do good to himself in that way. He finds that some religious people prosper in the world and that even sincere Christians are by no means fools in business and, therefore, he will try their plan. And now he comes under the third censure of our textYou ask and receive not. What is the reason why the man who is the slave of his lusts obtains not his desire, even when he takes to asking?

The reason is because his asking is a mere matter of form. His heart is not in his worship. He buys a book containing what are called, forms of prayer, and he repeats these, for repeating is easier than praying and demands no thought! I have no objection to your using a form of prayer if you pray with it, but I know a great many who do not pray with it, but only repeat the form. Imagine what would come of our families if, instead of our children speaking to us frankly when they have any need, they were always to think it requisite to go into the library and hunt up a form of prayer and read it to us! Surely there would be an end to all home-feeling and love! Life would move in fetters! Our household would become a kind of boarding-school, or barracksand all would be parade and formality instead of happy eyes looking up with loving trust into fond eyes that delight to respond!

Many spiritual men use a form, but carnal men are pretty sure to do so, for they end in the form. This mans prayer is asking amiss because it is entirely for himself. He wants to prosper that he may enjoy himself. He wants to be great simply that he may be admiredhis prayer begins and ends with self. Look at the indecency of such a prayer even if it is sincere. When a man so prays, he asks God to be his servant and gratify his desires. No, worse than that! He wants God to join him in the service of his lusts! He will gratify his lusts and God shall come and help him to do it! Such prayer is blasphemous, but a large quantity of it is offered and it must be one of the most God-provoking things that Heaven ever beholds!

No, if a man will live to himself and his lusts, let him do so, and the further he gets off from God the more consistent he will be. Let him not mouth the Lords Prayer as though God were his father, or drag in Christs sacred name to sanctify his greed, or invoke the Spirits blessed power in connection with his personal aggrandizement or his selfish ambition! If he does so, he will be no better off than he was at the beginninghe will ask, and have not. His asking will miss because he asks amiss, that he may consume it upon his lusts. If your desires are the longings of fallen nature; if your desires begin and end with yourself and if the chief end for which you live is not to glorify God, but to glorify

yourself, then you may fight, but you shall not have!

You may rise up early and sit up late, but nothing worth gaining shall come of it! Remember how the Lord has spoken in the 37th PsalmCease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not yourself in any wise to do evil. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yes, you shall diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

So much upon the poverty of lusting.   
II. Secondly, I have now before me a serious business, and that is, to show HOW CHRISTIAN CHURCHES MAY SUFFER SPIRITUAL POVERTY so that they, too, desire to have, and cannot obtain. Of course the Christian seeks higher things than the worldling, otherwise he were not worthy of that name at all. At least, professedly, his objective is to obtain the true riches and to glorify God in spirit and in truth. Yes, but look, dear Brothers and Sisters, all Churches do not get what they desire. We have to complain, not here and there, but in many places, of Churches that are nearly asleep and are gradually declining.   
Of course they find excuses. The population is dwindling, or another place of worship is attracting the people. There is always a handy excuse when a man needs one. But still, there stands the factpublic worship is almost deserted in some places, the ministry has no rallying power about itand those who put in an appearance are discontented or indifferent. In such Churches there are no conversions. If they had half-a-dozen added to them in a year, they would need to sing the Hallelujah Chorus! But as to bringing thousands to Christ, they secretly fear that this would be an undesirable thing, for it might involve excitementand they are so proper that they dread anything of that sort!   
To do nothing and let men be damned is, in their judgment, proper and respectable. But to be alive and energetic is a perilous state of affairs, for it might lead to fanaticism and indecorum! They are specially afraid of anything like sensationalism. That ugly-looking word they set before us very much as the Chinese try to frighten their enemies by painting horrible faces on their shields! Never mind that terrible wordit will hurt no one! These Churches have not, for no Truth of God is made prevalent through their zeal; no sin is smitten; no holiness promoted; nothing is done by which God is glorified. And what is the reason for it?   
First, even among professed Christians there may be the pursuit of desirable things in a wrong method. You fight and war, yet you have not, Have not Churches thought to prosper by competing with other Churches? At such-and-such a place of worship they have a very clever manwe must get a clever man, too! In fact, he must be a little cleverer than our neighbors hero. That is the thinga clever man! Ah me, that we should live in an age in which we talk about clever men in preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Alas, that this holy service should be thought to depend upon human cleverness! Churches have competed with each other in architecture, in music, in apparel and in social status. The leaders fancy that to succeed they must have something more handsome, artistic, or expensive than their neighborstherefore they build Gothic edifices in which the ministers voice gets up among the timbers and is never properly heardor else they purchase an organ with every stop except the full one!   
The opinion would seem to be widely spread that there is a deal of Grace in an organ. To pray to God with a windmill, like the Tartars, would be very absurd! But to praise God with wind passing through a set of pipes is eminently proper! I never have seen the distinction and do not see it now. Organ or no organ is not, now, the question, but I speak of instances in which these machines are set up as a matter of rivalry. Is it not the design of many to succeed by a finer building, better music and a cleverer ministry than others? Is it not as much a matter of competition as a shop front and a dressed window are with drapers? Is this the way by which the Kingdom of God is to grow up among us?   
In some cases there is a measure of bitterness in the rivalry. It is not pleasant to little minds to see other Churches prospering more than their own. They may be more earnest than we are and be doing Gods work better, but we are too apt to turn a jealous eye towards themand we, frankly, would rather they did not get on quite so well. Do you think that the Scripture says in vain, The spirit that dwells in us lusts to envy? If we could see a disturbance among them, so that they would break up and be ecclesiastically killed, we would not rejoice. Of course not! But neither should we suffer any deadly sorrow! In some Churches an evil spirit lingers. I bring no railing accusation and, therefore, say no more than this God will never bless such means and such a spiritthose who give way to them will desire to have, but never obtain.   
Meanwhile, what is the reason why they do not have a blessing? The text says, Because you ask not. I am afraid there are Churches which do not ask. Prayer in all forms is too much neglected. Private prayer is allowed to decay. I shall put it to the conscience of every man how far secret prayer is attended to and how much of fellowship with God there is in secret among the members of our Churches. Certainly its healthy existence is vital to Church prosperity. Of family prayer it is more easy to judge, for we can see it. I fear that in these days many have quite given up family prayer. I pray you do not imitate them!   
I wish you were all of the same mind as the Scotch laborer who obtained employment in the house of a wealthy farmer who was known to pay well. All his friends envied him that he had gone to live in such a service. In a short time he returned to his native village. And when they asked him why he had left his situation, he replied that, he could not live in a house which had no roof to it. A house without prayer is a house without a roof! We cannot expect blessings on our Churches if we have none on our families! As to the congregational prayer, the gathering together in what we call our Prayer Meetingsis there not a falling off? In many cases the Prayer Meeting is despised and looked down upon as a sort of second-rate gathering. There are members of Churches who are never present and it does not prick their consciences that they stay away.   
Some congregations mix up the Prayer Meeting with a lecture, so as to hold only one service in the week. I read the other day an excuse for all thisit is said that people are better at home, attending to family concerns. This is idle talk! Who among us wishes people to neglect their domestic concerns? It will be found that those best attend to their own concerns who are diligent to get everything in order, so that they may go out to assemblies for worship. Negligence of the House of God is often an index of negligence of their own houses! They are not bringing their children to Christ, I am persuaded, or they would bring them up to the services. Anyway, the prayers of the Church measure its prosperity. If we restrain prayer we restrain the blessing.   
Our true success as Churches can only be had by asking it of the Lord. Are we not prepared to reform and amend in this matter? Oh for Zions travailing hour to come, when an agony of prayer shall move the whole body of the faithful! But some reply, There are Prayer Meetings and we do ask for the blessing, and yet it comes not. Is not the explanation to be found in the other part of the text, You have not, because you ask amiss? When Prayer Meetings become a mere form; when Brothers and Sisters stand up and waste the time away with their long orations instead of speaking to God in earnest and burning words; when there is no expectation of a blessingwhen the prayer is cold and chillthen nothing will come of it. He who prays without fervency does not pray at all! We cannot commune with God, who is a consuming fire, if there is no fire in our prayers!   
Many prayers fail of their errand because there is no faith in them. Prayers which are filled with doubt are requests for refusal. Imagine that you wrote to a friend and said, Dear Friend, I am in great trouble and I, therefore, tell you, and ask for your help because it seems right to do so. But though I thus write, I have no belief that you will send me any help. Indeed, I should be mightily surprised if you did and should speak of it as a great wonder. Will you get the help, do you think? I should say your friend would be sensible enough to observe the little confidence which you have in him and he would reply that, as you did not expect anything, he would not astonish you. Your opinion of his generosity is so low that he does not feel called upon to put himself out of the way on your account. When prayers are of that kind you cannot wonder if we have not, because we ask amiss.   
Moreover, if our praying, however earnest and believing it may be, is a mere asking that our Church may prosper because we want to glory in its prosperityif we want to see our own denomination largely increased and its respectability improved, that we may share the honors thereofthen our desires are nothing but lusts, after all! Can it be that the children of God manifest the same emulations, jealousies and ambitious as men of the world? Shall religious work be a matter of rivalry and contest? Ah, then, the prayers which seek success will have no acceptance at the Mercy Seat! God will not hear us, but bid us be gone, for He cares not for the petitions of which self is the object. You have not, because you ask not, or because you ask amiss.   
III. Thirdly, I have a much more pleasing work to do, and that is to hint at THE WEALTH WHICH AWAITS THE USE OF THE RIGHT MEANS, namely, of asking rightly of God. I invite your most solemn attention to this matter, for it is vitally important. And my first observation is this how very small, after all, is this demand which God makes of us. Ask? Why, it is the

least thing He can possibly expect of us, and it is no more than we ordinarily require of those who need help from us! We expect a poor man to ask and if he does not, we lay the blame of his lack upon himself. If God will give for the asking and we remain poor, who is to blame? Is not the blame most grievous? Does it not look as if we were out of order with God, so that we will not even condescend to ask a favor of Him? Surely, there must be, in our hearts, a lurking enmity to Him, or else, instead of its being an unwelcome necessity, it would be regarded as a great delight!   
However, Brothers and Sisters, whether we like it or not, remember, asking is the rule of the Kingdom. Ask, and you shall receive. It is a rule that never will be altered in anybodys case. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the elder Brother of the family, but God has not relaxed the rule for Him! Remember this textJehovah says to His own Son, Ask of Me and I will give You the heathen for Your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Your possession. If the royal and Divine Son of God cannot be exempted from the rule of asking, that He may have, you and I cannot expect the rule to be relaxed in our favor!   
Why should it be? What reason can be pleaded why we should be exempted from prayer? What argument can there be why we should be deprived of the privilege and delivered from the necessity of supplication? I can see nonecan you? God will bless Elijah and send rain on Israel, but Elijah must pray for it. If the chosen nation is to prosper, Samuel must plead for it. If the Jews are to be delivered, Daniel must intercede. God will bless Paul and the nations shall be converted through him, but Paul must pray! Pray he did, without ceasinghis Epistles show that he expected nothing except by asking for it. If you may have everything by asking and nothing without asking, I beg you to see how absolutely vital prayer is! And I beseech you to abound in it.   
Moreover, it is clear to even the most shallow thinker that there are some things necessary for the Church of God which we cannot get except by prayer. You can get that clever man I spoke aboutthe less, perhaps, you pray about him, the better! And that new Church, and the new organ, and the choir you can also get without prayerbut you cannot get the heavenly anointingthe gift of God is not to be purchased with money! Some of the members of a Church in a primitive village in America thought that they would raise a congregation by hanging up a very handsome chandelier in the Meeting House. People talked about this chandelier and some went to see itbut the light of it soon grew dim.   
You can buy all sorts of ecclesiastical furniture! You can purchase any kind of paint, brass, muslin, blue scarlet and fine linentogether with flutes, harps, sackbuts, psalteries and all kinds of musicyou can get these without prayer. In fact, it would be an impertinence to pray about such rubbish! But you cannot get the Holy Spirit without prayer. He blows where He wills. He will not be brought near by any process or method at our command apart from asking. There are no mechanical means which will make up for His absence! If the Holy Spirit is not there, what is the use of that clever man of yours? Will anybody be converted? Will any soul be comforted? Will any children of God be renewed in spiritual life without the Holy Spirit? Neither can you get communion with God without prayer. He that will not pray, cannot have communion with God. Yet more, there is no real, spiritual communion of the Church with its own members when prayer is suspended. Prayer must be in action, or else those blessings which are vitally essential to the success of the Church can never come to it. Prayer is the great door of spiritual blessing and if you close it, you shut out the favor.   
Beloved Brothers and Sisters, do you not think that this asking, which God requires, is a very great privilege? Suppose there were an edict published that you must not praythat would be a hardship, indeed! If prayer rather interrupted, than increased the stream of blessing, it would be a sad calamity. Did you ever see a dumb man under a strong excitement, or suffering great pain and, therefore, anxious to speak? It is a terrible sight to see! The face is distorted, the body is fearfully agitatedthe mute writhes and labors in dire distress. Every limb is contorted with a desire to help the tongue, but it cannot break its bonds! Hollow sounds come from the breast and stuttering of ineffectual speech awaken attention, though they cannot reach so far as expression. The poor creature is in unspeakable pain!   
Suppose we were, in our spiritual nature, full of strong desires and yet dumb as to the tongue of prayer? I think it would be one of the direst afflictions that could possibly befall us! We should be terribly maimed and dismemberedand our agony would be overwhelming! Blessed be His name, the Lord ordains a way of utterance and bids our heart speak out to Him! Beloved, we must prayit seems to me that it ought to be the first thing we ever think of doing when in need. If men were right with God and truly loved Him, they would pray as naturally as they breathe! I hope some of us are right with God and do not need to be driven to prayer, for it has become an instinct of our nature.   
I was told by a friend, yesterday, the story of a little German boya story which his pastor loved to tell. The dear little child believed his God and delighted in prayer. His schoolmaster had urged the scholars to be at school on time and this child always tried to be so. But his father and mother were slow people and, one morning, through their fault, alone, he just left the door as the clock struck the hour for the school to open. A friend, standing near, heard the little one cry, Dear God, do grant I may be in time for school. It struck the listener that for once, prayer could not be heard, for the child had quite a little walk before him and the hour was already come. He was curious to see the result.   
Now it so happened that morning that the master, in trying to open the schoolhouse door, turned the key the wrong way and could not move the bolt. They had to send for a locksmith to open the door. Hence a delay and just as the door opened, our little friend entered with the rest, all in good time! God has many ways of granting right desires. It was most natural that, instead of crying and whining, a child that really loved God should speak to Him about his trouble. Should it not be natural to you and to me, spontaneously and at once, to tell the Lord our sorrows and ask for help? Should not this be the first resort? Alas, according to Scripture and observationand, I grieve to addaccording to experience, prayer is often the last thing!  
Look at the sick man in the 107th Psalm. Friends bring him various foods, but his soul abhors all manner of meat. The physicians do what they can to heal him, but he grows worse and worse, and draws near to the gates of deathThen they cry unto the Lord in their trouble. That was put last which should have been first! Send for the doctor. Prepare him nourishment. Wrap him in flannels! All very well, but when will you pray to God? God will be called upon when the case grows desperate! Look at the mariners described in the same Psalm. The ship is well-near wrecked. They mount up to the Heaven, they go down, again, to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. Still they do all they can to ride out the storm. But when they reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits end: then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble.   
Oh, yes; God is sought when we are driven into a corner and ready to perish! And what a mercy it is that He hears such laggard prayers and delivers the suppliants out of their troubles! But ought it to be so with you and with me, and with Churches of Christ? Ought not the first impulse of a declining Church to be, Let us pray day and night until the Lord appears for us. Let us meet together with one accord in one place and never separate until the blessing descends upon us? Do you know, Brothers and Sisters, what great things are to be had for the asking? Have you ever thought of it? Does it not stimulate you to pray fervently? All Heaven lies before the grasp of the asking man! All the promises of God are rich and inexhaustibleand their fulfillment is to be had by prayer!   
Jesus says, All things are delivered unto Me of My Father, and Paul says, All things are yours, and you are Christs. Who would not pray when all things are thus handed over to us? Yes, and promises that were first made to special individuals are all made to us if we know how to plead them in prayer. Israel went through the Red Sea ages ago and yet we read in the 66th Psalm, There did we rejoice in Him. Only Jacob was present at Peniel and yet Hosea says, There He spoke with us. Paul wants to give us a great promise for times of need and he quotes from the Old Testament, For He has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you. Where did Paul get that? That is the assurance which the Lord gave to JoshuaI will never leave you nor forsake you.   
Surely the promise was only for Joshua! No, it is for us! No Scripture is of private interpretation. All Scripture is ours. See how God appears unto Solomon at night and says, Ask what I shall give you. Solomon asks for wisdom. Oh, that is Solomon, you say. Listen!If any man lacks wisdom, let him ask of God. God gave Solomon wealth and fame in the bargain! Is not that peculiar to Solomon? No, for it is said of true wisdom, Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honorand is not this much like our Saviors words, Seek you first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you? Thus, you see, the Lords promises have many fulfillments and they are waiting to pour their treasures into the lap of prayer! Does not this lift prayer up to a high level, when God is willing to repeat the biographies of His saints in us when He is waiting to be gracious, and to load us with His benefits?

I will mention another Truth of God which ought to make us pray and that is, that if we ask, God will give to us much more than we ask. Abraham asked of God that Ishmael might live before Him. He thought, Surely this is the promised seed: I cannot expect that Sarah will bear a child in her old age. God has promised me a seed, and surely it must be this child of Hagar. Oh that Ishmael might live before You. God granted him that and He gave him Isaac, as well, and all the blessings of the Covenant! There is Jacob. He kneels down to pray and asks the Lord to give him bread to eat and raiment to put on. But what did his God give him? When he came back to Bethel, he had two bands, thousands of sheep and camels, and much wealth! God had heard him and done exceeding abundantly above what he asked!   
It is said of David, The king asked life of You, and You gave him length of days, yes, gave him not only length of days, but a throne for his sons throughout all generations, till David went in and sat before the Lord, overpowered with the Lords goodness. Well, you say, but is that true of New Testament prayers? Yes, it is so with the New Testament pleaders, whether saints or sinners! They brought a man to Christ, sick of the palsy, and asked Him to heal him. And He said, Son, your sins are forgiven you. He had not asked that, had he? No, but God gives greater things than we ask for! Hear that poor, dying thiefs humble prayer, Lord, remember me when You enter into Your Kingdom. Jesus replies, Today shall you be with Me in Paradise! He had not dreamed of such an honor!   
Even the story of the Prodigal teaches us this. He resolved to say, I am not worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired servants. What is the answer? This my son was dead, and is alive again: bring forth the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his hands, and shoes on his feet. Once get into the position of an asker and you shall have what you never asked for and never thought to receive! The text is often misquotedGod is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask, or even think. We could ask, if we were but more sensible and had more faith, for the very greatest things, but God is willing to give us infinitely more than we ask for!   
At this moment I believe that Gods Church might have inconceivable blessings if she were but ready, now, to pray. Did your ever notice that wonderful picture in the 8th chapter of Revelation? It is worthy of careful notice. I shall not attempt to explain it, in its context, but merely point to the picture as it hangs on the wall by itself. Read onWhen He has opened the seventh seal, there was silence in Heaven about the space of half an hour. Silence in Heaven!? There were no anthems, ho hallelujahs, not an angel stirred a wing! Silence in Heaven!? Can you imagine it? And look! You see seven angels standing before God and to them are given seven trumpets. There they wait, trumpet in hand, but there is no sound! Not a single note of cheer or warning during an interval which was sufficiently long to provoke lively emotion, but short enough to prevent impatience.   
Silence unbroken, profound, awful, reigned in Heaven! Action is suspended in Heaven, the center of all activity. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer. There he stands, but no offering is presentedeverything has come to a standstill. What can possibly set it in motion? And there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. Prayer is presented together with the merit of the Lord Jesus! Now, see what will happenAnd the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angels hands. That is the key of the whole matter!   
Now you will seethe angel begins to workhe takes the censer, fills it with the altar fire and flings it down upon the earth, and there were voices, and thundering and lightning and earthquake. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. Everything is moving now! As soon as the prayers of the saints were mixed with the incense of Christs eternal merit and begun to smoke up from the altar, then prayer became effectual! Down fell the living coals among the sons of men, while the angels of the Divine Providence, who stood still, before, sound their thunder blasts, and the will of the Lord is done! Such is the scene in Heaven, in a certain measure, even to this day. Bring here the incense! Bring here the prayers of the saints! Set them on fire with Christs merits and on the golden altar let them smoke before the Most High! Then shall we see the Lord at work and His will shall be done on earth as it is in Heaven! God send His blessing with these words, for Christs sake. Amen.

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MORE AND MORE   
NO. 3459

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 20, 1915.   
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON. But He gives more Grace.   
James 4:6.

PRACTICAL as the Epistle of James is, this Apostle does not neglect to extol the Grace of God. He would be very unpractical if he did. There are some professors of religion who talk as if they loved the doctrines and loathed the duties. They cling to the faith, while they shrink from the works! They accept the principles that are announced, but refuse the precepts that are enjoined. Herein they err. Yet we would be equally at fault and, perhaps, commit a graver error, were we to be biased in the opposite direction! Did we constantly expound and enforce the great things to be done by us without reference to the greater things that have been done for us. Did we commend the fruits regardless of the root from where they spring. Did we applaud the deeds of men without lauding the Grace of God, we would, I say, commit a graver error! Happily we have been taught both the saintship and the service, the Covenant engagements, as well as the creature obligations, the Divine enabling and the divers abilities of Believers that are set in motion, so that we discern without difficulty how the principle of Grace combines and co-operates with the practice of goodness. In our conflict with the natural spirit of enmity, Grace takes the form of, more Grace, and it is bestowed upon us that we may be able to overcome and prove victorious.

We shall first consider the words of our text in their natural connection. Secondly, we shall contemplate their general instructions. Then, thirdly, we shall connect them with a special application, seeking, each one of us, to appropriate them to ourselves.

I. OUR TEXT IN ITS NATURAL CONNECTION.   
Directly you look at the matter, you are struck with the contrast. It is not merely that a comparison is instituted, but two potent motives are confrontedthe one a strong instinct, the other a liberal endowment. The spirit that is in us lusts to envy, but He gives more Grace. On our side it is a spirita turbulent passion! On Gods side it is a sweet gratuitya supply of more Grace! We fretful and murmuring, anxious and complaining. He, far from grudging, stinting, or withholding (which would be a fit retaliation), succors us and augments and multiplies His liberality, as if to compensate the aggravation of our waywardness by the enlargement of His concessions! The spirit that is in us complains of God, as though we were jealous that He gave more to others than to us. Still, the Spirit that is in God goes on to give, saying, Is your eye evil because Mine is good? May I not do what I will with My own? The spirit that is in us undervalues what we possess, because, under some aspects, it may not be equally precious with that which somebody else possesses. But God, instead of taking away from us what He has given, because we judge Him so unworthily, only gives more! He gives more Grace. One might have supposed, that because the spirit that is in us lusts to envy, therefore we should discover God opposing us, restraining the bottles of Heaven, commanding the dew no longer to fall upon us and withdrawing all the benedictions of His love! But no, it does not say, He is opposed to us and, whereas we run in one direction, He runs in another. His thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are His ways our ways. And then, again, our ways are not His ways, nor our thoughts His thoughts. We do not rise to Him and He does not stoop to us, so as to lower His Character, by meeting us with that return that would seem due to us if strict laws of retaliation were carried out. Note that contrast! Note it always! Observe how weak we are, how strong He ishow proud we are, how condescending He ishow erring we are, and how Infallible He is! Note how changing we are, and how Immutable He ishow provoking we are, and how forgiving He is. Observe how in us there is only evil, and how in Him there is only good. Yet our evil but draws His goodness forth, and still He blesses! Oh, what a rich contrast!   
Do we not get a hint, here, as to the quarter from which we are to derive the weapons of war against our sin? The spirit that is in us lusts to envy. What will you say to this? Will you, therefore, sit still and consider that you are excused because this is a positive instinct of your nature? Do you say that envy is a natural proclivity, a craving passion of many men and that it is, therefore, to be accounted of rather as a mental cast than as a moral crimea flaw in ones constitution rather than a fault in his conscience? Or, to say the worst, more of a distressing temptation than of a detestable transgression against God? Ah, no, my Brothers and Sisters, there is not a word in Holy Scripture that gives the least countenance or the faintest indulgence to any sin! Indulgences for sin may come from Rome, but they never come from Zion! I have known persons attempt to exculpate themselves after a fit of anger by a cool acknowledgment like thisI was always hot-tempered. What is that but a bitter aggravation? You do but admit that your sin is of long standing and frequent recurrence! You confess, indeed, your greater guilt, and there is no repentance to regret it, no force of conviction to forsake it. So it is with envyThe spirit that dwells in us lusts to envy. So much the worse for our spirit! So much the more guilty we are. This is not only an infirmity which our circumstances have betrayed, but it is an inherent quality of the animal, debased propensity of the creature! Oh, how defiled must the nature be to which vice is as natural as a black skin to the Ethiopian, or as a spotted skin to the leopard! In vain your every pleayou cannot lighten the sin, albeit you may heighten the shame! There is no cause to tamper, but there is a call to arms. He gives more Grace. This is as much as to say, Sit not coolly down and parley with the spirit that is in you lusting to envy, but up! Resist, withstand and oppose till you quench it!

Here is counsel to instruct you in this arduous encounter. That evil spirit must be met with a pure, a devout spirit. The weapons of this warfare are not carnalthey are only to be found in the armory of Grace. He gives more Grace. You cannot overcome your sins by denouncing them, or frustrate their malignity by fostering an admiration of virtues that never grew in the soil of your own hearts. Nor can you, resolve as you may, keep the moral Law. Neither is it possible, by religious services in the future, to make amends for the perversity of your past life. Such proposals and such efforts would become the race of Ishmael, for they are under bondage. But we are the children of the free woman and we are not moved to holiness by the hope of gaining Heaven, or the fear of being sent to Hell. We live under a different Covenant from that! They have to do with Sinai, which made men tremblewe are not under the Law, but under Grace, so other arguments persuade us! When we need weapons wherewith to fight against our sin, we turn to Divine Love and say, Behold how God has loved us. Can we act unloving to Him? Or we go to Calvary and there see what a bitter thing it is to our Well-Beloved. We take the spear that pierced His heart, to see if it cannot pierce the heart of our sin. And we take the nails that nailed Him to the tree and pray the Holy Spirit to crucify our flesh with its affections and lusts. Our warfare is not carried on by weapons from the armory of Mosesthe shield and spear of David suit us better. By faith in the living God who defends us from danger and guards us with strength, we shall bring down the lion, rend the bear like a kid, and vanquish the Philistine! By the help of His right hand we expect to kill the enemy. We are not going back to legal bondagewe have more Grace. And with Divine Grace there always comes joy, peace and security. That Doctrine which, it has been often argued, gives liberty to sin does really set forth the way in which to overthrow and conquer it! The text, then, gives an indication of the place where we may find the shield and buckler of our sacred warHe gives more Grace.   
And then the text, besides giving thus a contrast and a suggestion, appears to me to give us an encouragement for the continuance of our spiritual warfare. He gives more Grace. You had Grace at first with which to struggle against the envying and every other sin. You are now alarmed because the warfare of your spirit is so protracted. He gives more Grace to continue the struggle! As long as there is one passion in your soul that dares to rise, there will be Grace in your soul to answer! Are you distressed because you dont appear to be making the headway you could wish against sin? It is a blessed distress and I would not mitigate it, but, meanwhile, let us not degenerate into unbelief. Know this, that though there may be more temptation, God will give more Grace! And though advancing years may bring more infirmity and, consequently, more temptation, He will always give you more Grace! As long as the fight shall last, the help will last. You shall have manna all the while you are in the wildernessit shall never cease to drop till you come where you no more require it, having crossed the Jordan. Fight on, then! Never think of saying, I cannot overcome this sin. By Gods help you must, for no sin can enter Heaven with you! You must overcome it. It cannot be permitted that you sit down in peace with any foe to purity. You are never to have peace with any sin. When, first of all, the Lord Jesus made peace with us, He proclaimed war against sin on every side and of every size, and the loyal Christian never dreams of peace, but contemplates only a perpetual fighting against sin, expecting to have perpetual Grace bestowed!   
And then it seems to me that, in this matter, we have a prediction of victory, for if He gives more Grace, it seems to me thus, that He promises so to augment the force of Grace that the sin must ultimately yield to repeated assaults. There shall be more Grace than sinwhere sin abounded, Grace did much more abound. Such shall be the climax of every Christians experience when it comes to be summed up. O Sin, you cruel, deadly foe! You seek to capture us, and, if possible, to slay usbut you shall not prevail! Sin seeks to enter, Grace shuts the door. Sin tries to get the mastery, but Grace, which is stronger than sin, resists and will not permit it. Sin gets us down at times and puts its foot on our neckGrace comes to the rescue and faith prompts us to say, Rejoice not over me, O my enemy, for though I fall, yet shall I rise up again. Sin comes up like Noahs flood, but Grace rides over the tops of the mountains like the Ark! Sin, like Sennacherib, pours forth its troops to swallow up the land Grace, like the Angel of the Lord, goes through the camp of Sennacherib and lays sin dead. O glorious Grace, you shall certainly get the victory! He gives more Grace. Surely, therefore, there is a prediction, here, of ultimate victory! The spirit that is in us lusts to envy, but for us there is victory, and to Jehovah shall it be ascribed, for He gives more Grace! Such, as it seems to me, is the instruction to be drawn from the text, if we take it in its connection. Now let us take it out of the connection and   
II. USE IT AS A GENERAL TRUTH.  
He gives more Grace. Does not this mean that He gives new supplies of Grace? The Grace you had yesterday is of no use today. It would breed worms and stink like the old manna. The man who has no new experience of Divine Love, but tries to live on the memory of the past, will find the food very musty and apt to breed diseases. The child of God will never prosper on Tuesday through Mondays Graceand you will not find the supplies of Grace for last year keep you afloat during this year! He gives more Grace. Grace is like a riverits waters are always sweet and fresh as it comes rushing from the eternal hills. Like the sunlight, it never sends the same beams twice! It is always fresh, always new. Blessed be God for this! There are perpetual streams of Grace.  
And He gives larger supplies of Grace. He gives new drops to the blade, He gives a greater watering to the corn in the ear, sends heavy showers when it comes to the full corn in the ear. There is comparatively little Grace with him who is but a babe in Grace, though enough for his present need. There is more Grace for the young man who has temptations to avoid that he may cleanse his way. And there is the most Grace for the valiant man who is strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Little faith has Grace, but great faith has more Grace. Little love has Grace, but God gives greater Grace where there is greater love. None of us have got so far but what there is much beyond. Suppose a man says he is perfect? You may conclude that he does not know himself, or the course that lies before him, for if he is perfect in his own estimation, he has not a perfect standard to judge himself by and probably he is not so perfect in his humility as it is desirable he should be!   
God gives more Grace, that is, higher, larger, deeper, stronger Grace, so that we may go from strength to strength. When it is said, He gives more Grace, it means that He gives higher styles of Grace, for there are differences and degrees of Grace. One man has Gracea proportionate amount of it, but it is of one kind. Now the Grace of patience appears to me to be a higher Grace than many others, and to come late to some of us. We have not got to it yet. We have got courage and we have faith in a measure and that will produce every other virtue, doubtless, but as yet we have not the full closeness of fellowship, the perfectness of acquiescence, the keen susceptibility of the Presence of God, and certain other and higher forms of Grace of which we cannot now particularly speak. But these are not things that are reserved and laid byHe gives these higher Gracesthey are to be had. There is no degree of Divine Grace which we ought not to seeknot with the covetousness that seeks Grace for a graceless object like self-exaltation, but with that sacred eagerness which longs for more Grace that God may have more Glory! God gives to His people the highest forms of Grace and, therefore, they ought to be encouraged to ask for them.   
This precious Word of God which I have before me, dear Friends, on which my heart is fondly set, and which my tongue gladly repeats, expresses a statute of the Lord which we ought to live upon every day. He gives more Grace, By the Grace of God I have got to the end of another day! Well, then, I need to go to Him again at my bedside, before my eyes are closed in slumber, and seek fresh fellowship with HimHe gives more Grace. What He is prepared to give most certainly I am prone to need! Tomorrow, when I go forth to follow my calling, I know not what may befall me, for I have not trod that way beforebut He gives more Grace. Every day there are fresh supplies of Grace as fresh needs for Grace arise. And oh, how I ought to recollect this in my pleadings for others! Should I not pray for my minister, that he might have more Grace? If I do not profit under his ministry as I could wish, I should pray more, being confident of this very thing, that, God gives more Grace. And if I do profit as I could wish, then I have new reasons for praying that he will continue to get more Grace, for God has promised to give it! Have I a child whom I hope to see grow up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? As I see the budding, the beginning of Grace in him, I should plead for more Grace! And how, my Christian Brothers and Sisters in the service of the Church, should I fail to plead with God on your behalf?  
Much blessed use, too, Beloved, may we make of this verse when called to any fresh service. If you who never preached before, should be invited to speak to a few people, do not measure your ability by your inexperience. He who calls you to more service will give you more Grace! Or should you be about to move from a little to a larger occupation, you may be timidcast down because of the littleness of your strengthbut He gives more Grace. Possibly, you are entering into deeper trials. You have only been a coaster before, and you kept among the headlands near the shore. Now you are to cross the sea and get out of the sight of land. Well, the Pilot knows all about the sea which you are about to traversetrust Him. He gives more Grace. I know you have more fear. The only way to overcome it is by more Grace. Do not be over-anxious to make more provision, or trust to the exercise of more prudence, or rely upon anything you have got, else you will make shipwreck in that manner! But go to the Lord for more Grace. It is the straight way, the right way, the safe way and in that way you will always find that more Grace will carry you through more trouble! Possibly you are about to undergo sharper tests than ever. You are to be tried this time as to whether you are really Gods servant. Well, if the Lord permits Satan to tempt you, He will give you more Grace! He who preserved you in prosperity, will preserve you in adversity! He who kept you in the high places will not forsake you in the lowlands. He who blessed your substance will not suffer you to starve in time of famine. If you need more Grace, you shall have more Grace to supply your need! Do not be afraid, dear Brothers and Sisters, as to what may happen to you. Go in this your strengthseek the Lords guidance. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths. If God should bid any one of us go right through a wall of stone, we are to go straight through it and He shall clear our way! He cuts the gates of brass and breaks the bars of iron asunder. Ours is to obeynot to reason or ask why! Ours is to dare and die, if need be, for Himnot to halt or draw back! When He bids us go, He will clear the way. Through the Red Sea, Israel went. Forward, was the word, and the floods divided and stood upright as a heap! So shall it be, if Providence should call you to the most extraordinary pathway ever trod by human pilgrims! He that calls you will preserve you and cause you to triumph in the way of obedience, for He gives more Grace. Again, let us endeavor to

III. MAKE APPLICATION OF THIS PRINCIPLE TO OURSELVES.   
I would urge each dear Brother and Sister here to take the words and see what they say to you. He gives more Grace. Do you suffer from spiritual poverty? It is your own fault, for He gives more Grace. If you have not got it, it is not because it is not to be had, but because you have not gone for ityou have not sought for ityou have not walked in such a way that you could possess it and exhibit its fruit! If there is anyonea hired servant of our Fatherthat is hungry, it is not because our Fathers larder is bare, for He has provided bread enough and to spare! And if there is one of our Fathers children who cannot fill his belly, it is not because there is not food enough, nor because there is not abundance on the Fathers table, but because he chooses to go after the swine husks in some form or other. We might rejoice, we might triumph, but we take the course which leads to poverty, littleness of Grace, leanness of soul! It is our own choicenot the Lords. The text forbids us ever to lay blame on God. Have I been a wilderness to Israel? You might well consider this. You have little lovehave I given you little cause for love? Your zeal burns very lowhave I given you objects so contemptible that you might reasonably relax your fervor? Ah, no. He gives more Grace. He always gives. You hungry ones that stand shivering there, faint and ready to dieit is not because the oxen and the fatlings are not killed, and all things are not readyyou that pinch yourselves and starve yourselves are not straitened in Him, but straitened in your own heart. May God teach us this lesson! May we come now to God with open mouths that He may fill them. May our desires be strong and our faith a mighty enthusiasm, that, according to our faith, it may be done unto us!   
Spiritual growth, if we have any, must never be the subject of our selfcongratulation, but we must give all the Glory to God, for if you look at the text from another point of view, the more Grace we have, the more has been given us! If we have it not, it is our own fault, but if we have it, it is not our earning, but His bestowal! If you have more than another, you have no cause to thank yourself for it. If you can say, I bless myself that I have more Grace than my brother, you have already shown that you are naked, poor and miserable, though you think yourself to be rich and increased in goods. All Grace leads us to gratitude. Grace never leads us to lift ourselves up and say, I have done well to obtain it. Grace, like the cargo in the vessel, makes the ship sink deeper in the stream. He that has most Grace is the lowliest man. You shall measure your rising in Grace by your sinking in humility.   
Oh, Beloved, what satisfaction and what security we should feel in meditating on the goodness of God. Verily, God is good. This is not an occasional display of His bounty, but it is the universal order of His government in the Church, He gives more Grace. There is no time given here. You do not find any timetable in Scripture, saying, At such an hour of the day He gives more Grace, or, At such a time in the year He gives more Grace, but it is day by day, all the year round, long as the cycles roll, while the dispensation of mercy lasts! So long as there is an heir of Heaven that needs, our Father, who is in Heaven, supplies! He gives more Grace. What a blessing for us that the Grace of God is unlimited as to time!   
Nor is there any restriction as to the way of our getting it. When He gives more Grace, you need not apply through certain appointed priests, or use a prescribed ritual, or put yourselves in certain peculiar postures. No, no! Nothing ceremonialeverything substantial! This provision, like every other promise, is in and through Jesus Christ, the Mediator. If you do but go and seek from Him, He gives what none others can giveHe gives more Grace! Oh, for the agony of prayer that will lead us to the Mercy Seat with power! And for the humility of soul that empties us in order that there may be room for God to fill us! Oh, for the life of faith which believes that God will do great things, and expects Him to do them! How then should we, each one, have to say, He gives me more Grace: blessed be His name! He leads me on from height to height, enlarges my capacity and still fills me! He makes me feel that there is a greater capacity yet to receive, and an undiminished fullness when my capacity expands. Turn the meditation into music in your heart! Let the rich melody charm your thoughts and henceforth may our song be, He gives more Grace.   
Are any of you seeking more Grace? If He has given you Grace to seek, He will surely give you more GraceGrace to find! Are any of you grieving for sin? That is of His GraceHe will give you more Grace to rejoice in the pardon of all your sins through Christ! Have you begun to pray? That is according to His Grace bestowed on youbut He will give you more Grace to continue in prayer until you receive such answers as are the ripe fruit of your supplications! Thank God for little Gracemind that you do. If you have only starlight, thank Him for it, and He will give you moonlight. Or if you have only moonlight, thank Him for it, and He will give you sunlight! Then, if you have sunlight, thank Him fervently and He will give you, shortly, as the light of seven days! Be thankful, since a little Grace is more than you deserve! Be thankful for the least grain that the Lord adds to it. Oh, that you might be all led to believe in Christ! It pleased the Father to give Christ Jesus to us, and in Him all fullness dwells. He cannot give you more, because in this one Gift every other gift is concentrated. You cannot need more than Jesus! With Him you shall find that you receive more and more Grace adequate to your needs and according to His exceeding riches of glory. So shall you praise Him more and more forever and ever! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:   
**GENESIS 24:1-16; 1 SAMUEL 30:1-13; 1 JOHN 1:1-3.**

Our subject is the value of Divine Guidance, and we shall, therefore, read two passages of Scripture illustrating the Truth of God which we hope to enforce.

**GENESIS 24:1-16.**   
Verse 1. And Abraham was old, and well advanced in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. Happy man that can say that, who has a blessing everywhere! And yet Abraham had his, but, for as yet Isaac was unmarried and, perhaps, he little dreamed that for 20 years afterwards, he who was to build the house of Abraham was to remain childless. Yet so it was. There was always a trial for Abrahams faith, but even his trials were blessed, for God blessed Abraham in all things.

2. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray you, your hand under my thigh According to the Eastern manner of swearing.

3. And I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of Heaven, and the

God of the earth, that you shall not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell. This holy man was careful of the purity of his familyhe knew what an ill effect a Canaanite wife might have upon his son, and also upon his offspring. He was, therefore, particularly careful here. I would that all parents were the same.

4, 5. But you shall go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. And the servant said unto him, Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I bring your son again unto the land from where you came? The servant was very careful. Those that swear too readily they know not what, will, before long, swear till they care not what. Better still is it for the Christian to remember the Words of Christ, Swear not at all, neither by Heaven, nor by earth, nor by any other oath. Doubtless the Doctrine of the Savior is that all oaths of every sort are lawful to the Christian, but if they ever are taken, it should be with deep circumspection and with earnest prayerfulness that there be no mistake about the matter.

6. And Abraham said unto him, Beware you that you bring not my son there again. He knew that God had called him and his kindred to inherit the land of Canaan and, therefore, he was not willing that they should go back to their former dwelling places.

7. The LORD God of Heaven, which took me from my fathers house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spoke unto me, and that swore unto me, saying, Unto your seed will I give this land; He shall send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife unto my son from there. What simple faith! This was the very glory of Abrahams faithit was so simple, so childlike. It might be many miles to Padan-aram, but it does not matter to faith. My God will send His angel. Oh, we are always making difficulties and suggesting hardships, but if our faith were in lively exercise, we Would do Gods will far more readily! Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain. Brothers and Sisters, let us be of good heart and of good courage in all matters, for doubtless the angel of God will go before us!

8-11. And if the woman will not be willing to follow you, then you shall be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son there again. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham, his master, and swore to him concerning that matter. And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor. And he made his camels to kneel down outside the city, by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water. Now I think I may freely say that this looks something like what we call a wild goose chase. He was to go and find a wife for a young man left at home. He knew nothing of the people among whom he was to sojourn, but he believed that the angel of God would guide him aright. What ought he to do, now he had come near to the time when the decision must be made? He should seek counsel of Godand observe that he did so!

12-14. And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray You, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water. And let it come to pass that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down your pitcher, I pray you, that I may drink, and she shall say, Drink, and I will give your camels drink, also; let the same be she that you have appointed for Your servant Isaac and, thereby, shall I know that You have showed kindness unto my master. I do not know that he is to be imitated in setting a sign to God. Perhaps not, but he did his besthe left the matter with God, and a thing is always in good hands when it is left with Him. There is a deal of wisdom in this sign, however. Why did he not say, The damsel that shall first offer me a drink? No, she might be a little too forward, and a forward woman was not a fit spouse for the good and meditative Isaac. He himself was to address her, first, and then she must be ready, with all cheerfulness, to do far more than he asks! She was to offer him a drink, and draw water for his camels. She would thus not be afraid of work, she would be courteous, she would be kind and all these meeting in one might show him! And by this test he might very wisely discover that she was a fitting woman for Isaac, and might become his spouse.

15. And it came to pass, before he had done speakingNo, he did not know that promise, While they are yet speaking I will hear, but God keeps His promises before He makes them and, therefore, I am sure He will keep them after He has made them!

15, 16. That, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abrahams brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her. And she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up. And so onI need not read the rest of the story, because we now find that, through earnest prayer, the good servant has been rightly led. We will now turn to another passage where we shall have another instance of a difficult casewhere another person put his case before the Lordsought guidance and found it.

*1 SAMUEL 30:1-13.*

Verses 1, 2. And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire. And had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way. What a singular Providence! There was a blood-feud between Amalek and Israel since Israel endeavored to exterminate the Amalekites, and it is written, The Lord shall have war with Amalek forever and ever. Yet God holds in these tigers and will not let the lions devour their prey!

3, 4. So David and his men came to the city, and behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives. Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. They were tired and weary after a long march with Achish, and then another long march home. Oh, how they longed for their couches! How they desired to sit down and converse with their wives and their little ones! Tears did not seem a sufficient expression for their sorrow, and yet when a strong man weepsa burly warrior like Joab, a rough, coarse man like Abishai, or a strong young man like Asahelthere must be deep grief. They wept till they had no more power to weep.

5, 6. And Davids two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And David was greatly distressed; for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters. But David encouraged himself in the LORD his God. He had not only his own personal sorrow, but that of all his people. And then, instead of comforting him, every friend had turned into a foe! His house was a heap of asheshe might have saidAhinoam is not, and Abigail is not, and my children have You taken away. All these things are against me! But he had more faith than Job, and so he encouraged himself in the Lord his God.

7. And David said to Abiathar, the priest, Ahimelechs son, I pray you, bring me here the ephod. And Abiathar brought there the ephod to David. Ah, thats the thing! Bring here the old family Bible! Let us go to prayer about it! Down on our knees and tell the Lord the case.

8. And David inquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? Shall I overtake them? And He answered him, Pursue: for you shall surely overtake them, and without fail recover all. But it is easier said than done! Where are they? How shall they find these fleet Amalekites who fly away so rapidly?

9, 10. So David went, he and the six hundred men that were with him, and came to the Brook Besor, where those that were left behind stayed. But David pursued, he and four hundred men: for two hundred stayed behind, which were so faint that they could not go over the Brook Besor. Worse and worse you see! But the case is in Gods hands and no matter what the circumstances may be, alls well that ends well, and God always has the enemy in His hands!

11-13. And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water. And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins: and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him; for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights. And David said unto him, To whom do you belong? And from where did you come? And he said, I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick. Shame on his master, I say, and yet there are some who stop their mens wages as soon as they get a little ill! Shame on them, I say! It might be fit for an Amalekite to do this, but certainly not for an Israelite! So this young Egyptian tells David all about what they had done. And David follows them, kills them with the sword, takes away their plunder and, moreover, gets a great spoil to himself, and so the Lord hears the voice of David. Now Abrahams servant and David were men in like difficulties with us, but they asked guidance of God and received it! Let us be sure in every time of difficulty to do the same.

*1 JOHN 1:1-3*

Verse 1. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the Word of lifeThe fact that Christ was really in the flesh, that He was no phantom, no shadow mocking the eyes that looked upon Him, is exceedingly important, and hence John (whose style, by the way, in this Epistle is precisely like the style which he uses in his Gospel)John begins by declaring that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who in His eternity was from the beginning, was really a substantial Man, for he says, We have heard Himhearing is good evidence. Which we have seen with our eyeseyesight is good, clear evidence certainly. Which we have looked uponthis is better still, for this imports a deliberate, careful, circumspect gaze. But better still, Which our hands have handledfor John had leaned his head on Jesus Christs bosom, and his hands had often met the real flesh and blood of the living Savior. We need have no doubt about the reality of Christs Incarnation when we have these open eyes and hands to give us evidence!

2. For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. That same eternal Being who is Very God of Very God, and is worthy to be called essentially Life, was made flesh and dwelt among us, and the Apostles could say, We beheld His Glory.

3. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you. See how he hammers this nail as if he will drive it fast! How he rings this bell that it may toll the death-knell of every doubt!

3. That you also may have fellowship with us. But John, what is the value of fellowship with you, you and your brethren, a parcel of poor fishermen? Who wants fellowship with youhooted, despised, mocked and persecuted in every citywho wants fellowship with you?

3. And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ. What a leap from the fisherman to the Fathers Throne, from the poor, despised son of Zebedee up to the King of Kings! Oh, John, we would have fellowship with you now! We will have fellowship with your scorn and spitting, that we may have fellowship with you, and with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.   
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1276 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER   
NO. 1276

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 30, 1876, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Submit yourselves therefore to God.   
James 4:7.

THIS advice should not need much pressing. Submit yourselves to Godis it not right upon the very face of it? Is it not wise? Does not conscience tell us that we ought to submit? Does not reason bear witness that it must be best to do so? Submit yourselves to God. Should not the creature be submissive to the Creator, to whom it owes its existence, without whom it had never been and without whose continuous good pleasure it would, at once, cease to be? Our Creator is infinitely good and His will is loveto submit to One who is too wise to err, too good to be unkind, should not be difficult.

If He were a tyrant, it might be courageous to resist, but since He is a Father, it is ungrateful to rebel. He cannot do anything which is not perfectly just, nor will He do anything which is inconsistent with the best interests of our race. Therefore, to resist Him is to contend against ones own advantage and, like the untamed bullock, to kick against the pricks to our own hurt. Submit yourselves to Godit is what angels do. It is what kings and Prophets have done. It is what the best of men delight in there is, therefore, no dishonor nor sorrow in so doing. All Nature is submissive to His Laws. Suns and stars yield to His commands. We shall but be in harmony with the universe in willingly bowing to His sway.

Submit yourselves to Godyou must do it whether you are willing to do so or not. Who can stand out against the Almighty? For puny man to oppose the Lord is for the chaff to set itself in battle array with the wind, or for the twig to make war with the flame. As well might man attempt to turn back the tide of the ocean, or check the march of the hosts of Heaven as dream of overcoming the Omnipotent. The Eternal God is irresistible and any rebellion against His government must soon end in total defeat. By the mouth of His servant, Isaiah, the Lord challenges His enemies, saying, Who would set the briars and thorns against Me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together.

God will be sure to overthrow His adversaries. He may, in His infinite patience, permit the rebel to continue for a while in his revolt, but as surely as the Lord lives, He will compel every knee to bow before Him and every tongue to confess that He is the living God. Submit yourselves to God. Who would do otherwise since not to submit is injurious now and will be fatal in the end? If we oppose the Most High, our opposition must lead on to defeat and destruction, for the adversaries of the Lord shall be

as the fat of ramsinto smoke shall they consume away. For the man who strives with his Maker there remains a fearful looking for of judgment and the dread reward of everlasting punishment! Who will be so foolhardy as to provoke such a result?

Submit yourselves to God is a precept, which, to thoughtful men, is a plain dictate of reason. It needs few arguments to support it. Yet because of our foolishness, the text enforces it by a, therefore. With the previous verseHe resists the proud, but gives Grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to GodHis wrath and His mercy both argue for submission. We are both driven and drawn to it. The Romans were known to say of their empire that its motto was to spare the vanquished, but to war continually against the proud. This saying aptly sets forth the procedure of the Most High. He aims all His arrows at the lofty and turns the edge of His sword against the stubborn.

But the moment He sees signs of submission, His pity comes to the front and through the merits of His Son, His abounding mercy forgives the fault. Is not this an excellent reason for submission? Who can refuse to be vanquished by love? Who will not say as our hymn puts it

*Lord, You have won, at length I yield!   
My heart, by mighty Grace compelled,   
Surrenders all to Thee.   
Against Your terrors long I strove,   
But who can stall against Your love?   
Love conquers even me.*

If resistance will only call forth the Omnipotent wrath of God, but true submission will lead to the obtaining of His plenteous Grace, who will continue in arms? I shall not tarry to carry the argument further, but aim at once to press home this precept upon you as God the Holy Spirit may enable me.

I believe it to be addressed both to saint and sinner and, therefore, I shall urge it home first upon the child of God, and say to all of you who love the Lord, Submit yourselves to God. And then we shall take a little longer time to say in deep solemnity to those who are not reconciled to God by the death of His Son, Submit yourselves to God if you would be saved.

I. To THE PEOPLE OF GOD, Submit yourselves to God. He is your God, your Father, your Friendyield yourselves to Him. What does this counsel mean? It means, first, exercise humility. We do well to interpret a text by its connection. The connection here is, God resists the proud, but gives Grace unto the humble and, therefore, the submission here meant must include humility, even if it is not the chief thing intended. Brothers and Sisters, let us take our right place before God. And what is that? Is it the highest seat in the synagogue? Is it the place of those who thank God that they are not as other men are?

I scarcely need reply! You who are the children of God will not dream of occupying such a position! If by reason of temporary foolishness you ever boast, I am sure, my dear Friends, when you think it over in the watches of the night, you are very much ashamed of yourselves and would be glad to eat your own words. A pardoned sinner boasting? A debtor to Sovereign Grace extolling himself? It is horrible! Nothing can be more out of place than boasting upon the lips of a child of God. If I heard Balaams ass speak, I should impute it to a miracle that it should use the language of man, but that a man of God should use the braying of vanity is a miracle another waynot of God but of Satan!

Is it not one of the fundamental Truths of our faith that we are saved by Grace? And what says the Apostle? Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. The word, excluded, means shut out. Boasting comes to the door, it knocks, it pleads for admission but it is excluded. Possibly through our unwatchfulness it gains a momentary entrance, but as soon as ever the Grace of God within us ascertains that the intruder is within our gates, it ejects him, shuts the door in his face and bars him out! And in answer to the question, Where is boasting, then? Free Grace replies, It is excluded, by the Law of Grace.

If all the good we have has been given to us freely by Divine favor, in what can we glory? If we possess the highest degree of spiritualityif our life is perfectly clear from any open fault and if our hearts are wholly consecrated to the Lordyet we are unprofitable servants, we have done no more than it was our duty to have done. But, alas, we fall far short of this, for we have not done what it was our duty to have done and in many things we fail and come short of the glory of God. The right position of a Christian is to walk with lowly humility before God and with meekness towards his fellow Christians. The lowest room becomes us most and the lowest seat in that room.

Look at Paul, who knew far more of Christ than we doand who served Him far better! It is edifying to notice his expressions. He is an Apostle and he will by no means allow anyone to question his calling, for he has received it from the Lord. But what does he say? Not meet to be called an Apostle. What can be lower than this? But we shall see him descending far below it! He takes his place among the ordinary saints and he will not give up his claim to be numbered with them, for he has made his calling and election sure. But where does he sit among the people of God? He styles himself, less than the least of all saints. That is no small a descent from, not meet to be called an Apostle, to, less than the least of all saints!

But he went lower, for at another time he confessed himself to be still a sinner, and coming into the assembly of sinners, where does he take his position? He writes himself down as, the chief of sinners. This is submission to God, the true surrender of every proud pretension or conceited claim! If, my Brothers, the Lord has called us to be ministers, let us always feel that we are not worthy of so great a Grace. Since He has made us saints, let us confess that the very least of our Brothers is more esteemed by us than we dare to esteem ourselves! And since we know that we are sinners, let us look at our sins under that aspect which most reveals their heinousness, for in some respects and under certain lights there are evils in our character which make us guiltier than the rest of our fellow sinners.

The stool of repentance and the foot of the Cross are the favorite positions of instructed Christians. Such humility is not at all inconsistent with believing that we are saved, nor with the fullest assurance of faith, no, not at all inconsistent with the nearest familiarity with God! Listen to AbrahamI have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, I that am but dust and ashes. He has drawn very near to the Lord and speaks with Him as a man speaks with his friend, and yet he says, I am but dust and ashes. His boldness did not destroy his humbleness, nor his sense of nothingness hinder his near approach to the Lord.

My dear Brothers and Sisters, we know that in Christ we are accepted. We know that we are dear to God and loved with an everlasting love. We know that He hears our prayers and answers us continually. We know that we walk in the light of His Countenance. But still, our posture should always be that of deep humiliation before the Lord. In the attitude of complete submission we should sit at the Masters feet and say, By the Grace of God I am what I am. May the Holy Spirit work this gracious submission in every regenerated soul!

Let us next observe that our text bears a second meaning, namely, that of submission to the Divine will. That, of course, would strike you in the wording of the verseSubmit yourselves therefore to God. Beloved Christian Friends, be willing to accept whatever God appoints. Let us each pray to be

*Simple, teachable and mild,   
Made into a little child;   
Pleased with all the Lord provides,   
Weaned from all the world besides.*

Is it, indeed, so with us? Are you not, some of you, very far from it? Are you quite sure that you are submissive to the Divine will as to your rank in society? Have you accepted your position in the scale of worldly wealth? Are you satisfied to be sickly, obscure, or of small ability? Are you content with Gods appointments?

Too many professors are quarrelling with God that they are not other than they are. This is evil and shows that pride is still in our hearts, for were we conscious of our own wickedness, we would know that anything short of Hell is more than we deserve! As long as we are not in the pit of torment, gratitude becomes us! It is a happy thing when the mind is brought to submit to all the chastisements of God and to acquiesce in all the trials of His Providence. Knowing, as we do, that all these things work together for our good, and that we never endure a smart more than our heavenly Father knows is necessary, we are bound to submit ourselves cheerfully to all that He appoints.

Though no trial for the present is joyous, but grievous, yet ought we to resign ourselves to it because of its results. Even the beasts of the field may teach us this! I read the other day of an elephant which had lost its sightit was brought to the surgeon and he placed some powerful substance upon the eyes which caused it great pain. And, of course, the huge creature was very restless during the operation. After a while it began to see a little and when it was brought, the next day, to the surgeon, it was as docile as a lamb, for it evidently perceived that benefit had resulted from the painful application.

If such a creature has enough intelligence to perceive the benefit and to accept the pain, how much more should we! Since we know that we owe infinite blessings to the rod of the Covenant, we ought to be willing to bare our own back to the scourge and let the Lord do as He wills with us. Yes, I go beyond this, even if we did not know that good would come of it, we ought to submit because it is the Lords will, for He has a right to do whatever He wills with us. Can you subscribe to this? As a true child, can you make a complete surrender to your Fathers good pleasure? If not, you have not fairly learned the mind of Christ.

It is a great thing to have the soul entirely submitted to God about everything so that we never wish to have anything in Providence other than God would have it to be, nor desire to have anything in His Word altered. Not one ordinance of the Church of God, not one doctrine of Revelation, not one precept or warning other than it is! We shall never be at rest till we come to this. It is essential to our happiness to say at all times, Nevertheless, not as I will but as You will. Brothers and Sisters, ought it not to be so? Who ought to rule in the house but the Father? Who should govern in the body but the Head? Who should lead the flock but the Shepherd? We owe so much to Jesus and so entirely belong to Him, that even were it put to the vote, all of us would give our suffrages so that the Lord Jesus should be Head and Chief among us! For is He not the First-Born among many Brethren?

Submit, then, my Brothers and Sisters! Beseech the Holy Spirit to mold your wills to complete subjection. You will never be happy till self is dethroned. I know some of Gods children who are in great trouble only because they will not yield to the Divine will. I met with one, I believe a good Sister, who said she could not forgive God for taking away her mother. And another friend said he could not see God to be a good God for he had made him suffer such terrible afflictions. Their furnace was heated seven times hotter by the fuel of rebellion which they threw into it! So long as we blame the Lord and challenge His rights, our self-tortured minds will be tossed to and fro.

No father can let his boy bend his little fist in defiance and yet treat that child with the same love and fondness as his other children who submit themselves to him! You cannot enjoy your heavenly Fathers smile, my dear Brother or Sister, till you cease from being in opposition to Him

and yield the point in debatefor He has said that if we walk contrary to Him, He will walk contrary to us. It will be wise for you to cry, My Father, my evil spirit has rebelled against You, my wicked heart has dared to question You, but I cease from it now! Let it be even as You will, for I know that You do right.

So the text means first humility and then submission to the Lords will. Lord, teach us both! It means, also, obedience. Do not passively lie back and yield to the necessities of the position, but gird up the loins of your mind and manifest a voluntary and active submission to your great Lord. The position of a Christian should be that of a soldier to whom the centurion said, Go, and he goes. And he says, Do this, and he does it. It is not ours to questionthat were to become masters. But ours it is to obey without questioning, even as soldiers do. Submission to our Lord and Savior will be manifested by ready obedience.

Delays are essentially insubordinations and neglects are a form of rebellion. I fear that there are some Christians whose disobedience to Christ is a proof of their pride. It may be said that they do not know such-andsuch a duty to be incumbent upon them. Yes, but there is a proud ignorance which does not care to knowa pride which despises the Commandments of the Lord and counts them nonessential and unimportant. Can such scorn be justifiable? Is that a right temper for the Lords servant to indulge? Can any point in our Lords will be unimportant to us? Can the wish of a dear Friend be trivial to those who love Him? Has Jesus said, If you love Me, keep My commandments, and shall I treat them as matters of no importance? No, my Lord, if it were the lifting of a stone from the road. If it were the moving of a sere leaf, or the brushing away of a cobweb, if You ordain it, then it becomes important straightway important to my loving allegiance that I may, by my prompt obedience, show how fully I submit myself to You.

Love is often more seen in little things than in great things. You may have, in your house, a servant who is indifferent and yet she will perform all the necessary operations of the household. But the loving child attends to the little details which make up the comfort of life and are the tests of affection. Let your love be shown by a childlike obedience which strives to do all the Masters will in all points. I am afraid there are some who do not obey the Master because they are proud enough to think that they know better than He does! They judge the Lords will instead of obeying it. Are you a judge of the Law, my Brother? Are you to sit on the judgment seat and say of this or that statute of the Law, This is not important, or, That may be set aside without any loss to me?

This is not according to the mind of Christ, who did His Fathers will and asked no questions. When next you pray, Your will be done in earth, even as it is in Heaven, remember how they do that will before the Throne of God, without hesitation, demur, or debatebeing wholly subservient to every wish of the Most High. Thus, dear Brethren, Submit yourselves to God. The expression, however, is not well worked out unless I add another explanation and, perhaps, even then I have not brought out, fully, its meaning. Submit yourselves to God by yielding your hearts to the motions of the Divine Spirit, by being impressible, sensitive and easily affected.

The Spirit of God has hard work with many Christians to lead them in the right way. They are as the horse and the mule which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle. There is the stout oak in the forest and a hurricane howls through it and it is not moved. But the rush by the river yields to the faintest breath of the gale. Now, though in many things you should be as the oak and not as the rush, yet in this thing be as the bulrush and be moved by the slightest breathing of the Spirit of God! The photographers plates are rendered sensitive by a peculiar processyou shall take another sheet of glass and your friend shall stand before it as long as ever he likes and there will be no impression producedat least none which will be visible to the eye.

But the sensitive plate will reveal every little wrinkle of the face and perpetuate every hair of the head. Oh, to be rendered sensitive by the Spirit of God! We can be made so by submitting ourselves entirely to His will. Is there not a promise to that effect?I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. Sometimes the Spirit of God whispers to you, Retire to pray. At such times enter your closet at once. Remember how David said, When you said unto me, Seek you My face, my heart said unto You, Your face, Lord, will I seek. The Spirit of God will sometimes impel you to a duty which involves selfdenial, which will take up much of your leisure and will bring you no very great honor as a reward. Be not disobedient to His call, but go about your work speedily. Say with the Psalmist, I made haste and delayed not to keep Your commandments.

The Spirit will, at times, urge us to deep repentance on account of faults in which we have been living. He will rebuke us for some ugly temper which we have indulged, or for some hard word which we have spoken against a Brother. Or because of the worldliness of mind into which we have fallen. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, bestir yourself at such times and examine and purge your soul! Let a hint from the Holy Spirit be enough for you! As the eyes of the handmaiden are towards her mistress, so let your eyes be to your Lord. The handmaid does not require the mistress to speak. It will often happen when she is waiting at table and there are friends. The mistress nods or puts her finger up and that is enough.

She does not call out, Mary, do this or that, or speak to her loudly a dozen times, as the Lord has to do to us! But a wink suffices. So it ought to be with us. Half a word from the Divine Spiritthe very gentlest motion from Himshould be enough guidance and straightway we should be ready to do His bidding. In this matter it is not so much your activity as your submission to the Holy Spirit which is needed. It is not so much your running as your willing to be drawn by Him. There is to be an activity in religionwe are to wrestle and to fight, but side by side with that we are

to yield ourselves to the Spirits impulsefor it is He that works in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure. He strives in us mightily and if we will but resign ourselves, and no longer be obstacles in His Divine way, He will carry us to greater heights of Grace and create in us more fully the likeness of Christ.

Submit yourselves to God. Learn the sweetness of lying passive in His hands, knowing no will but His! Learn the blessedness of giving yourselves up entirely to His Divine sway, for in so doing you will enter into Heaven below!

II. Now we come to that part of our discourse in which we must earnestly pray God the Holy Spirit to help us doubly. I desire now to address myself TO THOSE WHO ARE NOT SAVED but have some desire to be so. I am thankful to God that there should be even the faintest wish of the kind. May it grow at once into an impetuous longing, yes, may that longing be fulfilled this very morning and may you go out of this house saved!

You tell me that you have been anxious about your soul for some time, but have made no headway. You have been putting forth great efforts. You have been very diligent in attending the means of Grace, in searching the Scriptures and in private prayer, but you cannot get on. It is very possible, my dear Friend, that the reason is thisthat you have not submitted yourself to God. You are trying to

do when the best thing would be to cease from yourself and drop into the hands of the Savior who is able to save you though you cannot save yourself. For a proud heart, the very hardest thing is to submit. Do you find it so?

No surrender is the stubborn sinners motto. I have known men who would give their bodies to be burned sooner than yield to God. Their high stomach has stood out long against the Most High and they have been little Pharaohs till the Lord has brought them to their senses. Must I yield, must I bow at His feet?they could not submit to such humiliation! If the Gospel had tolerated their pride and given them a little credit they would have rejoiced in it. But to be tumbled in the dust and made to confess their own nothingness they could not bear. Submit is wormwood and gall to haughty sinners! Yet they must drink the cup or die.

Hear, then, you stout-hearted! You can never be saved unless you submit! And when you are saved, one of the main points in your salvation will be that you have submitted! I desire to whisper one little Truth of God in your ear and I pray that it may startle youYou are submitting even now. You say, Not I. I am lord of myself. I know you think so, but all the while you are submitting to the devil. The verse before us hints at this. Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. If you do not submit to God you never will resist the deviland you will remain constantly under his tyrannical power!

Which shall be your master, God or devil, for one of these must? No man is without a master. Some power or other is paramount within us, either good or evil is supreme in our hearts. And if we will not be mastered by the good, the evil has already gained the sway. How, then, am I to submit? one asks, To what shall I submit, and in what respects? Well, first, submit yourself, if you would be saved, to the Word of God. Believe it to be true. Believing it to be true, yield yourself to its force. Does it accuse you? Confess the accusation! Does it condemn you? Plead guilty! Does it hold out hope to you? Grasp it! Does it command you? Obey it! Does it guide you? Follow it! Does it cheer you? Believe it! Submit yourself to Him who in this blessed Book proclaims Himself the Savior of all such as will throw down the weapons of their rebellion and end their futile war by relying upon His power to save them!

Yield yourself, next, to your conscience. You have quarreled with your conscience and your conscience with you. It persists in speaking and you desire it to be quiet. After dissipation, in the lull which comes after a storm of evil pleasure, a voice is heard saying, Is this right? Is this safe? Will this last? What will the end of this be? Would it not be better to seek some better and nobler thing than this? God speaks often to men through the still small voice of conscience. Open your ears, then, and listen. Your conscience can do you no harm! It may disturb you, but it is well to be disturbed when peace leads on to death! He was a fool who killed the watch dog because it alarmed him when thieves were breaking into his house! If conscience upbraids you, feel its upbraiding and heed its rebuke. It is your best friend! Faithful are its friendly wounds, but the kisses of a flattering enemy are deceitful.

God also sends many messengers. To some of you He has sent the most tender of monitors. Hearken their admonitions and regard their kind warnings, for they mean good to your souls. Is it hard, O son, is it hard to submit when the message comes by a mothers loving lips? Is it hard to submit when her tears bedew each word she speaks? It must have been difficult for some of you, in your young days, to stand out against a mothers entreaties when she not only pointed you to Heaven, but led the waynot only spoke of Jesus, but reflected His love in her daily walk and conversation. You have a sister, young man, whom you love and respect. You could hardly tell how much an object of admiration she is to you.

Now, that letter of hers, which you turned into a joke? You did feel it, after all, didnt you? Yield to its pathetic pleading! Yield to its tender entreaties! Remember, God has other messengers whom He will send if these loving ones do not suffice. He will soon send you a sterner summons. If you listen not to the gentle word, the still, small voice, He can send to you by the rougher messengers of disease and death! Be not so foolish as to provoke Him to do so. Moreover, submit yourselves to God, since He has, perhaps, already sent His messengers in sterner shapes to you. It was but a few days ago that you lost your old friend. Many a merry day you had spent together and many a jovial night, too.

He was in as good health as yourself, apparently, but he was struck down and you have followed him to the tomb. Is there no voice from that new grave to you? Do you think your friend, in his sudden end, was a warning to you to be ready for the same departure? You have also suffered from premonitory symptoms of sickness. Perhaps you have actually been sick and been made to lie where your only prospect was eternitya dread eternityhow surely yours! You trembled to gaze into it, but the very tones of the surgeons voice compelled you to do so. You feared that you would have to leave this body and you could not help saying to yourself, To where shall I fly? My naked spirit, where must it go when once it leaves the warm precincts of this house of clay?

It is not my business one-tenth as much as it is yoursbut I charge you, hear the voice of these Providences! Listen to these solemn calls! The Angel of Death has stood at your bedside and pointed to you and said, Young man, it is the fever this time and you may recover, but the next time you will never rise from the bed on which you lie. Or, You have been rescued, now, from a dreadful accident, but the next time there will be no escape for you. Because I will do this, prepare to meet your God.

Above all, I pray you submit yourselves if you are conscious of such things, to the whispers of Gods Holy Spirit. Gods Holy Spirit does not strive with every man alike. Some have so grieved Him that He has ceased to strive with them, or does so very occasionally and then they so resist His striving that they are never very long continued. The worst men that lives has his better moments. The most careless has some serious thoughts. There are lucid intervals in the madness of carnal pleasure. At such times men hear what they call, their better selves. It is hardly so. I prefer to call it the general reproving of Gods Spirit in their souls. He says to them, Is this right? Is this wise? This trifling, this time-killing, this depraving of the soul by allowing the bodily appetites to rule. This lowering of the man to the level of the brute, can this be right? Is there no eternity? Is there no immortality, no God, no judgment to come?

The Holy Spirit sometimes opens the mans eyes, as He did the eyes of Balaam, and makes him see the certainty of the Judgment Day and the nearness of its approach. The man is led to anticipate the trumpets sound which heralds the assize, the coming of the Judge upon His Great White Throne, the gathering of the multitudes of the quick and the dead, the opening of the books, the dividing of the throng, the driving away of the goats to their everlasting punishment and the reception of the righteous to their everlasting joy! Oh, when you are made to feel all this, I pray you submit yourself to it!

It costs some men a great deal of trouble to be damned! And a man who blasphemes and talks infidelity merely does so to conceal his inward struggles. Like the boy who whistles as he goes through the churchyard to keep his courage up, they talk blasphemy to divert their mind from its own fears. He who is most fierce in the utterance of his disbelief is not the greatest disbeliever. When the heathen offered children to Moloch, they beat their drums to drown the cries of the victims, and even so these men make a great noise to drown the voice of Conscience. The man knows better and I charge him to let that better knowledge come to the front and lead him to his God and Father. It will be a blessed thing for him if it shall be so, even this day. Submit yourselves to God.

If you ask me again, In what respect am I to submit myself? I answer as briefly as I can. First, submit yourself by confessing your sin. Cry peccavi. Do not brazen it out and say, I have not sinned. You will never be pardoned while that is the case. He that confesses his sin shall find mercy. Sinner, choose between one of two thingsjudge yourself or be judged of God. If you will judge yourself and put in a plea of guilty, then will the Great Judge grant you forgiveness! Condemn yourself and you shall not be condemned! Confess the indictment to be true, for true it is, and to deny it is to seal your doom. Next, honor the Law which condemns you. Do not persevere in picking holes in it and saying that it is too severe and requires too much of a poor fallible creature. The Law is holy, just and good. Put your lips down and kiss it, though it condemns you, and say, though it charges me with guilt and convicts me of deadly sin, yet it is a good Law, and ought not to be altered, even to save me.

Next, admit the justice of the penalty. Your sins condemn you to Hell. Do not say, God is too severe. This is a punishment disproportionate to the offense. You will never be pardoned if you think so, but God will be justified in your condemnation. The pride of your heart will be a swift witness against you. Confess with your heart, If my soul were sent to Hell it is no more than I deserve. When you have confessed the guilt and honored the Law, and acknowledged the justice of the penalty, then you are nearing the position in which God can be merciful to you! Submit yourself, SinnerI pray you do it nowsubmit yourself to God as your King!

Throw down your weapons! Lower your crest and cast away those robes of pride. Surrender unconditionally and say, Lord God, I admit You, now, to be king. No longer like stout-hearted Pharaoh will I ask, Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice? But like one brought to his senses, I yield as reason and Grace suggest. It will go well with you when you make a full capitulation, an unconditional surrender. Fling wide the gates of the city of Mansoul and admit the prince Emanuel to rule as sole Sovereign in every street in the city! Dispute no longer His sovereignty, but pray to be made a loyal subject, obedient in all things. You shall find Grace in the sight of the Lord if you will do this.

Furthermore, submit yourself to Gods way of saving you. Now Gods way of saving you is by His Grace, not by your merits. It is by the blood of Jesus, not by your tears and sufferings. He will justify you by your simply trusting Jesus now. Your proud heart does not admire the Lords way of salvation. You stand up and say, How is this consistent with morality? As if you were the guardian of morality, as if the King of Heaven and earth could not take care of the moralities without assistance from you! Who are you to be, all of a sudden, the champion of morality? How dare you dream that the thrice holy God will not take care of that?

He bids you trust His Son, Jesus. Will you do so or not? If you will not, there is no hope for you. If you will, you are saved the moment that you believesaved from the guilt of sin by trusting Jesus! You must also

surrender yourself at discretion to His method of operating upon you. One says, I would believe in Jesus, Sir, if I felt the horror and terror which some have experienced on account of sin. What? Do you demand of God that He should drag you through horrors and terrors before you will believe? Submit yourself to be saved in a gentler way! But I read of one, says another, who had a dream! I would believe if I, too, saw a vision. Must God give you dreams? Must He play lackey to you and save you in your way?

He tells you plainly, If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ you shall be saved. Will you believe or not? For if you do not, neither dreams, nor visions, nor terrors, nor anything else can save you. There is Gods way, Sinner! I ask youand perhaps your answer will settle your fate forever will you follow that way or not? If you will not, you have chosen your own destruction! But if you will have it and will submit yourself to be saved by believing in Jesus Christ, it is well with you! I know there are some in this place who feel ready to burst, for their broken hearts are saying, I yield at once. Oh, if He would but save me. How glad I am to hear you say so, for, He gives Grace to the humble.

I remember the time when I stood and cried to God, O God, if I must lie on a sick bed till I die, I care not if You will but have mercy on me! If You will but conquer my proud will and make a new man of me, You may do whatever You please with me! Only save me from the guilt, the power of sin! It was when the Lord brought me down there that He enabled me to see life and salvation in Jesus Christ! And if He has brought you down to that point, Sinner, then you have nothing to do but simply trust the Lord Jesus Christ and you are assuredly saved!

When He brings you to submit, He has given you His Grace. Submission to His Divine will is the essence of salvation. Now, who will yield? Who will yield at once? The Master has come among us! The King, Himself is here! Your Maker, your Redeemer! See the marks of His wounds! See the scars on His hands and feet and side! He asks of you, Will you yield to Me? Will you throw down your weapons? Will you end the war? Will you surrender at discretion? If so, He gives you His hand and says, Go in peace. There is peace between Me and you.

Kiss the Son lest He be angry and you perish from the way, while His wrath is kindled but a little. I prayed the Lord to give me many souls and I believe I shall have them this morning! I feel sure of it! Grant me this favorif you submit yourselves to Christ, let me hear of it and do not delay to unite yourselves with those who rejoice to be led in triumph as the captives of His Grace!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONJames 4.** HYMNS FROMOUR OWN HYMN BOOK181, 578, 654. Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.  
Sermon #1408 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE REASON WHY MANY CANNOT FIND PEACE   
NO. 1408

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, APRIL 7, 1878, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves**

**in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up. James 4:7-10.**

WE frequently meet with persons who tell us that they cannot find peace with God. They have been bidden to believe in the Lord Jesus, but they misunderstand the command and, while they think they are obeying it, they are really unbelievers and, therefore, they miss the way of peace. They attempt to pray, but their petitions are not answered and their supplications yield them no comfort whatever, for neither their faith nor their prayer is accepted of the Lord. Such persons are described by James in the 3rd verse of the chapter now open before usYou ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss. We cannot be content to see seekers in this wretchedness and, therefore, we endeavor to comfort them, instructing them, again and again, in the great Gospel precept, Believe and live.

Yet as a rule they get no further, but linger in an unsatisfactory condition. They assure us that they believe in Jesus, but we see none of the fruits of faith in them, neither can they, themselves, say that they derive any spiritual benefit from the faith which they profess. Now I fear that comfort is misplaced in these cases. When we have endeavored to cheer such people, I fear we may have been filming over a wound which needs a sharp knife rather than a soft bandagea keen lancet rather than a healing liniment.

We shall try at this time to show certain uneasy souls why they do not obtain peace and what they must be brought to by the Holy Spirit before they can rightly claim that they are saved. Though our words may be somewhat caustic, they will be uttered in loving faithfulness and may the Lord our God make them effectual to the ending of the inner strife and the establishment of settled peace. I fear that many who profess to be Christians are in a very questionable conditionthey have no joy of their faith and no success in their prayers. Whether they are Christians or not is a moot point and the practical James does not waste time in discussing the doubtful question, but speaks to them from both sides of their apparent

condition.

In his previous chapters he calls them, my brethren, and even, my beloved brethren. He draws no line of demarcation when he, afterwards, addresses them as, sinners, whose hands must be cleansed and, as, double-minded persons, whose hearts must be purified. They were both of thesethey were professedly Brothers and Sisters, but they were at heart unchaste to Christthey indulged in grievous sins of contention and maliceand their hearts were divided between the love of sin and the hope of salvation. We will not, therefore, raise personal questions, or try to discriminate where certainty is hard to reach, but we will speak to suspicious characters without determining whether they are truly Believers or not.

If such persons claim to be called Brothers and Sisters, we will address them as such, but it will be in a sentence like this, My Brothers and Sisters, such things ought not to be. On the other hand, we will use no condemnatory title, but leave the question between God and each mans own conscience. We will go to the root of the matter and set forth the reason for the lack of peace and salvation of which some complain. May the sacred Spirit help us to point out the fatal failure which keeps the soul from rest. If any man is not sure that he is in Christ, he ought not to be easy one moment more until he is so.

Dear Friend, without the fullest confidence as to your saved condition, you have no right to be at ease and I pray you may never be so! This is a matter too important to be left undecided. Instantly should every man of prudence make assurance doubly sure and bind all things fast that he may find them fast for eternityfor eternity I sayfor thus says the Lord. Never risk your souls, for your souls are yourselves, your real selves and nothing can make up for their loss. If you lose your souls, it will be no recompense to have gained the whole world! Be careful, then! Leave nothing insecure. Carefully measure and weigh every important step. Consider and examine, lest being so near to the kingdom, any of you should seem to come short of it.

To help you to a settled peace, let me, first of all, urge upon you to obey the comprehensive command of our textSubmit yourselves therefore to God. And then, secondly, let me further press upon you to practice the other precepts which follow, such as, Resist the devil. Draw near to God. Cleanse your hands. Purify your hearts. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep. And, Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord.

I. First listen to THE COMPREHENSIVE COMMANDSubmit yourselves therefore to God. According to the connection, the lighting spirit within many men shows that they have not submitted themselves to Godlusting, envy, strife, contention, jealousy, angerall these things declare that the heart is not submissive but remains violently self-willed and rebellious. Those who are still wrathful, proud, contentious and selfish are evidently unsubdued. There are some men to whom the very idea of submission is distastefulthey will be subjective to no one, but wish to be their own gods and a law unto themselves. Submit is a galling word to them. They say in their hearts, Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice?

They are willing, enough, to accept His favors, willing enough, after their fashion, to say, Thank God, but as to submission, they will have none of itit suits not their high mightiness! They strive for the mastery. They push for the front place, aiming to advance their own interests and make the great I to be lord above all. The Apostle quietly indicates in the words of our text that many Christian professors need to submit, for at present their unhumbled nature leads them to lusting and strivingand effectually prevents their asking so as to receive at the Lords hands. A lack of submission is no new or rare fault in mankind. Ever since the Fall it has been the root of all sin. When the heart submits to God in sincerity, the work of Grace is begun. And when it submits perfectly, the work is complete. But for this, Divine Grace must display its power, for the heart is obstinate and rebellious.

From the moment when our mother Eve stretched out her hand to pluck the forbidden fruit and her husband joined her in setting up the human will against the Divine, the sons of men have universally been guilty of a lack of conformity to the will of God. They choose their own way and will not submit their wills. They think their own thoughts and will not submit their understanding. They love earthly things and will not submit their affections. Man wants to be his own law and his own master. This is abominable, since we are not our own makers, for, it is He that has made us and not we ourselves.

The Lord should have supremacy over us, for our existence depends on His will. I have heard much of the rights of man, but it were well also to consider the rights of God, which are the first, highest, surest and most solemn rights in the universe and lie at the base of all other rights! The Lord has an absolute right to the beings whom He has fashioned and it is shameful that the great mass of men seem never even to remember that He exists, much less to ask themselves what is due to Him. Alas, great God, how are You a stranger even in the world which You have, Yourself, made! Your creatures, who could not see if You had not given them eyes, look everywhere except to You. Creatures who could not think if You had not given them minds, think of all things except You! And beings who could not live if You did not keep them in being, forget You utterly, or, if they remember Your existence and see Your power, are foolhardy enough to become Your foes!

The hemlock of sin grows in the furrows of opposition to God. When the Lord is pleased to turn the hearts of opposers to the obedience of His Truth, it is an evident token of salvation. In fact, it is the dawn of salvation itself! To submit to God is to find rest! The rule of God is so beneficial that He ought readily to be obeyed. He never commands us to do that which, in the long run, can be injurious to us, nor does He forbid us anything which can be to our real advantage. Our God is so kind, so wise, so

full of loving forethought, that it is always be to our best interest to follow His lead. Even if we could be left to choose our own way and were under no bonds of duty, it would be wise and prudent to choose the way of the Lord, for it is the path of pleasantness and safety.

Beloved, the Lord is far too great to have any need to deal unjustly, or unkindly with His creatures. Indeed, He is so great that He cannot desire any personal advantage from His government, but He condescends to govern us because without His rule and guidance we would be utterly undone. It is for our good that like a father in a family He commands us this or forbids us the other. It is wanton cruelty to ourselves when we break away from the liberty with which Jesus makes us free, to place ourselves under the tyranny of selfishness and the baser passions of the mind. It is madness to forsake the honorable service of the great King to become the slave of Satan. O that men would submit themselves unto God and be willing to be blessed!

All resistance against God is, from the necessity of the case, be futile. Common sense teaches that rebellion against Omnipotence is both insanity and blasphemy. The Lords purpose must stand and His pleasure must be done! His power will assuredly crush all opposition and it is idle to raise it. Why, then, should a man contend against his Master? Wisdom as well as righteousness call upon him to submit to God. And then let it always be known that submission to God is absolutely necessary to salvation. A man is not saved until he bows before the supreme majesty of God. He may say, I believe in Jesus, but if he goes on to follow out his own desires and to gratify his own passions, he is a mere pretender, a wolf in sheeps clothing.

Dead faith will save no man! It is not even as good as the faith of devils, for they believe and tremble, and these men believe in a fashion which makes them brazen in their iniquity. No, salvation means being saved from the domination of self and sin! Salvation means being made to long after likeness to God, being helped by Divine Grace to reach to that likeness and living after the mind and will of the Most High. Submission to God is the salvation which we preach, not a mere deliverance from eternal burning, but deliverance from present rebellion, deliverance from the sin which is the fuel of those unquenchable flames. There must be conformity to the eternal Laws of the universe and according to these God must be first and man must bow to Himnothing can be right till this is done. Submit is a command which in every case must be obeyedor no peace or salvation will be found.

Now, it is generally, in this matter of submission, that the stumbling block lies in the way of souls when seeking peace with God. It keeps them unsaved and, as I have already said, necessarily so, because a man who is not submissive to God is not saved. He is not saved from rebellion. He is not saved from pride. He is still evidently an unsaved man, no matter what he may think of himself. Perhaps by a few personal remarks I may hit upon the reason why certain of my hearers cannot get the peace which the Gospel so freely sets before them. There is a lack of submission in some point or other. In the saved man there is and must be a full and unconditional submission to the Law of God. He must consent unto the Law that it is good.

If your mind has up to now quibbled against the Law, you must end the fight, for it is impossible that you should be right while you quarrel with the Law of Righteousness! If you set yourself up to be a judge of the Law, you judge the Lawgiver Himself, and what is this but the blackest presumption? Traced to its real meaning, the thought of judging the Law is treason and would dethrone God and reign in His place! How sad to see a sinful mortal criticizing the perfect Law of his Maker! Dare you do this? If you say in your heart, He is too strict in marking sin and too severe in punishing it, what is this but condemning your Judge? If you say, He calls me to account for idle words and even for sins of ignorance and this is hard, what is this but to call your Lord unjust?

Should the Law be amended to suit your desires? Should its requirements be accommodated to ease your indolence? If you ask for this you are not saved, for a saved person delights in the Law of God after the inward man. He says of it, the Law is holy, though he weeps as he adds, but I am carnal, sold under sin. He honors the Law as he bows before it and confesses his shortcomings. Yes, and before a man can have peace with God he must submit himself to the sentence of the Law. Though that Law in its severity searches the thoughts and tries the heart, arraigns us before the bar of God and pronounces sentence upon us, we must acknowledge it to be just!

Grace working in the heart brings the penitent to plead guilty to the sin and to admit that the penalty is deserved. In my own case I unreservedly acknowledge that when the Law in my conscience condemned me to Hell, I dared not lift a finger nor even think a thought by way of disputing the sentence. The conscience is not Divinely quickened, nor the soul renewed, nor the man saved, unless he cries, I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight, that You might be justified when You speak and be clear when You judge.

You must submit yourselves to the righteousness and severity of God or He will resist you as He does all the proud. There can be no pardon for a man unless he will honor the Law by hearty submission. If your plea is, not guilty, you will be committed for trial according to justiceand then you cannot be forgiven by mercy! You are in a hopeless position! God Himself cannot meet you upon that ground, for He cannot admit that the Law is unrighteous and its penalty too severe. The Lord cannot be at peace with you while you defy His Law! He declares that you are guilty and you dispute this declaration, therefore between you and Himself there is a quarrel which never can be ended till you admit your error and beg for pardon.

He can deal with you in mercy when you once stand where mercy can meet with you, namely, in the sinners place. But if you say I am not guilty, and begin to vindicate or excuse yourself, you are on a ground which the Lord cannot recognize. If you are professedly righteous, how can the Lord deal with you except in justice? And if He deals with you in justice He will readily enough summon His witnesses and prove you guilty and condemn you to Hell. Submit, then, unto God, and say, Guilty, Lord. I throw down the weapons of my rebellion and acknowledge that I stand condemned before You. And if I am saved at all it must be by Your free forgiveness, by Your unmerited mercy, by Your boundless love.

A man must next submit himself to the plan of salvation by Grace alone. God meets the sinner on the footing of Grace. I cannot exonerate you, He seems to say, but I can forgive you. I cannot tolerate your denial of guilt, but if you confess your sin, I am faithful and just to forgive you your sin and to save you from all unrighteousness. Now, are you willing, my dear Hearerare you sure that you are willing to be saved by Grace, alone, and to owe your deliverance from sin and its punishment entirely to the free favor of God? Will you yield to that? I trust you will.

But there are some who will not, for they go about to establish their own righteousness and do not submit themselves to the righteousness of God. They think that so much Chapel-going, Church-going, sermonhearing, Prayer Meeting-attending, Bible reading and so on, will certainly work up something like a claim upon God! O, Sirs, have done with claims! If you come with anything like a claim, the Lord will not touch the case at all, for you have no claim and the pretense of one would be an insult to God! If you fancy you have demands upon God, go into the court of Justice and plead them, but the sentence is certain to be against you, for by the deeds of the Law no flesh can be justified.

Try the other way! Come to God with no claim and appeal to His pity, saying, Lord, I cry for mercy. Gladly will I accept Your free Grace if You will but give it to me. You will be accepted on that footing, for the Lord is gracious and casts out none who come to Him confessing their sins. You must also submit yourselves to Gods way of saving you through an atoning Sacrifice and by means of your personal faith in that Sacrifice. You must receive His Son as Divine and you must believe in that atoning blood which was shed for many for the remission of sins. Surely there should be no difficulty about surrendering the mind to this! Salvation by the great Mediator is such a delightful way of salvation, so just to God, so safe to man, that we ought to clap our hands for very joy to think that such a royal road to Heaven is opened for us!

What do you say, dear Hearers? Does the Holy Spirit incline you to trust in the blood of Jesus? And then there must be a full submission to God in the matter of giving up every sin. Numbers of persons pray for mercy, but they continue in their sins. Such men cannot be saved because salvation is salvation from sinnot in sin. How can we be saved from sin if we are its slaves? If you come to God and cry, Lord, deliver me and have mercy upon me, and yet you practice private drinking and tipple yourselves into semi-drunkenness, how can you be saved? If you keep on cheating in business, or telling lies, or indulge a malicious or angry temper in the family, or are proud and unkind, selfish and miserly, how can you be saved?

I warn you, Friends, that faith itself cannot save you while these things are so, for if your faith were a saving faith it would rescue you from these evils! This, indeed, is salvation, namely, deliverance from the power and habit of sin! Many prayers are semi-hypocriticalthere is a kind of sincerity about them, but there is no whole-hearted desire after holiness and, therefore, they will never gain a comfortable answer from God. O Seeker, are you willing to give up every sin? Come, drunkard, you pray to be forgiven, but are you willing to leave the intoxicating cup once and for all? You, my Friend, ask to be pardonedit is well, but are you, at the same time, desirous to cease from your transgressions?

Yes or no? Are you anxious to search out every false way and abandon it as soon as it is discovered? Do you wish to have a holy, truthful, godly tongue? Do you long to be saved from every lust and secret vice? If so, believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are already saved! Your sigh to be delivered from evil is the commencement of the work of sanctification! But if you say, I would be saved from every wrong way except my one indulgence, my one secret iniquity, then you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity! Your prayers will come back to your bosom unanswered and your pretended faith in Christ will condemn you! Your fancied faith cannot save you, seeing you love your sin.

A certain man has been accustomed to eat of a certain dish which is bad for his health and when he calls in a physician, their talk is after this fashionIf you trust me, says the doctor, I can cure you. Yes, replies the patient, I do trust you heartily. The doctor proceeds, That dainty of yours must be given up, for it is the cause of your disease and so long as you eat it, you must suffer the consequence. Well, doctor, he says, I trust you, but I cannot give up my favorite food. Is it not apparent to everybody that he does not trust the physician at all? Even so, when a man declares, I trust in Christ to save me from sin, and then continues in his wickedness, he mocks the Good Physician and is in danger of sudden destruction! Either you must cast sin out of your heart or it will keep you out of Heaven!

This point must be insisted onreceiving Christ is impossible without, at the same time, renouncing sin! If we would be saved there must be submission to the Lord as to all His teachings. A very necessary point in this age, for a multitude of persons who appear to be religious, judge the Scriptures instead of allowing the Scriptures to judge them. Hear, O you wise men, Except you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven. Submission to the Infallible authority of the Inspired Word is absolutely required of every disciple of Jesus, but this age delights in the opposite spirit!   
Even some of those who call themselves ministers of the Gospel persistently indulge a spirit which is precisely the reverse of the childlike faith which saves the soul. They industriously endeavor to excite rebellion against the teachings of Christ and cry it up under the name of, honest doubt. They do not wish men to believe, but to thinkand their Gospel, practically, isDoubt, and do not be baptized, and you shall be saved. Shame on them! Our Gospel is, He that believes and is baptized, shall be saved! And we are content to teach what Jesus Christ, our Lord, told His disciples to preach to all nations!

If I will never yield my reason. If I will never believe what I cannot understand. If I will carry an open knife about with me to cut and hack at texts of Scripture. If I will not sit at Jesus feet with Mary, but want Him to sit at my feet that I may tell Him what His religion ought to be and what He ought to have said, how can I be saved? If, after all, we are personally infallible and are to spend all our days in selecting our opinions, how can we know Christ? If instead of yielding my judgment to the plain teachings of my Lord, I revise His doctrines, how can I be saved? If I have not submitted my intellect to God, what peace can there be? Mark this well, you wise young men who know so much more than your fathers and are too intellectual to reverence your fathers God!

And, now, I must ask another question of you who desire peace and cannot find it. Have you submitted yourselves to the Providential arrangements of God? I know persons who often sit in this House of Prayer who have a quarrel with God. He took away a beloved object and they not only thought Him unkind and cruel at the time, but they still think so! Like a child in a fit of the sulks, they cast an evil eye upon the great Father! They are not at peace and never will be till they have acknowledged the Lords supremacy and ceased from their rebellious thoughts. If they were in a right state of heart they would thank the Lord for their sharp trials and consent to His will as being assuredly right.

I fear that unsubmission on this point affects a great number of persons. They cannot succeed in business and, therefore, they are out of temper with God. He knows very well that they are not fit to be made rich and could not be trusted with a large business and, therefore, He does not grant their suicidal desires. Some men would never win the race of life if they had an ounce of gold to carry! The only hope for their running at all lies in keeping them unencumbered. We know, also, thoughtful young men who cannot pursue their studies because of failing health. They want to be famous, but they are not strong enough to continue their work for the examination and so they are vexed with the Lord. Or, it may be they have less talent than ambition and they rebel because their Maker has not given them intellects as capacious as that of Solomon. Let them be satisfied to use the talent they have and cease from contending with their Creator!

Many men have a sort of private resentment with Providence and sit down like Jonah under their withered gourd and mutter, We do well to be angry even unto death. Now, if such is the case with any before me, I would say to themleave off quarrelling with your God! What can be the use of it? The very best and wisest thing for you is to make friends with Him and let His will be your will. After all, He deals well with you, if you would but see it. Depend upon it, there is something to be made out of the position you occupygain will come to you out of all those lossesprofit will arise even from those sad bereavements if you will stand still and see the salvation of God. Acquaint yourselves with God and be at peace, for thereby good shall come unto youfor unless you do this you may say, I believe, but you have no faith in God!

How can a man believe in God when he charges God with treating him wrongly? Faith begets resignation and submissionwhere there is strife and enmityunbelief is still supreme. Until you submit yourselves to God it cannot be well with your souls, for He resists the proud but gives Grace to the humble. This is the long and the short of ityou must, as a guilty sinner, cast yourself at Gods feet and say, Have mercy upon me, O Lord, and have mercy upon me in Your own way. I dictate not to You, but I implore Your Grace! I humbly beg forgiveness. Be pleased to pity me. I yield up myself to You, asking You to make me holy. I do from my very heart give up the love of sin. I fear I shall sin, help me to loathe myself when I do so! Make me what You will have me to be and then deal as You will with me. I make no terms nor conditions. Mine is an unconditional surrender. Only for Your mercys sake renew me. Make me Your child and save me. As You bid me trust Your Son, I trust Him. Lord, I believe! Help you my unbelief.

You will have peace when your heart is brought to this point. At present your wound does not heal because it needs washing, for the grit of pride has fallen into it and is causing a wretched irritation. When pride is gone and you are fully submissive, then shall the wound heal and your broken bones shall rejoice! I am not asking you to submit to a priest! I am not asking you to submit to a mere man! But I speak very earnestly when I say, Submit yourselves to Godit is natural, it is rightit is good in itself and filled with the highest good to you.

Submission is essential to salvation, therefore bow before the Lord at once! May the Lord bend that stubborn will and conquer that wayward heart. Yield yourselves to God and pray to be delivered from future rebellion. If you have submitted, do so yet more completely, for so shall you be known to be Christians when you submit yourselves to God. If you will not submit, your faith is a lie, your hope is a delusion, your prayer is an insult, your peace is presumption and your end will be despair! Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. But God shall wound the head of His enemies and the hairy scalp of such an one as goes on still in his trespasses.

II. But now, secondly, having thus spoken upon the great duty of submission, let us consider the other and FOLLOWING PRECEPTS. I think I am not suspicious without reason when I express a fear that the preaching which has lately been very common and, in some respects very useful, of, only believe and you shall be saved, has sometimes been altogether mistaken by those who have heard it. Cases occur in which young persons go on living light, frivolous, giddy, and even wicked livesand yet they claim that they believe in Jesus Christ. When you come to examine them a little, you find that their belief in Christ means that they believe that He has saved them, although everybody who knows their character can clearly see that they are not saved at all!

Now, what is their faith but the belief of a lie? They are living just as they did live and, therefore, it is clear that they are not saved from their former foolish conversation, nor from their bad tempers, nor from their old sins. And yet they try to persuade themselves that they are saved! Now, true faith never believes lies! Presumption lives upon lies, but faith will only feed on the Truth of God! My faith does not teach me to believe I am saved when straight before my very eyes I have the evidence that I am not saved, since I am living in the very sin I pretend to be saved from! Though we would not, for a moment, cast a doubt upon the doctrine of Justification by Faith and Free Salvation, we must also preach more and more that parallel Truth of GodYou must be born again.

We must bring to the front the grand old word which has been thrown into the background by some evangelists, namely, Repent. Repentance is as essential to salvation as faith. Indeed, there is no faith without repentance except the faith which needs to be repented of. A dry-eyed faith will never see the kingdom of God! A holy loathing for sin always attends upon a childlike faith in the Sin-Bearer. Where the root Grace of faith is found, other Graces will grow from it. Now notice how the Spirit of God, after having bidden us submit, goes on to show what else is to be done. He calls for a brave resistance of the devil. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

The business of salvation is not all passivethe soul must be awakened to active warfare! I am to fall into the arms of Christ, that He may save meI must trust Him completely. And when I depend upon Him I receive lifeand the very first effort of that life is to strike with all its might the adversary of Christ and of my own soul. I am not only to contend with sin, but with the spirit which foments and suggests sin! I am to resist the secret spirit of evil as well as its outward acts.

But oh, says one, I cannot give up an inveterate habit. Sir, you must give it up! You must resist the devil or perish. But I have been so long in it, cries the man. Yes, but if you truly trust Christ, your first effort will be to fight against the evil habit. And if it is not merely a habit, nor an impulse, but if your danger lies in the existence of a cunning spirit who is armed at all points and both strong and subtle, yet you must not yield, but resolve to resist to the death, cheered by the gracious promise that he will flee from you! You shall, in the name of Jesus overcome temptation, master evil habits and escape from bondage! Only strike for freedom and disdain the chain of sin. If you are to have peace with God there must be war with Satan! You cannot rest in your spirit and know the peace which faith gives unless you wage war to the knife against every evil and against the patron and Prince of Evil, even Satan. Are you ready for this? You cannot have peace unless you are!

Next the Apostle writes, Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. He who sincerely believes in Christ will be much in prayer. Yet there are some who say, We want to be saved, but they neglect prayer! They cannot make out how it is that they have no enjoyment of religion. But why need they be puzzled? Ask your neglected closet! Ask your own heart how you can be happy and prosperous and blessed in Divine things if you do not pray! Remember that the mere saying of prayers is not praying. The essence of prayer lies in the heart drawing near to Godand it can do that without words. Prayer is the feeling that God is present and the desire of the soul to come near to Him so as to know His influence, to know His love, to feel His power and to be conformed to His will.

This kind of praying can be continued by the power of Gods Holy Spirit all day long. We must know something of this. Behold he prays is one of the first marks of a saved soul and if you think that by some momentary act of faith which you suppose you exercised you are therefore saved while your heart remains at a distance from God, prayerless and carelessyou are fatally deceived! Such is not the teaching of Scripture and there is no guarantee for it in the promises of God. If prayer is utterly neglected, the soul is dead!

The next precept is, Cleanse your hands, you sinners. What? Does the Word of God tell sinners to cleanse their hands and purify their hearts? Yes, it does. Some Brother whispers, Ah, that is Arminianism. Who are you that reply against Gods Word? If such teaching is in this Inspired Book, how dare we question it? It comes with a, thus says the Lord Cleanse your hands, you sinners. When a man comes to God and says, I am willing and anxious to be saved and I trust Christ to save me, and yet he keeps his dirty black hands exercised in filthy actions doing what he knows is wrong, does he expect God to hear him? Do I need spend even so many as a half-dozen words to show that this man does not believe and is not really honest before the Most High? Cleanse your hands, you sinners.

Can you ask God to be at peace with you while your hands grasp your sins with loving embrace and are full of bribes, or are foul with lusts, or are smiting with the fist of anger and wrath? If you do the devils work with your hands, do not expect the Lord to fill them with His blessings! It cannot be! You must break off your sins by righteousness and, as Paul shook off the viper from His hand into the fire, so must you. By the power of faith, if it is a real faith, you will be able to purge your outward life. Why, when men talk about being spiritual and are not even decently moral, it makes us sick to hear them! How dare they talk about being Christians when they do not live as well as Muslims or heathens? Oh you dogs, howling out your shame, what portion have you among the children so long as you bite and devour and love your filthiness? It is idle to talk

about salvation while sin is hugged to the heart with both hands. Away with such hypocrisy!

Then it is added, Purify your hearts, you double-minded. Can they do this? Assuredly not by themselves, but still, in order to have peace with God there must be so much purification of the heart that it shall no longer be double-minded. He who would have salvation must seek it with all his heartmust so seek it that he is resolved to give up anything and to endure anything so that he may but be rescued from sin. Purify your hearts, you double-minded. Get rid of that leering eye of yours towards uncleanness and that cross eye which squints towards worldly gainfor till your whole heart cries after the Most High, He will not hear you!

When you can say with David, My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God, you shall find the Lord! When you cease trying to serve two masters and submit yourselves unto God, He will bless you, but not till then! I believe that this touches the center of the mischief in many of those hearts which fail to reach peacethey have not given up sinthey are not whole-hearted after salvation. Then the Lord bids us be afflicted, and mourn, and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

I grieve to say that I have met with persons who say, I cannot find peace, I cannot get salvation, and talk very prettily in that way. But yet, outside the door they are giggling one with another, as if it were matter of amusement. The Sabbath is spent in vain, idle, frivolous conversation seriousness they do not seem even to have felt. The whole matter appears to be a mere sport. Some converts seem to jump into religion as people do into a baththey jump out, again, about as fast. They never weigh the matter. They have no thought, no sorrow for sin, no humiliation before God. Stop that laughter if you are an unsaved soulfor decencys sake, stop that laughter!

For you to laugh while in danger of being lost sounds to me as ghastly and as grim as if the fiends of Hell were to set up a theater and perform a comedy in the Pit. What right have you with laughter while sin is unforgiven, while God is angry with you? No, go to Him in fitter form and fashion or He will refuse your prayers. Be serious! Begin to think of death, judgment, the wrath to come. These are not trifles, Friends, nor things to make sport about. Neither is true religion a thing that is to be attended to as easily as when one snaps his finger and says, Heigh presto! Quick. Its done! By no means! If you are saved, your mind is solemnly impressed by eternal realities and you are serious about matters of life and death. The very thought of sin pains youand since you meet with it in your daily life, you have cause for daily humbling and are afflicted because of it. Many, I fear, fail to get peace because it is not a solemn matter at all for them. They trifle with it as if it were a game for boys and girls to play and not for the heart and spirit to enter upon with deep concern.

Then the Lord sums up His precepts by saying, Humble yourselves in the sight of God. With that I close. There must be a deep and lowly prostration of the spirit before God. If you happen to have a boy who shows a high rebellious spirit against you and you have chastened him for it, but yet he continues in his rebellion, you tell him that there must be a humbling of himself before you can forgive him. If he is a wise child and wishes to escape your anger, he makes a dutiful confession, acknowledges that he was wrong and appeals to your loveand you freely pardon him. But in many who pretend to come to God there is no humbling. They do not admit that they ever did anything particularly wrong and they do not

care if they did! Still, they hear there is such a thing as believing in Jesus and they profess to believe, not because there is any need for it, as they think, but for fashions sake.

Ah, Friends, Jesus Christ did not come to heal the whole, but the sick! Neither did He die to bind up those who are not broken, nor to make alive those who were never killed. There must be in youand may God give it to youa brokenness of spirit! A broken and a contrite heart He will not despise! If your heart has never been broken, how can He bind it up? If it were never wounded, how can He heal it? These are weighty matters and I speak them weightily lest anyone among you should be deceived. God help you to cry, Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there is any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.

This is the way of salvationthat you believe in Jesus Christ whom God has sent! But remember that He saves us FROM our sins, not IN our sins! Faith in Jesus Christ saves and will save all who have itbut it is by purging out sin. It assures us that we are pardoned and thus it makes us love the Christ by whom we are forgiven. This love leads us to abhor ourselves for our sins and we endeavor to purify ourselves from them by His Spirit. Faith without works is dead, being alone, and though a man is justified by faith and not by worksand by faith alonenot even in part by his works!

Yet the faith which saves is a faith which produces good works and leads into the way of holiness. He who does not seek after righteousness and true holiness, let him pretend what he may, he is dead while he lives! The Lord have mercy upon you, for Christs sake. Amen.

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THE DOUBLE DRAWING NEAR   
NO. 2795

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1902.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 22, 1878.

Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. James 4:8.

As soon as man had disobeyed God, he ran away from Him. Our first parents hid themselves among the trees of the Garden when they heard the voice of the Lord God calling them. They did not come to Him at once, confess the wrong which they had committed and ask for mercy. The natural effect of their sin was to harden their hearts and not to lead them penitently to the great Fatherand it led them impertinently to run away from Him. So, when the Lord came walking in the Garden, in the cool of the day, Adam did not seek Him, to plead for mercy from Him, but the first words had to come from Godthe Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where are you? It was Gods voice speaking in mercy to His wandering child.

Our blessed Savior has set forth the result of sin in His parable of the lost sheep which has strayed from the fold and which, if left to itself, continues to go further and yet further away. We have, all of us, gone astray, as Dr. Watts says

*Each wandering in a different way,   
But all the downward road.*

Our Lord Jesus has set forth this same Truth in that other parable in which He describes the prodigal son as gathering all together and taking his journey into a far country, away from his father. He could not live as he wished in his fathers house. He could not, there, waste his substance with riotous living. His fathers eyes would have been a check upon him at home, so, the only way for him to obtain that foolish and ruinous liberty for which he sought was to get as far off as he could from his father. Alas, this is the condition of every unregenerate sinnerhe has gone away from God and he tries continually to get further and further away from God. Why do men neglect to keep holy the Sabbath, unless it is that they do not want to think of God? Why do they put religious books on one side? Why do they leave their Bibles unread but because Gods name, Gods Person, Gods Law, Gods Gospelall about Godhas become distasteful to them? Like the fool of whom David tells us, they say in their hearts, No God! They do not want Him and if there could be an official announcement made that there is no God, they would welcome it! God is not in all their thoughts, or if He is there at all, it is as an enemy, or as One for whom they have no care, One whom they are not willing to have to reign over them. O heart of man, you have, indeed, gone astray from your God when the distance at which you are from Him is loved by you and you even wish, in your unkindness and your folly, to make that distance greater! If you wish to return, you are already halfway back, but, alas, you do not wish to return! That thought comes not to you and, if you could, you would take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth in the hope that there you could be hidden from the eyes and the Presence of God!

Knowing this to be true, I am glad to be able to give the message of my text to those who are far off from God because the only cure for such sinful wandering is for the sinner to come back to God. While the prodigal was in the far country, he could not be set right. The first step towards getting back into his right position was his resolve, I will arise and go to my father. If he could have filled his belly with husks or anything else if he could have had his rags exchanged for robesif he could have been made a nobleman in that far-off land, it would have been a mischief rather than a benefit to him, for the radical cure, in his case, must lie in his saying, Father, I have sinned, and in receiving his fathers kiss of forgiveness and all the tokens of restoration to his fathers favor. It must be the same with any of you who are far off from Godif you would be right with Him, you must come back to Him.

Poor creatures, how can you be right till you love your Creator? Poor sheep, how can you be right till you are back under the care of the Good Shepherd? O poor immortal, how can you hope for an eternity of blessedness till the Immortal God is reconciled to you and you are reconciled to Him? A creature remaining at enmity against God must expect to dwell forever with the devils in Hell! Where can it dwell but where other rebels are confined in chains? You must come back to your God, Man, if you would have eternal bliss, for if you could have one of the harps of Heaven, it would yield no music to you till you had yielded yourself into submission to the God of Heaven! If you would have the street of gold, it would not enrich you until you had the God of Heaven to be your Friend! So I say again that the only remedy for sinthe only radical efficient cure for the great evil of iniquityis for the sinner to come back to God! I want to impress this one point upon you and I pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will work effectually upon some who are here and draw them back to God while, in His name, I deliver this gracious message to them, Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.   
First, I shall ask you to consider this message with hope. When we have done that, we shall, secondly, learn how to put it into practice. And

then, thirdly, we shall think of how many ways it will help us if we do draw near to God.

I. First, then, let us CONSIDER THIS MESSAGE WITH HOPEDraw near to God, and He will draw near to you.   
We may consider it with hope, because, first, here is a sincere call to us to come back to God. When we preach from such a text as this, Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you, somebody is sure to say, But is not that the wrong order? Is it not a fact that God draws near to us and then we draw near to Him? Yes, that is the right order and our text is in the right order, too, because there is understood here something which is manifest to every careful reader and which shows that the Grace of God is implied at the back of it all. The text itself is a call from God and no sinner ever comes back to the Lord until the Lord calls him back. But in this text He does call himby the mouth of the Apostle, He says, Draw near to God and He bids us repeat this message in His name. To those who are the furthest off and who have wandered the greatest distance from Him, God says, Draw near to Me. If you had offended some friend and wished to make up, you would feel that it was an easy matter if your friend, himself, invited you to comeif he took the initiative and asked you to come to him. Then, I think, you would feel great gratitude to him and say, He has taken the first step towards our reconciliation. Now I will willingly and cheerfully take the second. It is thus that the Lord sends you this message to induce you to return to Him, Draw near to God.   
But may I come to Him? someone asks. May you do what He bids you do? Of course you may! The text is not merely an invitation, it is a command! Obey it, I beseech you! You must have liberty to obey when God commands. You need not entertain any fear that you will be an intruder when, in the exercise of His gracious Sovereignty, He says to you, Come, come, come! Surely, among those here who are still unconverted, there must be some who will say to Him, O Lord, You have said to us, Seek you My face, and our heart says to you, Your face, Lord, will we seek.   
I have next to remind you that in addition to a sincere call from God, there is also an open road to Him. God says to you, Draw near to Me, but He would not bid you come to Him if there were no road by which you could come. Once there was a great gulf fixed between you and God. Your sin had dug a fathomless gulf which you could never have bridgedbut Jesus bridged the awful chasm by throwing His Cross across it and now there is a plain and easy way by which the sinner may come back to God. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation.   
When the Babe was born at Bethlehem, a multitude of the heavenly host praised God and said, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And when that Babe, after a life of perfect obedience to Gods Law, offered up Himself on Calvarys Cross, He said, It is finishedand then every mountain was laid low and every valley was filled up that there might be a magnificent causeway over which fallen and far-off sinners might draw near to God! The making of that way cost the Savior His life, but He did make it. His heart bled out its life that He might make plain that way of expiation by which, alone, a sinner can come near to God. The road is made and there is now nothing in the wayno Divine anger, no righteous wrath, no avenging Lawto prevent your coming, O you who desire to return to your God! Christ has made the way and cleared it and no lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there. So, draw near, for the road is open! Draw near, without money, and without price, for the road is free to all who believe in Jesus! Christ has completed it. He has not merely made it half way, but He has finished it all the way and He, Himself, has said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. Oh, then, with what force does the command come, Draw near to God, when there is an open road by which you may come to Him!

Consider the invitation of the text with great hopefulness, next, because there is an encouraging promise appended to it. You fear that if you were to try to get to God, you could notand that if you did reach Him, He is so pure and holy that He must spurn you because of your impurityand drive you from His Presence. But read the whole of the text Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. There is nothing in it about casting out, or spurning, or rejecting! The promise is emphatic, He will draw near to you. I have already referred to the parable of the prodigal son. I will refer to it again by reminding you that, when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. It is, after all, but little of the way that the sinner has to go in returning to his God. The greater partno, I might say, all the wayGod comes to the sinner who desires to return to Him! Only turn your face God-ward and your God is at once with you!   
Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. That is the Inspired declaration! Do you believe it? Oh, I think if you do, you will at once draw near to Him! Satan will perhaps whisper, He does not mean you. But, indeed, He means any soul that comes to Him, for His promise is, Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out. And the him that comes means any sinner, all the world over, who trusts in Jesus! Yes, you shall be received graciously and loved freely if you will but come back to your God through Jesus Christ His dear Son. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Our text ought to be like a hand to beckon you and to draw you back to your Godand you ought to run to Him as swiftly as the doves fly to their windows! You have seen the pigeons hastening home to their dove-cotes as if anxious to reach their nestsmay the gracious Spirit thus move you to flee away to your resting place in the loving heart of your Lord!   
There is one more thing that I want to say before I leave this first point in which I am urging you to a hopeful consideration of the text, and that is, draw near to God, O dear trembling ones, because He will help you to come to Him. Before our Lord Jesus Christ went up on high, He promised that the Holy Spirit would be given to His Church. And He had not long sat upon His Throne before the Spirit descendedand that Spirit has never gone away, but He is still here to help our infirmities, to guide us in prayer, to convince us of sin, to reveal Christ to us, to create faith in us and to strengthen that faith while it is yet weak! If you cannot come to God by yourself, here is One for you to lean upon, who will help you to come! If you feel as if you could not move a foot, here is a sweet prayer for you to present to God, Draw me, we will run after You, and He will draw you! I hope He is drawing some of you now. Do you feel as if you wish you could come to Him? I think that wish is a proof of His gentle drawing. Are you saying to yourself, I will think this matter over. I will be careless no longer? He is, as it were, putting out His finger to guide you, to help you, as a nurse does to a little child whose tottering footsteps can scarcely avoid a fall! Only be you willing to be helped and He will help you! Yield yourself up to Him and He will bless you. Be like the mariners who spread the ships sails, after which they can do no more but when the sails are spread, the wind fills them and the vessel is driven onward to its desired haven. Be you like the needle of the mariners compass and the Spirit of God will be like the magnet to attract you. Be you willing to be cleansed from all defilement and He will say to you, Be you clean, and so you shall be, for, where the will has yielded itself to Him, the citadel of the town of Mansoul is won and Prince Immanuel takes the entire possession and control of it!   
Listen to me, for a moment or two, while I put together these things of which I have been speaking. God says, Draw near. There is His call will you disobey it? It is implied, in that call, that He has made a way for you to come to Himwill you not avail yourself of it? He has added to His call an encouraging promise that you shall be welcomed if you come to Himwill you suffer that promise to be made known to you, and yet not obtain the blessing that is promised? Then, beside all this, there is the Holy Spirit waiting to be graciouswill you resist the Spirit, as so many have done who have perished in their sin? I can do no more than tell you these things with affectionate earnestness, but, dear Hearers who are far off from God, the day will come when, however poorly I have told you these things, if you despise or neglect them, you will have to answer, not to me, but to Him who sent me! Therefore, consider, I pray you, what answer you will give to Himto the question whether you will come to Him or notwhile He says to you, Draw near to Me, and I will draw near to you.   
II. The second part of our subject is very practical. It is thisLET US LEARN HOW TO DRAW NEAR TO GOD.  
How can a man draw near to God? someone asks. Well, we must begin thus. Draw near to Him by thinking of Him. God is not fixed in any one place so that we need to go on a pilgrimage in order to reach Him. God is a Spirit, and the way to draw near to a spirit is, first of all, to think of Him in our own spirit. I shall begin to have hope of any mans salvation when he begins to seriously think about God and about his own relationship to God. Will you do so, dear Hearer? Take time to think about your Creator, your Preserver, your Provider, your Guardian, your Friend, your Judge, your Savior. To help you to think of Him, read His Word, for Scripture will both give you the best subject for thought and assist you to understand and know more of God.   
Seek, also, to hear the Gospel. If you know anyone who speaks to your heart about God, Christ and the Gospel, give him the opportunity of speaking to you as often as it is possible. Also try to talk with some of Gods friendswith men who pray to Him, who have communion with Himand get as far away as you can from those who deny Him and blaspheme Him. In this way, I believe that it will not be long before He will begin to show Himself to you. You will be astonished to find how He is everywhere present around youin every flower, in every blade of grass, in every drop of dew you will see signs of His Presence. If you are willing to find Him, you will see traces of His skill and of His wisdom there. If you look at the workings of His Providence, expecting to find Him, you will not look long before you do find Him, for, as we have often been reminded, He who watches Providence will never be without a Providence to watch. And when you begin to say, Wherever I go, I feel that God surrounds me. He is within me and I am in Him.As such thoughts as those possess you, I shall begin to have bright hopes concerning you!   
Draw near to God, next, by trusting Him. Some of you will not be able to do that immediatelyyou will have to think a little about Him first. And when you have thought about Him and, especially when you have received what this Book tells you about Him, then draw near to Him by trusting Him! If you trust God, He will not deceive you. If you believe in Him that He will pardon your sin, He will pardon it. His rule still is, According to your faith, be it done unto you. Whatever you can believe concerning God, that is in accordance with what He has revealed in His Word and that is for His Glory, you shall find that He will do. He has been pleased to give His dear Son to be the Redeemer of men and He tells us that all those who trust in Him have everlasting life. Now draw near to Him by saying, If these things are true, I will trust myself upon them. As God has revealed them, they are true and I will just cast myself upon Him. Jesus Christ has shed His precious blood to put away sin and He promises to forgive all who confess their sin and trust Him. I will confess my sin and trust Him to forgive me. One is getting very near to God when he does that, so I bid you, in that sense, draw near to God by trusting Him. And if you do, He will draw near to you by forgiving you. He will accept your trust and He will welcome you. He will be as good to you as your faith, and better still.   
Next, draw near to God by repentance. You have done wrong. Do not stay away from Him and so do more wrong. Do not try to hide your sin, or to make up a righteousness of your own, but go to God and tell Him that you have done wrong and plead for His forgiveness for Christs sake. Tell Him that you have a tendency to do wrong and ask Him to change your heart. Tell Him that you seem to be wrong altogether and beg Him to make you a new creature in Christ Jesus. Draw near to Him in a penitential spirit! It is your sense of sin that keeps you back from Him, but, rightly considered, that sense of sin should drive you to Him rather than restrain you from going to Him! What would a man do, if he has offended another, but try to make matters right between them? To my mind it is a beautiful thing to clear up difficulties and to settle disagreementsbut it is the sweetest thing of all to get right with Godto tell Him that you have been all wrong, to plead the merit of His dear Sons obedience and Sacrifice, and to ask Him to set you right both as to the past and as to the future, too! Draw near to God in that way, by repentance.   
Then draw near to Him in prayer. Did I hear you say, I do pray? Yes, but do you really pray? That is the question! You may have said certain words, morning and night, for many years, yet you may never once have prayed. Do you know that prayer is the soul speaking to God? It is not the act of repeating something that you have learned, or heard, or read. The mere utterance of any particular form of words is nothing. You might as well set up one of the prayer windmills, at which so many have smiled, as expect to pray by the mere repetition of good words! No, no speak to God! Any true speech, straight from the heart, is accepted by God. Mr. Rowland Hill stayed one night at an inn and he told the landlord that he must have family prayer there. But, Sir, said the man, we never had such a thing in our lives. Then, said Mr. Hill, order out my horses, for I will not stay in any house where I cannot get the people together to pray. We shall all come in, Sir, said the landlord, hardly realizing the preachers purpose. Then the Bible was read and Mr. Hill said, Now, Sir, you pray. Every master should pray in his own house. But I cannot pray, he said, I wish I could. Tell the Lord that, said Mr. Hill, and the man said, Lord, I cannot pray. I wish I could. Then Mr. Hill said, You have begun to pray already, so I will go on for you. Only tell the Lord, from your heart, anything that is true about yourself and you have begun praying.

I pray you, dear Friends, to draw near to God in prayer! Make it your habit to ask of Him what you really need and He will draw near to you and you will get what you have asked of Him. You will be surprised to find what gracious answers you will receive to your supplications, for I have noticed that if the Lord delays His answers to the prayers of His saints when they grow strong, He generally hears them very quickly, indeed, when they first begin to pray. I have often known the answer come while they have yet been speaking. Try it, dear Friend! In your own case draw near to God in prayer and see what answers He will give you! How I wish that those who doubt the existence of God had ever tried to speak to Him! If they once came into familiar acquaintance with Him from day to day, doubts of His existence would be no more possible to them than doubts of their own existence, for they would say, We have spoken to Him and He has heard us, and given us the desire of our heart. Draw near to God in prayer, and He will draw near to you.   
Then, dear Friend, try to draw near to God every day by laying all your affairs before Him and yielding up all your plans to His will. Begin the day by asking Him to be with You and to glorify Himself in you. Ask Him to stay near you and to let you feel His Presence and you will have truly blessed times if you draw near to God in that way.   
Sometimes, you will most appropriately draw near to God by praise with sweet songs in your mouth and thankfulness in your heart. You will feel it to be indeed a   
*Happy day, happy day,*   
when you are thus brought near to God. You will do well to keep on at that praise till there will come a day(you need not mind how soon it comes) when the Lord will say to you, in another sense, Draw near to Meand you will go up to your chamber and gather up your feet in bed and He will draw near to you with such a glorious vision of His Presence that before you are ever aware, you will find yourself at His right hand your poor mortal body left behind to wait a little while for the resurrectionbut you, yourself, very near to Him in Heaven! Then, before long, there will sound out that blast of the archangels trumpet that shall wake even your body from its slumber among the dust into which it had molderedand it shall rise again and then there shall come One whom you have known in this life, and known still better in Heaven, who will say to you and to all the redeemed, Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Then your body, soul and spirit shall draw near to Him as He draws near to you and so shall you be forever with the Lord! That is what will come of your drawing near to Godit will end in your being with Him where He is, that you may behold His Glory forever and forevermore! And therefore do I feel a deep stirring within my soul that every far-off sinner should hear this gracious invitation and obey it at onceDraw near to God, and He will draw near to you.   
III. Now I shall conclude by just a few words upon THE PRACTICAL EFFECT WHICH THIS DRAWING NEAR TO GOD WILL HAVE UPON OUR LIVES.   
Well, now, if we draw near to God, it will have an effect upon our common, everyday life. How? Why, first, if you will follow the run of the chapter, you will see that drawing near to God will help us to resist the devil. The injunction, and promise, Resist the devil, and he will flee from you, are immediately followed by the words of our text, Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. The devil is not quite everywhere, but it is difficult to tell where he is not to be found. He, and the powers of darkness under his control, tempt us in all sorts of ways and all manner of places. And if any one of us would be so armed as to be able to resist the great adversary of souls, the very best thing we can do is to draw near to God! The sheep is never so safe as when it is close to the shepherd. And the prodigal son is never so safe and happy as when he is sitting at his fathers table and feasting on the good things provided by his fathers love. Draw near to God and you will be able to resist the tempter and drive him away from you!   
In the next place, drawing near to God will help you to become pure. Read the whole verse from which our text is takenDraw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. You do wish to be chaste, do you not? You wish to be sober. You wish to be honest. You wish to be pure in speech and pure in action, do you not? Well, nothing purifies us like getting near to God in Christ! There is cleansing by water as well as by bloodthe blood that washes away the guilt of sin is accompanied by a cleansing flood that takes away the power of sinso that hands are cleansed and hearts are purified when we draw near to God.   
Further, drawing near to God will help us to sorrow for sin, for the next verse to our text says, Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep. Oh, says some thoughtless person, I do not want to be helped to sorrow for sin. And yetand yetand yet, if you did but know it, one of the sweetest things in all the world is godly sorrow for sin! Often do I quote to myself that verse   
*Lord, let me weep for nothing but sin, And after none but Thee!   
And then I wouldoh, that I might!   
A constant weeper be!*   
It is a bitter sweet, say some, but I say that it is a sweet bitter and that the sweetness predominatesthe sweetness of so feeling the evil of sin as to loathe and shun it! It is a miserable state of things to have a hard heart. Even a hard hand may be a burden. It happened to a poor blind woman, who read with her fingers, that, after a while, they lost the delicacy of touch so that she could not distinguish the letters. It was a great grief to her, but, putting up to her lips the precious Bible that she had been accustomed to read, she found that she could read with her lips. She was very glad to have tenderness somewhere. A tender heart is necessary to the reading of the mind of God, so always try to keep your heart tender. A hard heart, or a stony heart, is an awful curse. When you feel your heart beginning to ossify or to petrify, pray God to plunge it in a bath of the Redeemers blood to make it soft again! The Lord grant that we may so draw near to Him that our heart may be kept soft, for hardness of heart can never come to the man who is kept near to God.   
If you draw near to God, dear Friends, it will also help you to think well of other people. Do not speak evil of one another, says the Apostle in the 11th verse. When you know that the great Judge of all, Himself, is near, you will not be so quick as you sometimes are to take His work out of His hands, but you will let Him judge. I am sure that the man who lives near to God gets to have a kindly feeling towards others. If ever you find a person saying that there is no life in the Church and finding fault with everybody, you may be sure that that man has not seen Jesus Christ of late, for Jesus Christ speaks not so. He says of His people all He can that is good. Surely, if Christ loves His Church, you ought not to find so much fault with it. Do not speak evil of one another, Brothers and Sisters, else it will prove that you have not been anywhere near your Master of late!   
And, last of all, if we live near to God, it will help us to think of eternal things. The Apostle warns us not to say, We will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain, and all that kind of talk. He who speaks like that has not seen God of late, for he who is much with God thinks of eternal things and he knows how near they are. And he says to himself, I shall soon be gone. This world is not my rest there is nothing here that is substantial and abiding. So he is waiting to hear the trumpet sound, Boot and saddle! Up and away! and he stands ready, at his Captains call, to be gone to another and a better world! If you dwell near to God, you will not be afraid of dyingyou will rather dread to remain here than to be taken away! Remember, this is your place of exile, and your state of probation. O Lord, bring us near to You! Really, Brothers and Sisters, I do not know anything that can do us so much good in our daily life as walking with God. If you live near to God, the family worries and troubles will not vex your spirit as they now do. You will live above them and the outside world, with all its fault-finding, its anxieties and its ups and downs will seem very small and insignificant to you when you dwell on high and your place of defense is the munitions of rocks. Some of us know what it is not to care even a snap of the fingers when the world seems enraged against usif we can but get away into the secret chamber of communion where God is pleased to manifest Himself to us.   
If you live down in the marshes, you will get the chills and fever. But if you live up on the mountaintop, you will rejoice in the suns rays before your fellow creatures see them and you will bask in them long after those below have lost sight of them! You will also find the air up there to be fresh and bracing and, among the eagles, you will grow like an eagle, yourself, for you will mount up with wings as eagles, till, one of these days, you will mount so high that you will not come down again, for you will have gone to dwell forever near your Lord!   
May the Lord bless you, Beloved, with all that this drawing near to Him is capable of giving to you, for His dear name and mercys sake! Amen.

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

Verse 1. Where do wars and fights come from among you? Whether between nations, or parties or individualsif there are wars and fights, where do they come from?

1. Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? Do they not arise from one desiring something, and another desiring the same thing? Is there not a competition or emulation of an evil kind in which each one prefers himself and seeks not the good of his neighbor?

2. You lust, and have not: you kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: you fight and war, yet you have not. This is natures way of trying to get by contention what it desires to possessfighting, warring and killingyet the result of all this is nil. After all is done, yet you have not. There is a simpler and a surer way which men forgetthey leave that Divine path untrodYou have not,

2. Because you ask not. With all your efforts you do not succeed because you omit to pray to God! Prayer would have brought you every blessing that you need, but, instead of going to God and asking at His hands, you rush upon your neighbor and seek to take what you desire as spoil from him. Perhaps some say, But we do ask. Well, then, says the Apostle

3. You ask, and receive not because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts. The lusts of the flesh come in and put us upon the wrong track. Or if we take the right road, yet, if the lusts are there, God will not bless us because, in doing so, He would be helping us to gratify our lusts.

4. You adulterers and adulteresses, know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? The Apostle uses this strong language not concerning the actual sin of adultery as the term is commonly understood, but in relation to our not loving God with true chastity of heart, but lusting after something else. This is the very essence of spiritual adultery. We ought to give God the whole affection of our being, but, instead of doing so, we allow at least some of it to wander to other objects and, therefore, we are called, by the Holy Spirit Himself, adulterers and adulteresses. These may seem to be hard words, but they are true ones. May they bring us to our spiritual senses and cause us to love our God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength!

4. Whoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God. In one sense, Christians are the greatest friends of the world, for they desire the good of all men and seek their salvation. But, in another sense, viewing the world as a great conglomerate of evil, we are no friends of the world. There is a certain form of theology, popular nowadays, which teaches us that we ought to remove the line of demarcation between the Church and the world. This kind of teaching may be called theology, but it comes not of Godit is a gross lie which we ought to abhor in the very depth of our spirit!

5, 6. Do you think that the Scripture says in vain, The Spirit that dwells in us yearns jealously? But He gives more Grace. There is a spirit, resident in the natural man, the human nature of man, which is always inclined toward hate and envy, always wanting to get something from other men and always grieved if other men seem to be or to have more than the person himself has. How is this spirit to be met? This verse supplies the answer, He gives more Grace. More Gracethis is the great remedy for hate and envy! More Gracethis is the balm for sorrow. More Gracethis is our greatest help out of all difficulties. More Gracethis is the universal recipe for all that we needHe gives more Grace.

6, 7. Therefore, He says, God resists the proud, but gives Grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Lay aside that fighting spiritthat effort to pull others down so as to raise yourself upand bow before God! Yield yourself wholly to His blessed will. This is the way of peace and the way of joy, too!

7. Resist the devil. Who will seek to stir you up to rebellion! Give no place to him. Resist the devil.  
7, 8. And he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Hear this command and practice it. Get near to God in Christ Jesus and you shall soon find Him come to your help in every hour of need.   
8. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. For, if you are double-minded, your hands and your hearts must both be cleansed. The Apostle does not say, Concentrate your thoughts, but he does say, Cleanse your hearts, for, to have two objectives in life is a kind of spiritual adultery from which we need to be purged, so the command is, Purify your hearts, you double-minded.   
9. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. If the previous verses have rightly accused you of sin, confess your guilt with shame and sorrowand so come to Christ imploring pardon.   
10. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up. If you exalt yourself, He will pull you down. If you lie down in the dust before Him, He will lift you up. It is according to Gods usual way of acting to practice these reversals. Mary truly sang, He has put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He has filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He has sent away empty.   
11. Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He that speaks evil of his brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the Law and judges the Law: but if you judge the Law, you are not a doer of the Law, but a judge. If you cease to think of that which is evil, you will also cease to speak evil. If I speak evil of my brother, I have condemned the Law which bids me love him as I love myself. I have practically said that it is an absurd Law and an unrighteous Lawand this is a great evil in Gods sight.  
12-15. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who are you that judges another? Come now, you who say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas you do not know not what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away. For that you ought to say, If the Lord wills, we shall live, and do this, or that. We are all too apt to say what we will do and where we will go, forgetting to add, If the Lord wills, we shall live, and do this, or that.   
16, 17. But now you rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is sin. There are sins of omission as well as sins of commission! May the Lord graciously keep us from both forms of the evil, for His dear Sons sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK130, 590, 537.  
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A COMMAND AND A PROMISE   
NO. 3212

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 25, 1910.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, JULY 19, 1863.

Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. James 4:8.   
[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon, upon the same text, is #2795, Volume 48THE DOUBLE DRAWING NEARRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

NOTICE the sentences immediately preceding our textResist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Wherever we are, we must come into contact with the unseen powers either for good or evil. Go where we may, we cannot shut ourselves away from them. If we could take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, spiritual beings would still be all around us there. Doubtless there are many invisible spirits, good or evil, in our midst at this moment, and when we go forth to our homes, or tomorrow go to our business or other duties, they will still attend usthe evil spirits seeking to lead our souls astray and the holy angels carrying out their sacred commissionto minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.

These spiritual beings are divided into two bands. One band is under the leadership of that great fallen spiritgreat, though fallenwho, by his masterly genius, has secured control over multitudes of other spirits who do his bidding and yield to his will with unquestioning obedience. You also may surrender yourself to him if you willhe is the god of this world, the prince of the power of the airand you may, if you will, be his slave. You may be girded with his chains, you may serve in his servitude and you may earn the wage which he will pay you at the last, for, the wages of sin is death. But, surely, the admonition of the practical Apostle James is a wise one and we shall do well to take heed to it and revolt from our old master! Let us break his bonds asunder and cast away his cords from us! In the name of Jesus let us resist the devil and he will flee from us. Jesus has a far greater host of spirits under his leadership than Satan has and, at His command, they shall keep us in all our ways, and bear us up in their hands lest we dash our feet against a stone. His legions are far mightier than those of the black Prince of Darkness and their services shall all be at our disposal, whenever we need themas soon as we have renounced all allegiance to our former tyrant lord!

Now, having noted the connection of our text, I am going to apply it to three classes of persons. First, to the Believer. Secondly, to the backslider. And then, last of all, to the unconverted.

I. First, then, we have here, A MESSAGE TO THE BELIEVER. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.   
In Scripture, drawing near has various meanings. First, it means, draw near to God in worship, in prayer and in praise. When the hen sees a hawk in the air hovering over her brood, she gives a peculiar warning cluck, calling her little ones to come to her while, at the same moment she, herself, draws near to them. In a far higher fashion, the voice of God calls you to Him, warning you of the danger that lurks all round you. And while you run to hide from peril beneath the shadow of His wings, He, on His part, runs to meet you as the forgiving father ran to meet his prodigal son. You draw near to Him in the fearfulness and feebleness of your supplication and He draws near to you in the faithfulness and almightiness of His everlasting love! I am afraid that we often pray as if our God were at a distance from usthis can never be prevailing prayer. I do not despise that prayer which is like shooting an arrow up to the Throne of God, but I love still better the prayer that grips the Angel of the Covenant, the prayer that stands foot to foot with Him and wrestles with Him until the breaking of the day, and even then cries, I will not let You go, except You bless me. If you can draw near to your Lord in prayer like that, He will certainly draw near to you and you will be like a prince who has power to prevail with God and with men.

Let me encourage you, dear Friends, who have been backward in your private prayer, or who have cried to Him as though He were a long way offDraw near to Him. There are no bounds set around this mount of Grace as there were around Mount Sinai. You may climb up to the place called Calvary and clasp to your bosom the Christ who there died upon the accursed tree, for He is your Brother, your Friend, your Savior, your All-in-All, if you are truly trusting Him! So to you I say, as Paul wrote to the Hebrews, Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy and find Grace to help in time of need. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Come near to Him and you shall soon have an answer to your prayers!  
It is the same with praise, but I am afraid that often we do not really draw near to God when we are professing to praise Him. I know that, sometimes, when we are singing Gods praises in our great assemblies here, we are drawn very near to the gates of Heaven. At such times I have felt as though I were swimming in an ocean of sacred delight! It should be so with every act of worshipit should all draw us nearer to our God. There are times when we feel more closely drawn to Him in the closet of private prayer than in the public services of the sanctuary, but still, there is a special blessing attending united prayer and praise which is not to be realized elsewhere. I remember reading of a Jew who would not open a business in a certain town because there was no synagogue in it. I wish that Christians would always be as careful to settle down, if possible, in a place where they would not lack religious privileges, for prayer and praise, like the two wheels of the chariot which carried Jacob down to Joseph, bring us near to our Beloved Lord and Master! And He, at the same time, comes to meet us and draws near to us.   
But I find that in Scripture, the term, Draw near to God, is often used in the sense of asking counsel of God. Thus the Israelites, when they were in perplexity or difficulty, consulted the priest and he, wearing the ephod and the breastplate with the mysterious Urim and Thummim, was able to interpret the will of God as it had been revealed to him. And now, though no sacred ephod or breastplate is worn by mortal man, though the ancient oracles are dumb and though no earthly prophet speaks infallibly according to the will of God, you may still draw near to God, Himself, in the name of Jesus Christ, His Son, and seek the guidance of His ever-blessed Spirit! I hope you will do so at every step of your life, for what step is there that is not important? Those that seem to us to be of the least significance may be the very ones that will the soonest lead us into mischief. But there are certain periods in our history when it is absolutely necessary that we should say to ourselves, Let us consult the Lord about this matter. Many of you would never have been in the trouble in which you now are if you had but waited upon God before you took a certain course which has brought you nothing but sorrow. We heedlessly run before the fiery-cloudy pillar movesand when we find that we have rushed into the waste howling wilderness, we lay the blame for our own folly at the door of Gods Providence! Let it not be so with any of you, dear Friends. Let every mornings plans be spread out before the Lord to see whether they meet with His approval. And let every evenings joys and sorrows be brought to Him that He may show you how to glorify Him in all that happens to you! Solomon truly said, He that trusts in his own heart is a fool. And David just as truly said, But he that trusts in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about. You need never lack Divine guidance, for you can have it by asking for it! God is willing to guide you if you will only seek His guidance. See to it, then, that you practice the text in the sense of asking counsel of GodDraw near to God, and He will draw near to you.   
There is a third meaning to the phrase, Draw near to God. It is used in the sense of enjoying communion with God. There are some here who do not understand what I mean by communion with God. They are completely puzzled by the very simple language of the Apostle John, Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ. There are hundreds and thousands of people constantly attending church or chapel who do not know the meaning of the word, communion. If you were to ask them what they understand by it, they would probably say that it means eating a piece of bread and drinking a little wine at the Lords Supper. And more than that, if they were to ask me to explain to them what true spiritual communion with God means, I would probably fail to make them comprehend it. Yet you who, by Grace, have been enabled to drink of these cooling streams, know well what that communion means! Some of you who have been the most deeply taught of the Spirit could sing through the whole Song of Solomon and see your Beloved in it allwhile to others it is only an Eastern love song which is to them quite incomprehensible. You know Christ, not only by faith, but by a sort of second sense which makes Him very real to you. You have drawn near to Christ and talked with Himand He has drawn near to you and talked with youand He has been nearer to you and dearer to you than any earthly friend has ever been! Oh, what joy Believers know when they realize Christs Presence! When His left hand is under their heads and His right hand embraces them! Talk of Heavensuch communion is Heaven begun below! When Heavens gates are opened wide and the celestial sunshine comes streaming through, it falls upon the eyes that have been illuminated by the Holy Spiritthat is true spiritual communionand the glorified spirits above do but know that bliss to the full in knowing God and rejoicing in the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.   
Perhaps, my dear Brother, you have been reading Rutherfords letters and you have said to yourself. Alas, I cannot hope to enjoy such communion with Christ as Rutherford enjoyed! But why shouldnt you? Read our text again. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. You, my dear Sister, may have read the life of Madame Guyon and you have said, What an angel in human form that woman must have been! But if you draw near to God, you may have as much love to Christ as she had! And you may enjoy as much fellowship with Christ as she had, for, He will draw near to you. You have envied Mary because she sat at Jesus feet, or you have wished that you had been John, to lean your head upon your Masters bosom. Well, you may do both these things in a spiritual senseand that is better than the carnal! Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. To you, even to you, the very feeblest of those who resist the devil, will God draw near if you draw near to Him!   
I think, however, that there is another meaning in our text, and that is, draw near to God in the general strain and tenor of your life. We all know that the sun, the great center of the solar system has several planets revolving around him. Some of them comparatively near, others at a greater distance, and some still more remote. And Jesus Christ, the great Sun of Righteousness, has His people revolving around Him as the planets circle round the sun! Some of them are very near the great central Luminary. Others are far away, at a vast distance from Him, and others are neither very near nor very far off, but somewhere between the two. There are some Believers who are like the planet Mercury. You do not often see that fast revolving planet because it keeps so near the sun that it is usually lost in his bright rays. So is it with some Christiansthe world knows little of themthey make no noise as they move along in their appointed orbit and they keep so near to Christ that they seem to be absorbed into His radiance! Their thoughts are so much occupied with Christ, their hearts affection is so fully given to Him, that they do not talk much about earthly things. Their great desire is to live in close and hallowed fellowship with their Lord. There are others who are like the planets that are far away from the sun, yet some rays of light and heat reach even them. And those Believers who are living at a distance from Christ have some of the Divine Light and heat within them, but oh, so little compared with what they might have! Oh, that you who are so far off from God, would leave your distant orbits and draw near to Himfor then He would also draw near to you!   
You know, dear Friends, that there is almost as much difference between some Christians and others as there is between Christians and worldlingsI said, almost, for there is not quite the same difference, though there is nearly the same. There are heights of lofty consecration and of intimate communion with Christ to which some Believers have attained, but of which others have not yet even dreamed. There is an inner circle of fellowship into which only a few privileged saints have ever enteredthese are the elect out of the elect who have been distinguished above all the rest of Christs disciples by the loftier Grace which has been their peculiar characteristic. Oh, that we had many more such Christians in all our Churches! There are a few of them scattered about Christendom, like grains of salt, but we need many more of themmen who, like Moses, have their faces made to shine with a supernatural brightness because they have dwelt with God upon the mount of secret communionmen who are not afraid to die because they have looked without alarm into the face of God, through Jesus Christ their Lordand men who have learned how to live as becomes the Gospel of Christand there is no higher life than that!   
Brothers and Sisters in Christ, draw near to God! Press towards the highest degree of godliness that is possible for you to obtain! Seek to have the closest communion with Christ that mortals can ever know while here on earth. Do not be content to be in the outer courts, the lobbies, the ante-chambers of religionstrive to gain admission to the very Holy of Holies, itself, for that is where your Lord would have you to be! You know that there is a sort of border-land where many professors live, where a man is thought to be a Christian, but all the while he is not even half a Christian. He is counted among the saved, yet he lives on the very borders of damnation! And if at the last he

is saved, we shall sorrowfully have to add, yet so as by fire. In some respects he is a righteous man, as Lot was, yet, like Lot, he dwells in Sodom. He is in some ways a good man, as Noah was, yet, like he, he falls into shameful sin. Oh, that we could all rise above this wretched condition and live continually so close to Christ that men would take knowledge of us that we had been with Jesus, and had caught something of His spiritand had been so changed by Grace that we were far more like He is than we now are!   
There I leave my text with the Believer. I would gladly draw you near to God, Beloved, by my words, if I could. But I know that He must, Himself, draw you by His Grace if the drawing is to be effectual. So let this be your prayer and resolve this very moment, Draw us, and we will run after You.   
II. Now, in the second place, we have in our text AN ENTREATY TO THE BACKSLIDER. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. I must speak but briefly on this point, but I need to be as earnest as I am brief.   
So, Backslider, you have come in here, tonight. A friend who is up from the country persuaded you to accompany him, or you would probably not have been here, for you have almost given up going to a place of worshipyou think there is no hope for you. Friend, do you know what your doom will be if you continue as you are now? Have you ever read the story of Judas? Do you know what became of Demas, Simon Magus, Alexander the coppersmith and others who turned aside from the faith in the days of the Apostles? Remember those terrible, yet Inspired words, If we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries. It would have been better for you never to have had any knowledge of the Truth of God than to have known it and then sinned willfully against it, and so, after all, to be a castaway! If you are a true child of God, though a wanderer from His ways, you will be brought back to Him and I pray that you may be brought back to Him this very hour! But if you are an apostate, a backslider in heart, you will be filled with your own ways! Having filled up the measure of your iniquity, you will be driven from Gods Presence into the place of woe where hope and mercy can never come!   
Yet listen to me, Backslider, this terrible sentence has not yet been pronounced on you. The voice of God still cries to you, Draw near unto Me. Where are you flying, my Brother? Are you seeking to escape from Gods righteous judgments? That is impossible, for His thunderbolts will soon overtake you and seal your eternal doom! Run not away from Him, but draw near to Him! Cast down your weapons of rebellion and fall prostrate before Him, seeking the forgiveness which He is willing and waiting to bestow upon you. Let me take you by the hand and try to encourage you to come near to the Lord this very moment. Do you ask, How can I come near to Him? Come just as you came to Him at the first! Perhaps you reply, But I never really came to Him aright. Then come to Him aright right now! I came to Him as a sinner and He gave me a hearty welcomeand He will receive you just as graciously if you only come to Him with wholehearted repentance for your sin and true faith in Jesus Christ as your only Savior!   
But here is one who did run well, yet she has been hindered. Backsliding woman, remember that your God is married to you and that He bids you return to Him! Backsliding man, you have turned aside from your God, yet He still loves you and cries out to you, Return, return, return! The Lord still says, as He did in Jeremiahs day, Return, you backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Oh, that you would reply even as they didBehold, we come unto You, for You are the Lord our God! I am sure that you are not happy in your present condition. On the contrary, you are as sad and miserable as you can possibly be. This very House of Prayer reminds you of your former privileges and joys, of the days when you delighted in God and felt that you were, indeed, on your way to Heaven. You cannot be content to live in the far country among the swine that are not fit companions for you! Leave the husks to the pigsthey can never satisfy your hunger! Come back to your Father, poor prodigal! Though your clothes are in rags, though you are steeped in filth, though you have sinned most grievously, come back to your Father and He will receive you with open arms and open heart! I will not act towards you as the elder brother did to the prodigal, but I will welcome you as a Brother if you are, indeed, a Brother. But if you are not a Brother, you are a sinnerand this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the very chief! So, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. Put your souls affairs into His hands! ask Him to be your Advocate to plead your cause before the King! He never yet lost a case that was entrusted to Himand He will not lose yours!  
III. I have almost anticipated the last division of my discourse, but I must close by giving from my text AN INVITATION TO THE UNCONVERTED. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.  
The great Gospel rings out again and the same note sounds to the sinner as to the saintnot that there is any implication in this text that the sinner can draw near to God by his own unaided power, or that he comes first, and God comes next, or that there is any natural willingness in the sinner to come to God. The text seems to me to show the difference between the Law and the Gospel. God even said to Moses, the chosen leader of His ancient people, Draw not near here: take off your shoes, for the place where you stand is holy ground. But under the Gospel, God says to the sinner, Draw near here. It is true that this is holy ground, but it is sprinkled with bloodthe blood of My only-begotten and wellbeloved Son. And if the blood is also sprinkled upon you, you may draw near and you cannot come too near, so come and welcome, Sinner, come! If it were a question of merit, or of justification by the works of the Law, the sinner might well try to flee from the avenging hands of Divine Justice. But on the ground of Divine Love, and pity, and mercy, and free and Sovereign Grace, the sinner may draw near to God though he has nothing to recommend him! He may come just as he is and God, in mercy, will draw near to Him! Should there be here a swearer, a drunk, or one who has committed the foulest of sinsthe text says to him in the sense in which I have explained itDraw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Sinner, if you repent of your sins and trust in Jesus as your Savior, God will not spurn you and drive you from Him, but He will draw near to you as you draw near to Him!   
Then, next, the text shows the sinner what God means to do for him. He means to draw the sinner near to Himself and then Himself to draw near to the sinner! This is done in two ways. It is done, first, by what Jesus did for us when He split the veil that separated us from God. And it is done, next, by what the Holy Spirit does in us when He splits the veil that hides God from us! There are, or were, these two veilsthe veil that concealed the visible manifestation of God from men, which was torn asunder at the moment of Christs deathand the veil that is over our own hearts which conceals God from us until the Holy Spirit takes it away and we see God in Christ Jesus reconciled to us by the death of His Son. I fear that there are even some in this congregation who are living just as if there were no God at all. If there really were no God, you would probably not be any different from what you are now. God is not in all your thoughts or if you ever do think of Him, you say, with the fool of whom the Psalmist tells us, No God. No God for me. I need no God and, as far as I am concerned, there is no God. Well then, if you are ever to be saved, you will have to be brought near to God by a power altogether outside yourself! You will have to be made to feel that God is One whom you must love. You will be reconciled to Him by the death of His Son and your heart will be filled with love to Christ through the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit!   
The text further shows what God will lead the sinner to do for himself. Ungodly man, if you are ever to be saved, you must draw near to God in prayer! Go to Him at this moment, just where you are sitting, and confess all your sin to Him. There is no need for you to utter a word that any of us can hear, for God can read the language of your heart. Then you must draw near to Christ by faith. Just as that poor woman in the crowd touched the hem of His garment and was immediately made whole, so must you, by faith, get into contact with Christ! Trust in Him as your one and only Savior, and He will certainly save you! And this shall be the grand result of it allyou will draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Oh, that you would now cry to Him, God be merciful to me, a sinner. That will be drawing near to God in penitence and contrition and supplicationand He will draw near to you in gracious acceptance and blessing. And then one day He will call you to draw near to Him in Heaven, itself, to sit at His table in Glory, to feast with Him in His Kingdom! Then shall you, even you, wear a crown, and wave a palm and forever adore that matchless Grace which first drew you near to Himand then draw near to you!   
If there is one here who will go home to pray, Draw me near, O God! Or better still, if there is one anywhere in this vast throng, whose heart is praying, Lord, save me! Draw me with the cords of a man, (even the Man, Christ Jesus, the Friend of sinful man), with the bands of love. O God, draw near to me, for I would gladly draw near to You! If there is one here whose eyes have in them the tears of penitence, I point that one to Jesus, hanging on the Cross, and say

*There is life for a look at the Crucified One! There is life at this moment for thee.   
Then look, Sinnerlook unto Him and be saved Unto Him who was nailed to the tree!*   
Remember that the Son of God, the Lord of Life and Glory, suffered indescribable shame and ignominy and, at last, death, itself, for sinnersfor every sinner who trusts in His great atoning Sacrifice! If you are trusting in Him, that is proof positive that He dried for you, died in your place, died that you should never die, for He bore all the punishment that your sin deserved, so there is none left for you to bear! He drank to the last dregs the cup of wrath that was your due, so there is not one drop left for you to drink! He suffered all that could ever have been your portion even in Hell, itself, for being Infinite, there was no limit to His agonies. And now, for you, there is no Hell, no torment, no condemnation! You may know assuredly whether Christ died for you or notdo you trust Him? Will you trust Him now? Will you say   
*Just as I amand waiting not   
To rid my soul of one dark blot.   
To You, whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come?*   
If You have said that from your heart, you are now a saved soul and you may go to your home rejoicing in the Lord, for your sins, which were many, are all forgiven and you are on your way to Heaven! God grant that it may be so, for Jesus Christs sake!

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

Verse 1. James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greetings. The Apostle James evidently believed in no lost ten tribes, as some, nowadays, do. They were never lostthe Israelites whom we see nearly every day belong to some of all the 12 tribes, so James addressed his Epistle, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greetings.

2. My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations.  
Or, trials. [See Sermon #1074, Volume 29ALL JOY IN ALL TRIALSRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

3-5. Knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom. That is just what most of us lack If any of you lack wisdom

5. Let him ask of God. That is the short road to true knowledgeto pray. Study is good, no doubt, for the acquisition of knowledge. But praying is the best way to obtain true wisdom!

5, 6. Who gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing unwavering. For the very essence of prayer lies in believing that God can and will give us the things which we seek at His hands.

6. For he that wavers. The man who does not know whether prayer will succeed or not   
6. Is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. [See Sermon

#2537, Volume 43A WARNING TO WAVERERSRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge,

at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] You can never tell what will become of the wave. It goes just where it is drivenand there are many men who can be good, after a certain fashion, if they are in good companybut they can be just as bad if the wind blows from another quarter! But if we have true faith in God and true faith in prayer, we shall not be like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

7. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. What the wild waves are saying, we know not. So is it with a man who is like a wave of the sea. He utters words without meaning and his prayer dies away like the roar of the billows upon the shore when the fury of the storm has abated. Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.

8. A double-minded man. A man with two mindsa mind to the religious and another mind to enjoy the pleasures of the worldsuch a man

8. Is unstable in all his ways. There is nothing solid or substantial about him, nothing enduring. You cannot rely on him, for he is blown here and there, as chaff flies before the wind.

9. Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted. For the Gospel lifts him up out of his poverty and makes him a child of God who is spiritually rich, even though he is poor in temporal things.

10. But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass, he shall pass away. Let him not, therefore, rely upon his wealth as though it were anything but a trust and a burden laid upon him, for he will have to leave it and he, himself, as the flower of the grass, shall pass away Let him rejoice to get down to the Rock of Ages! Let him lay hold of eternal things as if he had nothing else in which he could trust!

11, 12. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withers the grass, and the flower falls and the beauty of the fashion of it perishes; so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways. Blessed is the

man that endures temptation. [See Sermon #1874, Volume 31A DISCOURSE UPON TRUE BLESSEDNESS HERE AND HEREAFTERRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Or, trial. The man that holds on and holds out under it and does not give way under itblessed is the man that is tried

12, 13. For when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love Him. Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God. Here we must take the word, tempted, in its dark meaning, for the Scriptural word, temptation, means two very different things. When we are drawn towards evil, that is the black meaning of the word, temptation. But when we are tested or tried in order that it may seen that the good in us is realthat is the bright meaning of the word, temptation. In that sense, God did tempt (try or test) Abraham, but not in the other sense.

13-15. For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts He any man: but every man is tempted when he is drawn of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death. There is the parentage and the progeny of sin. Sin comes of unbridled desire. A man feels that he must have a certain thingright or wronghe is determined to have it. Then there comes of that determination the overt act of sin! And what comes of that? Why, deathfor every sin, in its measure, helps to kill usto destroy that which is the real life of our manhood. Every sin is a drop of poison. There are sweets that are poisonous and the pleasures of sin are of this kind. And leave the poison of sin alone, let it work in its natural way and it will bring forth death! That man, therefore, who lives in sin and loves it, has nothing before him but everlasting death! He may well tremble!

16, 17. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above. It never comes from within our own hearts! It does not even come by imitation of better menit must come from God.

17. And comes down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. As every sunbeam comes from the sun, so all Grace and virtue must come from God with whom there is neither parallax nor tropic, as there is with the natural sun. He never declines, He never variesHe is always the same. Now, in proof that everything in us comes from God, James says that our very spiritual life comes from God.

18. Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures. True Believers have been twice created. The second time we were begotten, again, by the Word of God that became the living seed within our spiritsout of which the new life grewand now we are a kind of first fruits of His creatures. Just as the first ears of ripe corn were brought into the sanctuary and dedicated to God, so are all true Believers consecrated persons, the first fruits of His creatures.

19, 20. Therefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, for the wrath of man works not the righteousness of God. We never do much for the Truth of God or goodness by getting angry about it. Whenever a man debates about the Truth of God and loses his temper, he has also lost his cause! I have heard of one who knew little of true religion, who watched a missionary and a Brahmin disputing. And he decided that the missionary was in the right. When he was asked why he thought so, he said, Because he kept his cool, and the other man flew into a passion. Although that may not always be a good test of the truth of the matter in question, it certainly is a good test of how the dispute is going!

21. Therefore, lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your   
souls. [See Sermon #1847, Volume 31BEFORE SERMON, AT SERMON AND AFTER SERMON Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] That evil

branch is cut awaynow be ready to have a branch of a better kind inserted into you, even the engrafted Word, which is able to save your soulsthat you may bring forth better fruit than the old crabbed stock of Nature can possibly yield!

22-26. But be you doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if any is a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: for he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was. But whoever looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed

in his deed. [See Sermons #1467-B, Volume 25TWO SORTS OF HEARERS and #1848, Volume 31THE LOOKING GLASSRead/download both sermons, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] If any man among you seems to be religious, but bridles not his tongue and deceives his own heart, this mans religion is vain. That which is in the well will come up in the bucket, and that which is in the heart will come up on the tongue. An unbridled tongue denotes an unrenewed heart. Oh, that God would always give us Grace in our heart to move our tongue aright! Then, as the water guides the whole ship, our tongue will guide our whole body and the whole of our manhood will be under holy government and control.

27. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself un  
spotted from the world. [See Sermon #2313, Volume 39CHARITY AND PURITY Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Oh, how

much this meanstenderness to others and tenderness of conscience in ourselves! How much Divine Grace we need in order that these two virtues may shine brightly within us!

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2242 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GODS WILL ABOUT THE FUTURE   
NO. 2242

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1892, DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 16, 1890.

**Come now, you that say, today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas you know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appears for a little time, and**

**then vanishes away. For that you ought to say, If the Lord wills, we shall live, and do this or that. But now you rejoice in your boasting: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is sin. James 4:13-17**

[It is remarkable that the sermon selected for this week should be so peculiarly suitable for the present trying time. It ought to be read with special solemnity. Oh, that it may be the means of leading many to make the great preparation for the future which only Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ have made!Words noted at the bottom of page one of this sermonread to the congregation at the Metropolitan Tabernacle the Sunday after Brother Spurgeon diedEOD.]

MEN, today, are just the same as when these words were first written. We still find people saying what they are going to do today, tomorrow, in six months time or at the end of another year and, perhaps, still further. I have no doubt there are persons here who have their own career mapped out before them pretty distinctlyand they feel well-near certain that they will realize it all! We are like the men of the past, but this Book, though it has been written so long, might have been written yesterday, so exactly does it describe human nature as it is at the end of this 19th Century!

The text applies with very peculiar force when our friends and fellow workers are passing away from us. Sickness and death have been busy in our midst. Perhaps in our abundant service we have been reckoning what this Brother would do this week, and what that Sister would be doing next week, and so on. Even for Gods work we have had our plans, dependent in great measure on the presence of some beloved helpers. They have appeared among us in such buoyant health that we have scarcely thought it possible that they would be struck down in a moment. Yet so it has often been. The uncertainty of life comes home to us when such things occur and we begin to wonder that we have reckoned anything at all safe, or even probable, in such a shifting, changing world as this! With this in full view, I am going to talk about how we ought to behave with regard to the futureand attempt to draw some lessons for our own correction and instruction from the verses before us.

Following the line of the text and keeping as close to it as we can, we will notice, first, that counting on the future is folly. Then we will observe what is clear enough to us all, that ignorance of the future is a matter of fact. In the third place, I shall set before you the main truth of this passage, that recognition of God in the future is wisdom. Our fourth point shall be that boasting of the future is sin. And our final thought will be that the using of the present is a duty.

I. To begin with, it will need but few words to convince you that COUNTING ON THE FUTURE IS FOLLY. The Apostle says, Come now! as if he meant, you are acting absurdly! See how ridiculous your conduct is. Come now, you that say, Today or tomorrow we will do such and such a thing. There is almost a touch of sarcasm in the words. The fact of frail, feeble man so proudly ordering his own life and forgetting God seems, to the Apostle James, so preposterous that he scarcely deems it worthwhile to argue the point! He only says, Come now!

Let us first look at the form of this folly and notice what it was that these people said when they were counting on the future. The text is very full of suggestions upon this matter.

They evidently thought everything was at their own disposal. They said, We will go, we will continue, we will buy, we will sell, we will get gain. But is it not foolish for a man to feel that he can do as he likes and that everything will fall out as he desiresthat he can both propose and disposeand has not to ask Gods consent at all? He makes up his mind and he determines to do just what his mind suggests. Is it so, O Man, that your life is self-governed? Is there not, after all, One greater than yourself? Is there not a higher Power that can speed you or stop you? If you do not know this, you have not yet learned the first letter of the alphabet of wisdom! May God teach you that everything is not at your disposal, but that the Lord reigns, the Lord sits King forever and ever! Notice that these people, while they thought everything was at their disposal, used everything for worldly objectives. What did they say? Did they determine with each other, We will today or tomorrow do such and such a thing for the glory of God and for the extension of His Kingdom? Oh, no, there was not a word about God in it, from beginning to end!

Therein they are only too truly the type of the bulk of men today. They said, We will buy. Then we will carry our goods to another market at a little distance. We will sell at a profit and so we will get gain. Their first and their last thoughts were of the earth, earthy, and their one idea seemed to be that they might get sufficient gain to make them feel that they were rich and increased in goods. That was the highest ambition upon their minds. Are there not many who are living just in that way now? They think that they can map our their own life and the one objective of their efforts seems to be to buy and sell and get gain! Or else to obtain honor, or to enjoy pleasure. Their heart rises not into the serene air of Heaven they are still groveling here below!

All that these men of old spoke of doing was to be done entirely in their own strength. They said, We will. We will. They had no thought of asking the Divine blessing, nor of entreating the help of the Most High. They did not care for thatthey were self-containedthey called themselves, selfmade men and they intended to make money! Who cannot make money who has made himself? Who cannot succeed in business who owes his character and his present standing entirely to his own exertions and to his own brain? So they were full of self-confidence and began reckoning for the future without a shadow of doubt as to their own ability. Alas, that men should do so, even today, that without seeking counsel of God, they should go forward in proud disdain or in complete forgetfulness of the arrow that flies by day and, the pestilence that walked in darkness, until they are suddenly overwhelmed in eternal ruin!

It is evident that to those men everything seemed certain. We will go into such a city. How did they know that they would ever get there? We will buy, and sell, and get gain. Did they regulate the markets? Might there be no fall in prices? Oh, no, they looked upon the future as a dead certainty and upon themselves as people who were sure to win, whatever might become of others.

They also had the foolish idea that they were immortal. If they had been asked whether men might not die, they would have said, Yes, of course, all men must die some time or other, for all men count all men mortal. But in their hearts they would have made an exception in their own caseif we may judge them by what we were apart from Sovereign Grace. All men count all men mortal but themselves. Without any saving clause, they said, We will continue there a year. How did they know that they would see a single quarter of that year through? But you must not press such men too closely with awkward questions! If you had done so, they would have said, Do not talk about deathit makes one melancholy.

Having looked at the form of this folly of counting on the future, let us speak a little on the folly itself. It is a great folly to build hopes on that which may never come. It is unwise to count your chickens before they are hatchedit is madness to risk everything on the unsubstantial future.

How do we know what will be on the morrow? It has grown into a proverb that we ought to expect the unexpected, for often the very thing happens which we thought would not happen. We are constantly surprised by the events which occur around us. In Gods great oratory of Providence, there are passages of wondrous eloquence because of the surprise power that is in them. They come upon us at unawares and overwhelm us. How can we reckon upon anything in a world like thiswhere nothing is certain but uncertainty? Besides, the folly is seen in the fact of the frailty of our lives and the brevity of them. What is your life? It is even a vapor, that appears for a little time.

That cloud upon the mountainyou see it as you rise in the morning you have scarcely dressed yourself before all trace of it has gone! Here in our streets, the other night, we came to worship through a thick fog and found it even here in the House of Prayer. But while we worshipped, there came a breath of wind and on our way home a stranger would not have thought that London had been, but a few hours before, so dark with dirty mistit had all disappeared! Life is even as a vapor. Sometimes these vapors, especially at the time of sunset, are exceedingly brilliant. They seems to be magnificence, itself, when the sun paints them with heavenly colors. But in a little while they are all gone and the whole panorama of the sunset has disappeared. Such is our life. It may sometimes be very bright and glorious, but it is still only like a painted cloud and, very soon, the cloud and the color in it are both gone. We cannot reckon upon the cloudstheir laws are so variable and their conditions so obscureand such, also, is our life!

Why, then, is it, that we are always counting upon what we are going to do? How is it that, instead of living in the eternal future, where we might deal with certainties, we continue to live in the more immediate future, where there can be nothing but uncertainties? Why do we choose to build upon clouds and pile our palaces on vapor to see them melt away, as before they have often melted, instead of, by faith, getting where there is no failure, where God is All in All and His sure promises make the foundations of eternal mansions? Oh, I would say with my strongest emphasis Do not reckon upon the future! Young people, I would whisper this in your earsDo not discount the days to come! Old men, whispering is not enough for youI would say with a voice of thunderCount not on distant years! In the course of nature, your days must be few! Live in the present! Live unto God! Trust Him now and serve Him now, for very soon your life on earth will be over!

We thus see that counting on the future is folly.   
II. Secondly, IGNORANCE OF THE FUTURE IS A MATTER OF FACT. Whatever we may say about what we mean to do, we do not know anything about the future. The Apostle, by the Spirit, speaks truly when he says, You know not what shall be on the morrow. Whether it will come to us laden with sickness or health, prosperity or adversity, we cannot tell. Tomorrow may mark the end of our lifepossibly even the end of the age. Our ignorance of the future is certainly a fact.   
Only God knows the future. All things are present to Himthere is no past and no future to His all-seeing eyes. He dwells in the present tense forevermore as the great I AM. He knows what will be on the morrow and He, alone knows! The whole course of the universe lies before Him, like an open map. Men do not know what a day may bring forth, but Jehovah knows the end from the beginning! There are two great certainties about things that shall come to passone is that God knowsand the other is that we do not know.   
As the knowledge of the future is hidden from us, we ought not pry into it. It is perilous, it is wicked to attempt to lift even a corner of the veil that hides us from things to come. Search into those things that are revealed in Holy Scripture and know them, as far as you can, but be not so foolish as to think that any man or woman can tell you what is to happen on the morrow. And do not think so much of your own judgment and foresight as to say, That is clear, I can predict that. Never prophesy until after the event and then, or course, you cannot prophesy! Therefore never attempt to prophesy at all. You know not what shall be on the morrow and you ought not to make any unhallowed attempt to obtain the knowledge. Let the doom of King Saul on Mount Gilboa warn you against such a terrible course.   
Further, we are benefited by our ignorance of the future. It is hidden from us for our good! Suppose a certain man is to be very happy, by-andby? If he knows it, he will be discontented till the happy hour arrives. Suppose another man is to have great sorrow very soon. It is well that he does not know it, for now he can enjoy the present good. If we could have all our lives written in a bookwith everything that was to happen to us recorded thereinand if the hand of Destiny should give us the book, we would be wise not to read it, but to put it by and say   
*My God, I would not long to see   
My fate with curious eyes,   
What gloomy lines are writ for me,   
Or what bright lines arise.*   
It is sufficient that our heavenly Father knowsand His knowledge may well content us. Knowledge is not wisdom. His is wisest who does not wish to know what God has not revealed. Here, surely, ignorance is blissit would be folly to be wise.   
Because we do not know what is to be on the morrow, we should be greatly humbled by our ignorance. We think we are so wise, do we not? And we make a calculation that we are sure is correct! We arrange that this and the other thing is going to be donebut God puts forth His little finger and removes some friend, or changes some circumstanceand all our propositions fall to the ground! It is better for us, when we are low before the Throne of God, than when we stand up and plume ourselves because we think we can say, Oh, I knew it would be so! See how well I reckoned! With what wondrous forethought I provided for it all! Had God blown upon our plans, they would have come to nothing! We know nothing for sure. Let that thought humble us greatly.   
Seeing that these things are so, we should remember the brevity, the frailty and the end of our life. We cannot be here long. If we live to the extreme age of men, how short our time is! But the most of us will never reach that period wherein we may say to one another, My lease has run out. How frail is our hold on this world! In a moment we are gonegone like the moth! You put your finger upon it and it is crushed. Man is not greatman is less than little! He is as nothing. He is but a dream. Before he can scarcely say that he is here, we are compelled to say that he is gone!   
We are glad that we do not know when our friends are to die and we feel thankful that we cannot foretell when we shall depart out of this life. What good would it do us? Some who are in bondage through fear of death might be in greater bondage, still, while those who are now careless about it would probably feel more content in their carelessness. If they had to live another 20 years, they would say, At any rate, we may sport away 19 of them. As for those of us to whom this world is a wilderness and who count ourselves as pilgrims hurrying through itwe know enough when we know that this is not our rest because it is pollutedand that the day will soon come when we shall enter the Canaan of our inheritance and be, forever with the Lord. Meanwhile, the Presence of the Lord makes a Heaven even of the wilderness! Since He is with us, we are content to leave the ordering of our lives to His unerring wisdom! We ought, for every reason, to be thankful that we do not know the future, but, at any rate, we can clearly see that to count on it is follyand that ignorance of it is a matter of fact.   
III. Thirdly, RECOGNITION OF GOD WITH REGARD TO THE FUTURE IS TRUE WISDOM. What says our text? For that you ought to say, if the Lord wills, we shall live, and do this, or that. I do not think that we need always, in every letter and in every handbill, put, If the Lord wills, yet I wish that we more often used those very words! The fashionable way is to put it in Latin and, even then, to abbreviate it, and use only the consonants, D.V., to express it. You know, it is a fine thing when you can put your religion into Latin and make it very short. Then nobody knows what you mean by it, or, if they do, they can praise your scholarship and admire your humility!   
I do not care about those letters, D.V. I rather like what Fuller says when he describes himself as writing in the letter such passages as, God willing, or, God lending me life. He says, I observe, Lord, that I can scarcely hold my hand from encircling these words in parenthesis, as if they were not essential to the sentence, but may as well be left out as put in. Whereas, indeed, they are not only of the commission at large, but so of the quorum, that without them all the rest is nothing! Why, hereafter, I will write these words freely and fairly, without any enclosure about them! Let critics censure it for bad grammarI am sure it is good divinity. So he quaintly puts the matter. Still, whether you write, If the Lord wills, or not, always let it be clearly understood! And let it be conspicuous in all your arrangements that you recognize that God is over all and that you are under His control. When you say, I will do this or that, always add, in thought, if not in words, If the Lord wills. No harm can come to you if you bow to Gods sovereign sway.   
We should recognize God in the affairs of the future, because, first, there is a Divine will which governs all things. I believe that nothing happens apart from Divine determination and decree! Even the little things in life are not overlooked by the all-seeing eyes! The very hairs of your head are numbered. The nest of a rush by the river is as fixed and foreknown as the station of a king! And the chaff from the hand of the winnower is steered as much as the stars in their courses! All things are under regulation and have an appointed place in Gods planand nothing happens, after all, but what He permits or ordains! Knowing that, we will not always say, If the Lord wills, yet we will always feel it. Whatever our purposes may be, there is a higher Power which we must always acknowledgeand there is an Omnipotent purpose before which we must bow in lowliest reverence, saying, If the Lord wills.   
But while many of Gods purposes are hidden from us, there is a revealed will which we must not violate. It is chiefly in reference to this that the Christian should always say, I will do this or that, provided that, when the time comes, I shall see it to be consistent with the Law of God and with the precepts of the Gospel. I say now, I will do this or that, but certain other things may occur which will render it improper for me to do so. Therefore, to be quite in accordance with the Word I so deeply reverence, I must always put in the saving clause, sometimes giving utterance to it, but in every case meaning, whether I put it into words or not, I will do so and so, if it is right to do it. I will go, or I will stay, if it is the will of God.   
In addition to this, there is a Providential will of God which we should always consult. With this guidance, which comes from the circumstances that surround us, Believers are familiar. Sometimes a thing may seem to us to be right enough, morally, and yet we may not quite know whether we should do it or not. Or, perhaps, there are two courses equally right, when judged by the Word of God, and you are uncertain which to follow. The highest wisdom, in such a case, is to wait for God to make a path plain by some act of Providence. When you come where two roads meet in your perplexity, pull up, kneel down and lift your hearts to Heaven, asking your Father the way! And whenever we are purposing what we should doand we

ought to make some purposes, for Gods people are not to be without forethought or prudencewe should always say, or mean without saying, All my plans must wait till the Lord sets before me an open door. If God permits, I will do this. But if the Lord wills, I will stop and do nothing. My strength shall be to sit still unless the Master wishes me to go forward.   
May I whisper into the ear of some very quick, impetuous and hasty people, that it would be greatly to their souls benefit if they knew how to sit still? Many of us seem as if we must always do everything at once and, therefore, we make no end to muddle for ourselves. There is often a blessed discipline in postponement. It is a grand word, that word, wait especially in this particular connection. Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart: wait, I say, on the Lord. Be patient! Sometimes even to be passive in the hand of God will be our strengthand to stand still until the cloudy, fiery pillar moves in front of us will be our highest wisdom.   
There is yet another sense I would give to this expressionthere is a royal will which we would seek to fulfill. That will is that the Lords people should be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth of God. So, as the servants of the Most High, we go forth to do this or that, if the Lord wills, that is to say, if, by so doing, we can fulfill the great will of God in the salvation of men! I wish that this was the master motive with all Christiansthat we were each willing to say, I will go and live in such a place if there are souls to be saved there. I will take a house in such a street if, by living there, I can be of service to my Lord and Master. I will go to China or Africa, or to the ends of the earth if the Lord willsthat is to say, if, by going there, I can be helping to answer that prayer, Your will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven.   
Dear Christian Friends, do you put yourselves entirely at Gods disposal? Are you really His, or have you kept back a bit of yourself from the surrender? If you have retained any portion for yourself, that little reserve that you have made will be the channel by which your life will bleed away! You say, We are not our own; we are bought with a price, but do you really mean it? I am afraid that there is a kind of mortgage on some Christians. They have some part they must give, as they fancy, to their own aggrandizement. They are not all for Christ. May the Lord bring us all to His feet in whole-hearted consecration till we can say, We will not go to that city unless we can serve God there! We will not buy and we will not sell unless we can glorify God by buying and selling. And we will not even wish for the honest gain that comes of trading unless we can be promoting the will of God by getting it! Our best profit will consist of doing Gods will.   
A man can as much serve God by measuring calico, or by weighing groceries, as he can by preaching the Gospel, if he is called to do it and if he does it in a right spirit! This should always be our aim and we should put this always in the forefront of our life. I go or stay, I ascend or I descend if the Lord wills. The Lords will shall be done in my mortal body whether I live or whether I die.   
May this be your resolve, then. Let this clause, if the Lord wills, be written across your life and let us all set ourselves to the recognition of God in the future. It is a grand thing to be able to say, Wherever I go and whatever happens to me, I belong to God, and I can say that God will prepare my way as well when I am old and gray-headed as He did when I was a boy. He shall guide me all the way to my everlasting mansion in Glory. He was the guide of my youth, He shall be the guide of my old age. I will leave everything to Himall the way from earth to Heavenand I will be content to live only a day at a time! And my happy song shall be **So for tomorrow and its need I do not pray, But keep me, guide me, hold me   
Lord, just for today.**   
IV. And now, fourthly, BOASTINGS ABOUT THE FUTURE ARE EVIL. But now you rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. I will not say much upon this point, but briefly ask you to notice the various ways in which men boast about the future.   
One man says, about a certain matter, I will do it, I have made up my mind, and he thinks, You cannot turn me. I am a man who, when he has once put his foot down, is not to be shifted from his place. Then he laughs and prides himself upon the strength of his willbut his boasting is sheer arrogance! Yet he rejoices in it and the Word of God is true of such a oneAll such rejoicing is evil.   
Another mans says, I shall do it, the thing is certain. And when a difficulty is suggested, he answers, Tut, do not tell me about my proposing and Gods disposingI will propose and I will also dispose! I do not see any difficulty. I shall carry it out, I tell you. I shall succeed! Then he laughs in his foolish pride and rejoices in his proud folly. All such rejoicings are evil! They are foolish, but, what is worse, they are wicked. Do I address myself to any who have no notion about Heaven or the world to come, but who feel that they are perfect masters of this world and, therefore, talk in the manner I have indicated and rejoice as they think how great they are? To such I will earnestly say, All such rejoicing is evil.   
I heard a third man say, I can do it. I feel quite competent. To him the message is the samehis boasting is evil. Though he thinks of himself, Whatever comes in my way, I am always ready for it, he is greatly mistaken and errs grievously. I have often been in the company of a gentleman of this sort, but only for a very little while, for I have generally got away from him as soon as I could. He knows a thing or two. He has got the great secret that so many are seeking in vain. All of you ordinary people, he just snuffs you out. If you had more sense and could do as he doeswell, then, you could be as well off as he is! Poor man! Nobody needs to be poor, he says. Nobody needs to be poor. I was poor a little while, but I made up my mind that I would not remain poor. I fought my own way and I could begin again with a crust and work myself up. You will notice his frequent use of the capital I, but ah, dear Sir, God has thunderbolts for these great Is! They offend Him! They are a smoke in His nostrils. Pride is one of the things which His soul hates. No man should speak in such a strainAll such rejoicing is evil.   
But that young man yonder talks in a different tone. He has been planning what he will do when he succeeds, for, of course, he is going to succeed! Well, I hope that he may. He is going to buy and selland get gain and he says, I will do so and so when I am rich. He intends, then, to live his fling and to enjoy himself! He laughs as he thinks what he will do when his toilsome beginnings are over and he can have his own way! I would ask him to pause and consider his life in a more serious veinAll such rejoicing is evil.   
There is, of course, a future concerning which you may be certain. There is a future in which you may rejoice! God has prepared for them that serve Him, a crown of life and, by humble hope, you may wear the crown even now! You may, by the thoughts of such amazing bliss, begin to partake of the joy of Heavenand this will do you no harm! On the contrary, it will set your heart at rest concerning your brief stay on earth, for what will it matter to you whether your life is cloudy or bright, short or long, when eternity is secure? But concerning the uncertainties of this fleeting life, if you begin to rejoice, All such rejoicing is evil.   
V. That brings me to my last and most practical point, which is this THE USING OF THE PRESENT IS OUR DUTY. Therefore to him that knows good, and does it not, to him it is sin. I take this text with its context. It means that he who knows what he ought to do, but does not do it at once, to him it is sin. The text does not refer to men who live in guilty knowledge of duty and neglect itits message is to men who know the present duty and who think that they will do it by-and-by.   
In the first place, it is sinful to defer obedience to the Gospel. He that knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is sin. Do you say, I am going to repent? Your duty is to repent now. I am going to believe, do you say? The command of Christ is, Believe now. After I have believed, says one, I shall wait a long time before I make any profession. Another says, I am a Believer and I shall be baptized some day. But as Baptism is according to the will of the Lord, you have no more right to postpone it than you have to postpone being honest or sober! All the commands of God to the characters to whom they are given come as a present demand. Obey them now! And if anyone here, knowing that God bids him to believe, refuses to believe, but says that he hopes to trust Christ one of these days, let me read him thisTo him that knows to do good, and does it not this word is in the present tenseto him it is sin.   
In the next place, it is sinful to neglect the common duties of life under the idea that we shall do something more, by-and-by. You do not obey your parents, young man, and yet you are going to be a minister, are you? A pretty minister will you make! As an apprentice you are very dilatory and neglectfuland your master would be glad to see the back of you! He wishes that he could burn your indentures and yet you have an idea you are going to be a missionary, I believe. A pretty missionary you would be! There is a mother at home and her children are neglected while she talks to her neighbors. But when her children are off her hands, she is going to be a true mother in Israel and look after the souls of others. Such conduct is sin! Mind your children! Darn the stockings and attend to your other home duties! And when you have done that, talk about doing something in other places. If present duties are neglected, you cannot make up for the omission by some future piece of quixotic endeavor to do what you were never called to do! If we could all be quiet enough to hear that clock tick, we should hear it say, Now! Now! Now! Now! The clock resembles the call of God in the daily duties of the hour. To him that knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is sin, even though he may dream of how he will, in years to come, make up for his present neglect!

Then, dear Friends, it is sinful to postpone purposes of service. If you have some grand project and holy purpose, I would ask you not to delay it. My dear friend, Mr. William Olney, whose absence we all mourn tonight, [This sermon was preached at the time Mr. William Olney, the senior deacon of the Tabernacle Church, was lying unconscious, after a paralytic stroke. He fell asleep in Jesus the next morning. On the following Lords Day evening, the Pastor preached from Aces 13:36, the sermon that will be published next weekIf the Lord WillsA postscript at the bottom of the pageEOD.] was a very prompt, energetic man. He was here, he was there, he was everywhere serving his Lord and Master! And now that he is suddenly stricken down, his life cannot be said to be in any sense, unfinished! There is nothing to be done in his business. There is nothing to be done in his relation to this Church. There is nothing left undone with regard to anybody! It is all as finished as if he had known that he was going to be struck down.   
Mr. Whitefield said that he would not go to bed unless he had put even his gloves in their right place. If he should die in the night, he would not like to have anybody asking, Where did he leave his gloves? That is the way for a Christian man to always liveto have everything in order, even to a pair of gloves! Finish up your work every nightno, finish up every minute! I have seen Mr. Wesleys journal, though it is not exactly a journalit does not give an account of what he did in a day, nor even what he did in an hour. He divided his time into portions of 20 minutes each and I have seen the book in which there is the record of something done for his Lord and Master every 20 minutes of the day! So exactly did he live that no single half-minute ever seemed to be wasted. I wish that we all lived in that way, so that we looked, not at projects in some distant future that never will be realized, but at something to be done now.   
Last Thursday, when I was speaking, I said that some Christian people had never told the story of the Cross to others, and urged them to begin to do so at once. A young friend, sitting in this place, leaned over the front of the pew and touched a friend sitting there, saying to her, I would like to speak to you about that. He had never spoken to her beforehe did not even know herand he thus addressed her while the service was proceeding. A member of the Church, sitting by her side, who heard what the young man said, was so pleased with his prompt action that she stayed after the service to sympathize and help while he explained the way of salvation! The young person to whom he spoke, came to tell me, last Tuesday, that she had found the Savior through that well-timed effort!   
Dear Friends, that is the way to serve the Lord! If we were to do things at the moment when they occurred to us, we should do them to purpose! But, oh, how many pretty things you have always meant to do and have never even attempted! You have strangled the infant projects that have been born in your mindyou have not allowed them to live and grow into manhood of real action. First thoughts are best in the service of God and the carrying of them out would secure great benefit to others and much fruit for ourselves. To him that knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is sin.  
God help us, if we are saved, to get at this holy business of serving the Lord Christ, which as far exceeds buying and selling and getting gain, as the heavens are higher than the earth! Let us do something for Christ at once! You young people that are newly converted, if you do not, very soon, begin to work for Christ, you will grow to be idle Christians, scarcely Christians at all! But I believe that to attempt something suited to your ability almost immediately, as God shall direct you, will put you on the line of a useful career. God will bless you and enable you to do more as the years roll onwards.   
I have this last wordTo him that knows to do good, and does is not, to him it is sin, that is, it is sinful in proportion to our knowledge. If there is any Brother here, into whose mind God has put something fresh, something good, I pray him to translate it into action at once! Oh, but nobody has done it before! Somebody must be first, and why should not you be the first if you are sure that it is a good thing and it has come into your heart through God the Holy Spirit? But if you know to do good, and do not do itit will be sin every minute that you leave it undone. Therefore get to it at once! And you, my Sister, who tonight, while sitting here thinking of something you might have done which you have not yet attempted, attempt it at once! Do not let another sun rise, if you can help it, before you have begun the joyful and blessed service! The time is short. Our opportunities are passing, For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Be up and doing! Soon we shall be gone!   
May we never hear the summons to go Home while there is anything left undone that we ought to have done for our Lord and Master! I am conscious of having spoken but very feebly and imperfectly, but, you know, my heart is heavy because of this sore trial which has come upon us through the stroke that has fallen on our beloved deacon, William Olney. And when the heart is so sad, the brain cannot be very lively. May God bless this word, for Jesus sake! Amen.

**Portion of Scripture Read before SermonJames 4.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK90, 39, 211.

When last weeks sermon was sent to the printers. Mr. Spurgeon was unable to write a letter to go at the end of it, for he was suffering so severely that he could not even dictate a message for his sermon readers. It was not, then, anticipated that his illness would take the terrible form it afterwards assumed, but on Tuesday, January 26, when the doctor came, he was obliged to report his patients condition as serious. Since then, the daily bulletins have carried the sad tidings far and wide and most of the readers of the sermons probably know, by this time, that their beloved preacher has been suffering the same malady that so grievously afflicted him during last summer and autumn. His illness, on this occasion, has not developed exactly the same symptoms as before, but at the date of writing this note (January 31), the doctor reports that, his condition gives cause for the greatest anxiety.

It is with profound regret that the Publishers record the death of the beloved Pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. He was called to his rest, at Mentone, on Sunday, January 31st, at 11 p.m.

To all who were privileged to know Mr. Spurgeon, this event has come as a great sorrowa sorrow which will certainly be shared by every reader of the weekly sermons.

*I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them. Revelation 14:13.*

The weekly Sermon and The Sword and the Trowel will be continued as usual, the Publishers having a large quantity of manuscripts and Sermons hitherto unpublished.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1773 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?   
NO. 1773

A sermon suggested by the sudden death of H.R.H., the Duke of Albany.

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, MARCH 30, 1884, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away.   
James 4:14.

WHEN a prince dies, they toll the great bell of the cathedral that all the city may hear it and that for miles around the tidings may spread. Swift messengers of the press bear the news through the length and breadth of the land and all mens ears are made to tingle. A royal death is a national warning! A death in any of our families is a loud call to our own household, a call which I trust we hear. But a death in the Royal Family has a voice to the whole nation. It will be heard, it must be heard! In this great city, the crowds who care not to come to the house of God will, nevertheless, hear of this lamented death, and think of it and speak of it, each man to his fellow. Death is an orator whose solemn periods demand attention, especially when he preaches from the steps of the throne. The Lords voice cries unto the citylet Believers be quick to hear the call to humiliation, to awakening and to prayer, that the visitation may be overruled for great and lasting good.

A sudden death is an especially impressive warning. If men die of old age, we regard it as coming in the common course of things. But when a young man is suddenly snatched away, then we understand that though the old must die, the young may die and that no one among us may reckon upon any long day of life, since, in a moment, our sun may go down before it is yet noon. So falls the grass beneath the mowers scythe! So fades the leaf from the tree! In a moment our strength is turned to weakness and our comeliness into corruption. Then, in accents as plain as they are terrible, the Lord says, Because I will do this unto you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel!

We have, this week, received fresh proof that death is impartial. As the Arab proverb has it, the black camel stops at every mans door. Sorrow has entered in at the windows of palaces and even in the royal chamber there lies one dead. If, therefore, Death is so impartial that he smites down the captains, let not the rank and file hope to escape. Death, which forces entrance to a princes bedchamber, will not respect our cottage door. To us, also, in due time, shall be brought the message, The Master is come and calls for you. My ear hears a voice crying aloud, Set your house in order; for you shall die and not live. Will not you hear it? Will any one of you refuse the voice which speaks from Heaven? Death evidently pays no respect to character, age, or hopefulness. A man may addict himself to the service of his country, but his patriotism will not protect him.

He may be surrounded with a wall of affection, but this will not screen him. He may have at his command all the comforts of life and yet life may ooze out before the physician is aware. He may be tenderly loved by an affectionate mother and his name may be engraved on the heart of the fondest of wives, but death has no regard to the love of women. It is appointed unto men once to die. There is no discharge in this warwe shall all march into this fightand unless the Lord, Himself, shall speedily come and end the present dispensation, we shall, each one, fall upon this battlefield, for the shafts of Death fly everywhere and there is no armor for either back or breast by which his cruel darts may be turned aside.

I would to God that all of us retained this Truth of God in our memories. Lord, make me to know my end and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. We have a very clear conviction that others will die, but as to ourselves, we put far from us the evil day and care not to dwell upon a subject which smells so unpleasantly of the morgue! Yes, we admit that we shall die, but not so soon as to make it a pressing matterwe imagine that we are not within measurable distance of the tomb. Even the oldest man gives himself a little longer lease on life. And when he has passed his four-score years, we have seen him hugging life with as much tenacity as if he had just commenced it! Brothers and Sisters, in this we are not wiseDeath will not spare us because we avoid him. What is there about any one of us that we should fare better than the rest of our fellow men? We are in the same army, marching upon the same fieldwhy should we escape where all others fall? Only two of our race have gone into the better land without crossing the dark river of deathEnoch and Elijahbut no one among us will make a third.

Now, upon this matter we have nothing to say but what is commonplace, for, garnish them as you may, graves are among the most common of common things. Yet a solemn reflection upon the shortness of life and the certainty of death may prove to be important and even invaluable, if it is allowed to penetrate our hearts and influence our lives. History tells us of Peter Waldo, of Lyons, who was sitting at a banquet as thoughtless and careless as any of the revelers, when suddenly, one at the table bowed his head and died. Waldo was startled into thought and went home to seek his God. He searched the Scriptures and, according to some, became a great helper, if not the second founder of the Waldensian Church, which in the Alpine valleys kept the lamp of the Gospel burning when all around was veiled in night! The whole Church of God was thus strengthened and perpetuated by the hallowed influence of death upon a single mind!

I suppose it is also true that Luther, in his younger days, walking with his friend, Alexis, saw him struck to the ground by a flash of lightning and became, from that day on, prepared in heart for that deep work of Grace through which he learned the Doctrine of Justification by Faith and rose to be the liberator of Europe from Papal bondage! How much, every way, we owe to this weighty subject! Among the earnest, the prayerful, the holy, many must acknowledge that the vaults of death have brought them spiritual health! Men have been helped to live by remembering that they must dieyes, some men knew nothing of the highest form of life till Death awakened them from their deadly slumbers.

I hope that Gods Spirit may, this morning, impress many of you with these reflections, and lead you to the Cross of Christ by the way of this memento mori. May a princes death awaken many of you to life! He, being dead, now speaks to you! From yonder sunny shores he reminds you of the valley of death which you must shortly traverse. With an intense desire for our spiritual profit I shall speak upon our text in two ways first, let us consider the Truth of God in the text and, secondly, the lessons in that Truth.

I. We commence with THE TRUTH IN THE TEXT, upon which we have already touched. The text begins by reminding us that we have no foresightWhereas you know not what shall be on the morrow. God has given us memory that we may look backwardand it were well if we used our memories better for remembrance, reflection and repentance but God has given us no eyes with which to pry into the future. He unveils the past to our penitence, but He veils the future from our curiosity. Dark days may be near at hand for some of us, but we do not perceive them. Let us be thankful that we do not, for we might multiply our afflictions by the foresight of themand the prospect of evil to come might cast a gloom over pleasure near at hand. As we may feel a thousand deaths in fearing one, so may we faint under a thousand lashes in dreading a single stroke.

It is good, also, that our God conceals from us our earthly joys until the time for their arrival. Great prosperity may await you and a considerable enlargement of your temporal comfort, but you do not know it and it is as well that you should not, for you might be none the better for the prospect. Earths goods are like birdlime and are fearfully apt to glue us down to things below and prevent our soaring towards Heaven. If, then, we could know all the pleasurable events that may happen to us, we might become more worldly and more earthbound than we are. None of us should desire that this present evil world should have an increased influence over uswe are glad that it should have less and, therefore, we rejoice that its future has such slight power over us because of its being unknown. No, we cannot see far, and those who act as if they could see into coming days behave most foolishly.

Hear these people whom James describesthey boast most wretchedly! They will go into the citythey are sure they willwhat is to hinder them? Today or tomorrow we will go into such a citythey have plenty of time and can make a selection according to their pleasurethey can go where they like and when they like. They see themselves, with prophetic glance, entering in at the city gate, and they are fully assured that they shall continue there a year. Of course, a year is a small matterif they please, they will stay longer. They allot themselves a lease for three, seven, 14, or 21 years, at discretionat least they talk as if they could do so. They are going into the city to buy and sell. They are sure of that, too. Of course they will not be laid up with sickness! They do not fear that accident or disease will keep them away from market, or hinder the active transacting of their business.

No, they are going to buy and sell, and such is their confidence in their own superior abilities that they are sure to make a profitthe markets cannot fall below the price which they have fixed in their own mindsneither will they make bad debts, nor incur other losses, for they have decided that they will get gain. Up to now they have been selfmade men and they mean to go on making themselves until they put the finishing stroke by adding a few more thousands. They have visions of going on to fortune. Ah, you prophets, you are going to your graves! This is a sure oracle. The tomb will be your only patrimony and the shroud your sole possession! Let none of us talk of what we resolve to do at some future date. Look well to the present, for that is all the time we can be sure ofand there may be little enough of that.

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, where you go. Thus said the wise man. Let wise men take heed to his counsel. The Apostle emphasizes the folly of this supposed foresight by telling us that we cannot even reckon upon another day. You have come close up to the end of March, but if you reckon upon what you will do upon the first of April, you may find, by the event, that you are a fool! You may get to the last day of the year, but if you reckon on a new year, you may be giving new proof of your ignorance! Even in the morning we cannot make sure of the eventide, nor in the evening can we reckon upon the morning. James puts the matter strongly when he asksWhat is your life? You do not know what is going to happen on the morrow, for you do not know your own life. What is it? The text divides itself into an emphatic question, What is your life? And an instructive answerIt is even a vapor, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away.

First, I say, we have, here, an emphatic question. He asks, What is your life? For solidity, for stability, what is it? What is there in it? Is it not composed of such stuff as dreams are made of? The breath in your nostrils is not more unsubstantial than is your life. There, breathe it out! On such a morning as this, you see your breath, but it is only in your sight for a moment and then it vanishes away. Your own breath is a fair picture of the flimsy, airy thing which men call life. What is your life? What is it for continuance? Some things last for centuriesbut what is your life?

Even garments bear some little wear and tear, but what is your life? A delicate textureno cobweb is a tenth as frail. It will fail before a touch, a breath! Justinian, an emperor of Rome, died by going into a room which had been newly painted! Adrian, a pope, was strangled by a fly! A consul struck his foot against his own threshold and his foot mortified, so that he died thereby! There are a thousand gates to death and, though some seem to be narrow wickets, many souls have passed through them! Men have been choked by a grape seed; killed by a tile falling from the roof of a house; poisoned by a drop; carried off by a whiff of foul air. I know not what there is that is too little to slay the greatest king!

It is a marvel that man lives at all! So unstable is our life that the Apostle says, What is it? So frail, so fragile is it, that he does not call it a flower of the field, or the snuff of a candle, but asks, What is our life? It is as if he had saidIs it anything? Is it not a near approach to nothing? Have you ever noticed how David answers this question in the 39

th Psalm? He says in the 5th verse of that Psalm that man is vanity. What is vanity? It is nothing in reality! It is merely the presence of something. It is an idle dream, an empty conceit, a delusion, a make-believe! Such is man. But David says more than thathe declares that every man is vanity. Princes, kings, philosophers, the strongest, the healthiest, the ablest, the most virtuousevery man is vanity! Among the millions of mankind, none rises above this dreary state of nothingness! He says more than that. He writesevery man at his best state is vanitywhen he is in the prime and glory of his life, when he is most healthy and vigorous, when his eyes are clearest and his muscles are firmest, he is still no better than sheer vanity!

David goes even further, for he thus speaks Every man at his best state is altogether vanity. That is, he is nothing but vanity, there is nothing more enduring about him. He is gone with a puff! He spends his years as a tale that is told. Do not overlook one more emphatic word which David sets in the forefront of the sentence, Verily, as if he were quite sure of it and could not tolerate a question upon the subject Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Have you ever observed how Job, when he speaks of our life, sets us a sign in each of the three elements whereon and wherein we dwell? See his ninth chapter, at the 25th verse. He says, My days are swifter than a runner. Here is an emblem upon the land. Oriental kings employed swift-footed runners and horses and camelsand these, to the Oriental imagination, were the very essence of speed. Even we, before the days of electricity, knew of nothing faster than the royal mail! Job, therefore, well says, My days are swifter than a runner.

Then he bids us look to sea, for he says, They are passed away as the swift ships. Ships which are built for speed seem to fly as on wings when they spread their sails to a favoring wind. We ought not to view ships at sea without remembering the brevity of our days. But lest we should still forget, the Patriarch further likens his days to the eagle that hastens to the prey. As the vulture spies, from a distance, the carcass of a camel and descends upon it with hasty swoop, so our life hastens to descend. Thus earth, sea, and air all remind us of the speed at which life flies towards its end! St. Augustine used to say he did not know whether to call it a dying life or a living deathand I leave you to choose between those two expressions.

This is certainly a dying lifeits march is marked by graves. Nothing but a continuous miracle keeps any one of us from the sepulcher. Were Omnipotence to stay its power but for a moment, earth would return to earth and ashes to ashes. It is a dying lifeand equally true is it that it is a living death. We are always dying. Every beating pulse we count leaves the number less. The more years we count in our life, the fewer remain in which we shall behold the light of day. While we are sitting still in this house, the earth is revolving round the sun and bearing us all through space at an amazing rate. We are all moving and yet we do not perceive it! Even so, while you are listening to this sermon you are all being borne onward towards eternity at lightning speed. As though we were laid in the bosom of some mighty angel and he, with outstretched wings, darted along like a flame of fire, we are always going our onward way.

Though we dream that we are at a stay, yet we never rest for an instant! The stream is bearing us onwardwe are nearing the cataract! We must always obey the mandateOnward, onward, onward. From childhood to youth, from youth to manhood, from manhood to gray old age we march onward in serried ranks from which no man can retire. We tarry not even when we sleepwe are continually moving forward like the waters of yonder river, on whose banks we find a habitation. What, then, is our life? That is a question which remains, to a large degree, unanswered and unanswerable. Yet our text affords us what is, in some aspects, an instructive answer. It does not so much tell us what life actually is as what it is like. It is even a vapor. James compares our life, you see, to a very subtle, unsubstantial, flimsy thinga vapor.

If you live upon a high hill, from which you can look down upon a stretch of country, you see in the early morning a mist covering all the valleys. It is singular to mark the tops of the great elms appearing above it, like islands in a sea of cloud, with, perhaps, here and there a Church spire rising like a sharp pyramid from the waste of mist. In a little time you look from the same window and the vapor has all vanished. It was so thin, so fine, so much like a gas, that a breath of wind has scattered it, or perhaps the sun has drawn it aloft. At any rate, not a trace of that allencompassing vapor remains. Such is your life!

Or you have marked a cloud in the western sky, illuminated with those marvelous lights which glowed during those extraordinary sunsets, the like of which none of our fathers had seen. You looked at the jeweled massit shone in the perfection of beauty and all the colors of the rainbow were blended in its hues! In another instant, lo, it was not! It was gone past all recall. Such is your life! This morning, as we came here, we saw our breathit was before our eyes for an instant and then it had gone. Such is the picture which James presents to us. What is your life? It is even a vapor. He proceeds to explain his own symbol in a sentence which is full of meaning. It is even a vapor, that appears. Notice that. He does not speak of it as a substance, having a true existence, but says that it appears.

Vapor is so ethereal, phantom-like and unreal, that it may rather be said to appear than to exist. If you could reach yon fleecy cloud, you would scarcely know that you had entered it, for it would possibly appear to be the thinnest of mist. The vapor which steams from your mouth how light, how airy it is! It is next door to nothingit only appears. And such is this lifea dream, a vain show, an apparition of the night! Half our joys and sorrows are but the presence of joy and the shadow of sorrowand the most of things through which we travel are not what they seem. We ought to know this in a practical way and set less store by the thing which are seen, which are temporal. This life appearsthat is all.

Further, the Apostle says, it, appears for a little time. It is only a very little while that a man lives at the longest. Compare a mans life with that of a tree. There is so striking a contrast between our present short life and that of a cedar, or an oak, that to set forth the longer life of saints in the millennial age, the Lord says, As the days of a tree are the days of My people, and My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. In that happy age men shall nourish long as the trees of the forest, but now, a man standing beneath an oak is a mere infant compared with the branches which overshadow him. A hundred years ago that oak seemed every way as venerable as it does today, whereas the man was then unthought of by his grandfather. Compare our life with the existence of this world. I mean not the present state of the earth as fitted up for man, but I allude to those unknown ages which intervened between the present arrangement and that beginning wherein God created the heavens and the earth.

The long eras of fire and water, the reigns of fishes and reptiles, the periods of tropical heat and polar ice make one think of man as a thing of yesterday. Then contrast our life with the being of the eternal Lordand what is manman when most venerable with years? A Methuselah what is he? He is but an insect born in the mornings sunbeam, sporting in the noontide ray and dead when the dews begin to fall! He appears for a little while. The parallel is further consummated by the Apostles adding, And then vanishes away. The cloud is gone from the mountain. Where is it? It has vanished away. No trace of it is leftneither can you recall it.

We, too, shall soon be gonegone as a dream when one awakens. With the most of us, our memory will be short. Many leave us concerning whom it would be a pity that they should be remembered, while many fail to live for others and, therefore, their fellows speedily forget them. Amid the crowded cemetery a single grave is lostamid 10,000 deaths no one departure can long abide in human memory. As far as this world is concerned, we all shall, by-and-by, vanish away. Then shall our near companion say of us

*One morn I missed him on the accustomed hill, Along the heath, and near his favorite tree. Another came, nor yet beside the rill,   
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he.*

The air has felt the passing bell and now the stars look down upon a stone on which is written in large letters, HERE HE LIES!

Or the dews shall wet a grass-grown mound, girt about with brambles, on which a few wild flowers have sprung up spontaneously to show how life shall yet triumph over death. Children may bear our name and yet a fourth generation shall quite forget that we ever sojourned in this region! Such is our lifea vapor, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away. This is the Truth of Godyou know itbut I cannot impress it upon your hearts as it ought to be impressed. Therefore I invite you to join me in the prayer, So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

II. Secondly, let us now learn THE LESSONS WHICH LIE WITHIN THIS TRUTH. May we read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the same. First, if this life is as unsubstantial as a vaporand nobody can deny the factlet us regard it as such and let us seek for something substantial elsewhere

*This worlds a dream, an empty show.   
But the great world to which I go   
Has joys substantial and sincere   
When shall I wake and find me there?*

It may be well to make the best of both worlds, but of this poor world, nothing can be made unless it is viewed in the light of another. This is a poor withering life at the best, for we all fade as a leaf. Unless we purposely live with a view to the

next world, we cannot make much out of our present existence. Such rags as this poor present world of time and sense, can never be made up into an array in which a man would care to robe himself. At the same time, do not be frightened at the unhandsome form in which this life, at times, appearsit is, after all, but a vapor and who will be alarmed at it?

Do not be overjoyed as he was who hoped to embrace a goddess and was deceived by a cloudit is, after all, but a semblanceits sorrows are scarcely worth a tear, nor do its joys deserve a smile! Vanity and vapor are things which wise men set small store by. Children may be pleased with the bubbles which they blow by the aid of an old pipe and a piece of soap, but as for men who have put away childish things, they ought not to be greatly moved by the things of this life, for they are but bubbles of less brilliance and less substance than those which delight the child! Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity. Let the lower lights burn dimly before your eyesthey are mere sparks and they are soon quenched.

Let us grip the eternal and sit loose by the temporal. The jewels of eternity will glitter in our crowns when all things pass away, but the trifles of this life are as the flowers which children pluck in the meadows, which wither in their hands before they can carry them home. In this place I suggest as your prayer that stanza of the poet, in which he addresses the Well-Beloved thus

*Show me Your face   
My faith and love   
Shall henceforth fixed be,   
And nothing here have power to move   
My souls serenity.   
My life shall seem a trance, a dream,   
And all I feel and see   
Illusive, visionary   
You, the one reality.*

Next, is life most uncertain? We know it isno one attempts to deny it. It is certain that life will come to an end, but it is most uncertain when it will come to that end. Is it so uncertain? Then let us not delay! I would to God I could whisper this wisdom into every procrastinators ear. Why do you halt and hesitate? If you are desirous to be saved from the wrath to come, why do you put it off till a tomorrow which may never come? Will you delay repenting and die impenitent? Will you delay faith and perish as an unbeliever? Will you keep back from mercy and pardon and refuse the free Grace of God? I pray you do not, for if you delay another day, it may be you will be in the land where hope can never come to you!

Think of your peril, O you ungodly men! Within an hour you may be at the Judgment Seat of God, or in the pit of Hell. Nothing keeps you where there is hope except a thread so fine as to be invisible and, so easily broken, that none but a madman would trust his souls destiny upon it! Awake, I pray you! Since death is hastening, hasten yourself until you have found a refuge in the cleft of the Rock of Agesand are safe in the arms of Jesus! Since life is so uncertain, oh, hasten, Christian, to serve your God while the opportunity is given you! Be diligent, today, to do those works which perfect saints above and holy angels cannot do. You will soon be where you can no more give alms to the poor, nor instruct the ignorant, nor visit the fatherless and the widow. You shall have no opportunities for speaking to men about their souls, or winning them for Christ, when once this shadowy life has vanished away!

How earnest every worker ought to be to do his work well while he has the opportunity. I have charged myself again and againI would to God the charge had been more effectualto preach

*As though I never might preach again,   
A dying man to dying men.*

I am persuaded that if we were in possession of all the wisdom that Grace will give us, we should do everything for the good of men most speedily, with deep prayerfulness, with true spiritual life and with an entire dependence upon the Spirit of God for the blessing of it. Come, my Brothers and Sisters, what you do, do quickly! If you wish to honor your Lord while you are here, and win jewels for His crown, up and at it, for the day is far spent! You cannot afford to waste a moment, for you have much to do, and very little time to do it in! Help us, O Spirit of the Lord!

Is life so short? Does it only appear for a little time and then vanish away? Then let us put all we can into it. If life is short, it is wisdom to have no fallows, but to sow every foot of ground while we can. It will be prudent to pack our little space as full as possible. Somebody said, the other day, of our dear friend, Mr. Moody, that he was the only man who could pronounce Jerusalem in two syllables. It shows the activity of the man that he can speak as much in two syllables as other people can say in four! He is always at it, working for his Master, double tides, rowing with both hands! Some speakers are long in delivering short sentences instead of saying much in little, they say little in much! Oh, for someone to teach them to say Jerusalem in two syllables!

Let us put plenty of life into our existence, plenty of work into our life, plenty of heart into our work and plenty of warmth into our heart. Oh, may God give us to live while we live! May we not only live but be all alive. Is life so short? Then do not let us make any very great provision for it. I have heard of certain people who are so imprudent that they never lay by anything for a rainy day, to whom I would say, Go to the ant, you sluggardconsider her ways and be wisewhich having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provides her meat in the summer and gathers her food in the harvest. It would be a poverty-stricken world if all followed the example of improvidence which is set by certain spiritual blunderers.

There is a thriftiness which we all ought to exercise, but there is no justification for laying up treasure which will never be used! Ants do not store up grain for storings sakethey do but divide over the whole year the harvest of a month. To hoard up endless gold is a species of insanity! If I were going a days voyage, I would not wish to take with me enough biscuit and salt beef to last for three yearsit would only cumber the boat. One walking stick is an admirable help, as I often find. But to carry a bundle of them when going on a journey would be a superfluity of absurdity! Alas, how many load themselves as if lifes journey would last a thousand years at the least? Some men have amassed hundreds of thousands of poundswhen are they going to enjoy their wealth? They are getting more and more and this occupies all their timethey are so busy cooking that they never have time to dine! They are so taken up with filling the wardrobe that they are all in rags. We do not need a ton weight of candles if we are only going to sit up for a few minutes. Let us be wise enough to suit the supply to the need.

Is time so short? Then do not let us fret about its troubles and discomforts. A man is on a journey and puts up at an inn. And when he is fairly in the hostelry, he perceives that it is a poor place with scant food and a hard bed. Well, well, he says, I am off the first thing tomorrow morning and so it does not matter. This world is an inn and if there are certain discomforts in it, let us remember that we are not tenants for years, but only guests for a day! Let us make the best we can of the temporary accommodation which this poor shanty of a world affords. Our life is removed as a shepherds tent, which was a hovel in which the shepherds watched their sheep. A shepherd who has to watch the sheep for a short time does not set to work to build a granite palace, or a brick househe is satisfied with a reed hutand does not complain of its scant space and slender strength.

So let it be with us! Let us sing together   
*The way may be rough, but it cannot be long! So lets smooth it with hope and cheer it with song.*

Must life vanish away? We know it must! What then? That vanishing is the end of one life and the beginning of another! Dear Friends, may I recommend you to remember that death is the end of this life? Do not leave this life to be raveled out at the end. I would like to have a well-hemmed life, with a finish about it. I would like to have my life enclosed with a fence of completeness. Too many leave lifes business in such a way that they leave endless trouble for their familieslawyers devour their substanceand their children are impoverished. See that your will is made, your debts paid, your charities distributed and all your affairs are arranged! Set your house in orderit is your duty as a citizenit is your higher duty as a Christian!

Do all that you would like to have done if you knew you would die tomorrow. I like Mr. Whitefields order, for he could not go to bed comfortably if his gloves were not in his hat ready for the morning! He felt that he could not tell when he would be called awaybut he wished to have everything in its place whenever the summons should come. Must this life vanish away? Then remember it is the beginning of another. The present life melts into the life to come! What kind of life will that other be? Do you not think that if it is to be a glorious life, it ought to commence here? Who would like to enter Heaven, could it be possible, and feel compelled to say, I cannot join in the music, for I do not know the tune. I cannot take up the hymn, for I know nothing of the song. I cannot glorify God, for I never did so while below. I cannot adore the Lamb, for I never trusted in Him while I was on earth.

You must learn the music here, or you will never sing in the choirs of Heaven! Oh, that this might awaken some of you! By the memory that this life must vanish away, may you be led to seek that eternal life which will abide in its excellency, world without end! And is death quite sure to come to me? Then, as I cannot avoid it, let me face it! If there were a way of avoiding it, I might postpone all consideration of it. But since I must meet it, let me know what I am doinglet me get ready for the inevitable and maybe it will become desirable. The thought of death will be one of two things to usit will be a ghost to haunt us if we remain out of Christ, unreconciled to God and unrenewed in heart. To Godless and Christless persons, death will be the king of terrors in prospect and in reality. Ungodly men cannot bear to think of being called away!

This morning they feel very uncomfortable while I am treading upon this troublesome subject. I hope they will not soon recover their composure, but will remain uncomfortable till they yield to Divine love and trust in the living Savior! Death is an awful thing to those who have their all in this world! If they could but live here forever, they would be at peace. But it cannot be so. God will not give men an immortality in this life to spend in disregarding Him. They must die. They may put Christ far from them, but they cannot put death far from them! They may avoid the Cross, but they cannot avoid the grave! The ungodly man frowns upon death because Death frowns upon him. Death is the skeleton in his closetit is the goblin at the foot of his bedit is the canker of his fairest joy. I would not like to be in such a position. Count me down all the red gold that could buy this round world, yet would I not accept it if I must live in fear of death!

But death will become another thing to you if you are renewed in heart. To the Christian it is an angel beckoning him onward and upward! It were not worth while to live on earth if this life were not to be crowned by deathI mean by leaving this world to go unto the Father. It is the supreme delight of the man who runs the race that is set before him that that course concludes with the winning postand so comes to an end. We are not of those who voyage the sea of this life for the sake of itwe ask not to forever sail over this rough oceanwe long for land! It is our delight to think of the port ahead! It is our joy to see the snow-white cliffs of our heavenly Albion! We do not desire to live here always. Why should we? Banished from our God, liable to sin, subject to temptation, vexed with infirmities, with corruptions, O Lord, what do we wait for?

*Welcome, sweet hour of full discharge   
That sets my longing soul at large,   
Takes off my chains, breaks up my cell,   
And gives me with my God to dwell!*

Believers have everything to gain by dying. To die is gain. We shall lose nothing which will be a loss to us! If one should take from us a jewel, but should give us another a thousand times its value, we should not regret the exchange. We lose this lifelet it be such a jewel as you like but we win the life to come which is infinitely more precious! Beloved, instead of fearing death, we should be willing to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better! Why should we be unwilling to be glorified? Our departing day is our wedding day! Oh, that the bells would ring it in! It is our home-coming from the school where we have been in training here below! Why are the minutes so slow, the years so long? Let the holidays, the holy days, come soon, when we shall be at home in the Fathers house!

It does not yet appear what we shall be, but it very soon will appear, and it will be no mere appearingit will be real joy and lasting pleasuresolid, substantial, eternal, like the God who has prepared it for us from of old! It is a blessed thing to be able to go through the world thanking God for this life, yet blessing Him more that it will land us at His right hand! Death is thus stripped of all dread! The curse is turned into a blessing! At the thought of it I feel ready to join in that rough but sweet

verse *Since Jesus is mine, Ill not fear undressing! But gladly take off these garments of clay To die in the Lord is a covenant blessing Since Jesus to Glory through death led the way.*

God grant us so to live and die that we may live to die no more, for Christs sake. Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SESSION Psalm 39, James 4:11-17.**   
HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK90, 823, 39.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #3126 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

PICTURES OF LIFE   
NO. 3126

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 1909.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON   
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON MONDAY EVENING, JUNE 18, 1855.

What is your life?   
James 4:14.

[This Sermon was delivered by Mr. Spurgeon on the evening before he came of age, having been born on June 19, 1834. A much later Sermon on the same verse is #1773, Volume 30WHAT IS YOUR LIFE? It was suggested by the sudden death of the Duke of Albany in 1884. A still later Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon, upon verses 13-17, #2242, Volume 38GODS WILL ABOUT THE FUTURE, was delivered in connection with the Home going of Mr. William Olney, and was published in the very week that the Beloved preacher was called Home in January 1892Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

IT well behooves me, now that another year of my existence has almost gone, standing on the threshold of a fresh era, to consider what I am, where I am going, what I am doing, whom I am serving and what shall be my reward. I will not, however, do so publicly before youI hope that I may be enabled to perform that duty in secret. But rather let me turn this occurrence to another account by speaking to you of the frailty of human life, the fleeting nature of time, how swiftly it passes away, how soon we all shall fade as a leaf and how speedily the place which knows us now shall know us no more forever! The Apostle James asks, What is your life? and, thanks to Inspiration, we are at no great difficulty to give the reply, for Scripture, being the best interpreter of Scripture, supplies us with many very excellent answers. I shall attempt to give you some of them.

I. First, we shall view life with regard to ITS SWIFTNESS. It is a great fact that though life to the young man, when viewed in the prospect appears to be long, to the old man it is always short and to all men life is really but a brief period. Human life is not long. Compare it with the existence of some animals and trees and how short is human life! Compare it with the ages of the universe and it becomes a spanand especially measure it by eternityand how little does life appear! It sinks like one small drop into the ocean and becomes as insignificant as one tiny grain of sand upon the seashore!   
Life is swift. If you would picture life, you must turn to the Bibleand this evening we will walk through the Bible-gallery of old paintings.   
You will find its swiftness spoken of in the Book of Job where we are furnished with three illustrations. In the ninth Chapter and at the 25th verse, we read, Now my days are swifter than a post. We are, most of us, acquainted with the swiftness of post-conveyance. I have sometimes, on an emergency, taken post horses where there has been no railway, and have been amazed and pleased with the swiftness of my journey. But since, in this ancient Book, there can be no allusion to modern posts, we must turn to the manners and customs of the East. And in so doing, we find that the ancient monarchs astonished their subjects by the amazing swiftness with which they received intelligence. By well-ordered arrangements, swift horses and constant relays, they were able to attain a speed which, although trifling in these days, was in those slower ages a marvel of marvels, so that, to an Eastern, one of the clearest ideas of swiftness was that of a post. Well does Job say that our life is swifter than a post. We ride one year until it is worn out, but there comes another just as swift and we are borne by itand soon it is gone and another year serves us for a steed! Post-house after post-house we pass as birthdays successively arrive! We loiter not, but vaulting at a leap from one year to another, still we hurry onward, onward, ever onward! My life is like a postnot like the slow wagon that drags along the road with tiresome wheels, but like a post, it attains the greatest speed!   
Job further says, My days are passed away as the swift ships. He increases, you see, the intensity of the metaphor, for if, in the Easterns idea, anything could exceed the swiftness of the post, it was the swift ship. Some translate this passage as the ships of desire, that is, the ships hurrying home, anxious for the haven and, therefore, crowding on all sail. You may well conceive how swiftly the mariner flies from a threatening storm, or seeks the port where he will find his home. You have sometimes seen how the ship cuts through the billows, leaving a white furrow behind her and causing the sea to boil around her. Such is life, says Job, as the swift ships, when the sails are filled by the wind and the vessel dashes on, cleaving a passage through the crowding waves. Swift are the ships, but swifter by far is life! The wind of time bears me along. I cannot stop its motion. I may direct it with the rudder of Gods Holy Spirit. I may, it is true, take in some small sails of sin which might hurry my days on faster than otherwise they would go but, nevertheless, like a swift ship my life must speed on its way until it reaches its haven. Where is that haven to be? Shall it be found in the land of bitterness and barrenness, that dreary region of the lost? Or shall it be that sweet haven of eternal peace where not a troubling wave can ruffle the resting glory of my spirit? Wherever the haven is to be, that Truth of God is the samewe are as the swift ships.   
Job also says that life is as the eagle that hastens to the prey. The eagle is a bird noted for its swiftness. I remember reading an account of an eagle attacking a fish hawk which had obtained some booty from the deep and was bearing it aloft. The hawk dropped the fish, which fell towards the water, but before the fish had reached the ocean, the eagle had flown more swiftly than the fish could fall and, catching it in its beak, it flew away with it. The swiftness of the eagle is almost incalculableyou see it and it is gone! You see a dark speck in the sky yonderit is an eagle soaring. Let the fowler imagine that, by-and-by, he shall overtake it on some mountains craggy peakit shall be long gone before he reaches it! Such is our life. It is like an eagle hastening to its preynot merely an eagle flying in its ordinary course, but an eagle hastening to its prey. Life appears to be hastening to its end! Death seeks the body as its preylife is ever fleeing from hungry Death, but Death is too swift to be outrunand as an eagle overtakes

his prey, so shall Death!  
If we require a further illustration of the swiftness of life, we must turn to two other passages in the Book of Job upon which I shall not dwell. One will be found in the seventh Chapter, at the sixth verse, where Job says, My days are swifter than a weavers shuttle, which the weaver throws so quickly that the eyes can hardly discern it. But he gives us a yet more excellent metaphor in the seventh verse of the same Chapter, where he says, O remember that my life is wind. Now this excels in velocity all the other figures we have examined. Who can outrun the winds? Proverbially, the winds are rapideven in their gentlest motion they appear to be swift. But when they rush in the tornado, or when they dash madly on in the hurricane, when the tempest blows and tears down everythinghow swift, then, is the wind! Perhaps some of us may have a gentle gale of wind and we may not seem to move so swiftly. But with others who are only just born and then snatched away to Heaven, the swiftness may be compared to that of the hurricane which soon snaps the ties of life and leaves the infant dead. Surely our life is like the wind!  
Oh, if you could but catch these idea, my Friends! Though we may be sitting still in this chapel, yet you know that we are all really in motion. This world is turning round on its axis once every 24 hours and besides that, it is moving around the sun in the 365 days of the year. So that we are all movingwe are all flitting along through spaceand as we are travelling through space, so are we moving through time at an incalculable rate! Oh, what an idea this is could we but grasp it! We are all being carried along as if by a giant angel with broad outstretched wings, which he flaps to the blast and, flying before the lightning, makes us ride on the winds! The whole multitude of us are hurrying along where, remains to be decided by the test of our faith and the Grace of Godbut certain it is that we are all travelling! Do not think that you are stable, fixed in one position! Fancy not that you are standing stillyou are not! Your pulses each moment beat the funeral marches to the tomb. You are chained to the chariot of rolling timethere is no bridling the steeds, or leaping from the chariotyou must be constantly in motion!   
Thus have I spoken of the swiftness of life.   
II. But next, I must speak concerning THE UNCERTAINTY OF LIFE, of which we have abundant illustrations. Let us refer to that part of Scripture from which I have chosen my text, the Epistle of James, the fourth Chapter, at the 14th verseFor what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. If I were to ask for a childs explanation of this, I know what he would say. He would say, Yes, it is even a vapor, like a bubble that is blown upward. Children sometimes blow bubbles and amuse themselves. Life is even as that bubble. You see it rising into the airthe child delights in seeing it fly about, but it is all gone in one moment. It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. But if you ask the poet to explain this, he would tell you that in the morning, sometimes at early dawn, the rivers send up a steamy offering to the sun. There is a vapor, a mist, an exhalation rising from the rivers and brooks, but in a very little while after the sun has risen, all that mist has gone. Hence we read of the morning cloud and the early dew that passes away. A more common observer, speaking of a vapor, would think of those thin clouds you sometimes see floating in the air which are so light that they are soon carried away. Indeed, a poet uses them as the picture of feebleness   
*Their hosts are scattered like thin clouds Before a Biscay gale.*   
The wind moves them and they are gone. What is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. So uncertain is life!   
Again, if you read in the Book of Ecclesiastes, at the sixth Chapter, and the 12th verse, you will there find life compared to something else, even more fragile than a vapor. The wise man there says that it is even as a shadow. Now, what can there be less substantial than a shadow? What substance is there in a shadow? Who can lay hold of it? You may see a persons shadow as he passes you, but the moment the person passes away, his shadow is gone. Yes, and who can grasp his life? Many men reckon upon a long existence and think they are going to live here foreverbut who can calculate upon a shadow? Go, you foolish man who says to your soul, You have much goods laid up for many yearstake your ease! Eat, drink and be merry. Go and fill your room with shadows! Go and pile up shadows and say, These are mine and they shall never depart. But, you say, I cannot catch a shadow. No, and you cannot reckon on a year, or even a moment, for it is as a shadow that soon melts away and is gone!   
King Hezekiah also furnishes us with a simile where he says that life is as a thread which is cut off. You will find this in the prophecy of Isaiah, the 38th Chapter, at the 12th verseMy age is departed and is removed from me as a shepherds tent: I have cut off my life like a weaver. The weaver cuts off his thread very easilyand so is life soon ended.   
I might continue my illustrations at pleasure concerning the uncertainty of life. We might find, perhaps, a score more figures in Scripture if we would search. Take, for instance, the grass, the flowers of the field, etc.   
But though life is swift and though it is to pass away so speedily, we are still generally very anxious to know what it is to be while we have it! For we say if we are to lose it soon, still, while we live, let us liveand while we are to be here, be it ever so short a time, let us know what we are to expect in it.   
III. And that leads us, in the third place, to look at LIFE IN ITS CHANGES.   
If you want pictures of the changes of life, turn to this wonderful Book of poetry, the Sacred Scriptures, and there you will find metaphors piled on metaphors! And, first, you will find life compared to a pilgrimage by good old Jacob in the 47th Chapter of Genesis, and the 9th verse. That hoary-headed Patriarch, when he was asked by Pharaoh what was his age, replied, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years; few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not obtained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage. He calls life a pilgrimage. A pilgrim sets out in the morning and he has to journey many a day before he gets to the shrine which he seeks. What varied scenes the traveler will behold on his way! Sometimes he will be on the mountains, but soon he will descend into the valleys. Here he will be where the brooks shine like silver, where the birds warble, where the air is balmy and the trees are greenand luscious fruits hang down to gratify his taste. And soon he will find himself in the arid desert where no life is found and no sound is heard except the screech of the wild eagle in the air. He finds no rest for the soles of his feetthe burning sky above him and the hot sand beneath himno shade tree and no house to rest himself. At another time he finds himself in a sweet oasis, resting himself by the wells of water and plucking fruit from palm trees. At one time he walks between the rocks in some narrow gorge where all is darkness. At another time he ascends the hill Mizar! Now he descends into the valley of Baca and soon he climbs the hill of Bashanand a high hill is the hill Bashanand yet again going into the mountains of leopards, he suffers trial and affliction.   
Such is life, always changing. Who can tell what may come next? Today it is fair, tomorrow there may be the blundering storm. Today I may lack for nothing, tomorrow I may be like Jacob with nothing but a stone for my pillow and the heavens for my curtains! But what a happy thought it is, though we know not how the road winds, we know where it ends! It is the straightest way to Heaven to go round about. Israels 40 years wanderings were, after all, the nearest path to Canaan. We may have to go through trial and affliction. Our pilgrimage may be a tiresome one, but it is safe! We cannot trace the river upon which we are sailing, but we know it ends in floods of bliss at last! We cannot track the roads, but we know that they all meet in the great metropolis of Heaven, in the center of Gods universe! God help us to pursue the true pilgrimage of a pious life!   
We have another picture of life in its changes given to us in the 90th Psalm, at the 9th verseWe spend our years as a tale that is told. Now David understood about tales that were told. I daresay he had been sometimes annoyed by them and amused by them at other times. There are, in the past, professed storytellers who amused their hearers by inventing tales such as those in that foolish book, The Arabian Nights. When I was foolish enough to read that book, I remember sometimes you were with fairies, sometimes with genii, sometimes in palaces, and soon you went down into caverns. All sorts of singular things are conglomerated into what they call a tale. Now, says David, we spend our years as a tale that is told. You know there is nothing so amazing as the history of the odds and ends of human life. Sometimes it is a merry rhyme, sometimes a prosy subjectsometimes you ascend to the sublime, soon you descend to the ridiculous. No man can write the whole of his own biography! I suppose if the complete history of a mans thoughts and words could be written, the world itself would hardly contain the record, so amazing is the tale that might be told. Our lives are all singular and must, to ourselves, seem strangeof which much might be saidour life is as a tale that is told.   
Another idea we get from the 38th Chapter of the Prophecy of Isaiah, at the 12th verseI am removed as a shepherds tent. The shepherds in the East build temporary huts near the sheep which are soon removed when the flock moves on. When the hot season comes on, they pitch their tents in the most favorable place they can find and each season has its suitable position. My life is like a shepherds tent. I have already pitched my tent in a variety of places, but where I shall pitch it, by-andby, I do not know. I cannot tell. Present probabilities seem to say that

*Here I shall make my settled rest,   
And neither go nor come   
No more a stranger or a guest,   
But like a child at home.*   
But I cannot tell and you cannot, either. I know that my tent cannot be removed till God says, Go forward. And it cannot stand firm unless He makes it so   
*All my ways shall always be   
Ordered by His wise decree.*   
You have been opening a new shop, lately, and you are thinking of settling down in trade and managing a thriving concern. Now paint not the future too brightly! Do not be too sure as to what is in store for you. Another has, for a long time, been engaged in an old establishment your father always carried on trade there, and you have no thought of moving. But here you have no abiding cityyour life is like a shepherds tent! You may be here, there, and almost everywhere before you die. It was once said by Solon, No man ought to be called a happy man till he diesbecause he does not know what his life is to be! But Christians may always call themselves happy men, here, because wherever their tent is carried, they cannot pitch it where the cloud does not move and where they are not surrounded by a circle of fire. God will be a wall of fire round about them and their Glory in the midst. They cannot dwell where God is not the bulwark of their salvation!   
If any of you who are Gods people are going to move, or are going to change your employment, start a new business, or move to another county, you need not fearGod was with you in the last place and He will be with you in this! He has said, Fear you not, for I am with you: be not dismayed, for I am your God. That is an often-told story of Caesar in a storm. The sailors were all afraid, but he exclaimed, Fear not! You carry Caesar and all his fortunes! So is it with the poor Christian. There is a storm coming on, but fear notyou are carrying Jesusand you must sink or swim with Him! Well may any true Believer say, Lord, if You are with me, it matters not where my tent is. All must be well, though my life is removed like a shepherds tent.   
Again, our life is compared in the Psalms to a dream. Now, if a tale is singular, surely a dream is still more so. If a tale is changing and shifting, what is a dream? As for dreams, those flutters of the benighted fancy, those revelries of the imaginationwho can tell what they consist of? We dream of everything in the world and a few things more! If we were asked to tell our dreams, it would be impossible for us to do so. You dream that you are at a feast and lo, the food changes into Pegasus and you are riding through the air! Or suddenly transformed into a morsel for a monsters meal! Such is life. The changes occur as suddenly as they happen in a dream. Men have been rich one day and they have been beggars the next. We have witnessed the exile of monarchs and the flight of a potentate. Or in another direction, we have seen a man, neither reputable in company nor honorable in station, at a single stride exalted to a throne! And you who would before have shunned him in the streets, were foolish enough to throng your thoroughfares to stare at him! Ah, such is life! Leaves of the Sibyl were not more easily moved by the winds, nor are dreams more variable. Boast not yourself of tomorrow; for you know not what a day may bring forth. How foolish are those men who wish to pry into the future! The telescope is ready and they are going to look through it, but they are so anxious to see that they breathe on the glass with their hot breathand they dim it so that they can discern nothing but clouds and darkness! Oh, you who are always conjuring up black fiends from the unknown deep and foolishly vexing your minds with fancies, turn your fancies out of doors and begin to rest on neverfailing promises! Promises are better than forebodings! Trust in the Lord and do good; so shall you dwell in the land and verily you shall be fed.   
Thus I have spoken of the changes of this mortal life.   
IV. And now, to close, let me ask, WHAT IS TO BE THE END OF THIS LIFE?   
We read in the Second Book of Samuel, Chapter 14 and verse 14We will surely die and are as water spilt on the ground which cannot be gathered up again. Man is like a great icicle which the sun of time is continually thawing and which is soon to be as water spilt upon the ground which cannot be gathered up again! Who can recall the departed spirit, or inflate the lungs with a new breath of life? Who can put vitality into the heart and restore the soul from Hell? No one! It cannot be gathered up againthe place that once knew it shall know it no more forever.   
But here a sweet thought charms us. This water cannot be lost, but it shall descend into the soil to filter through the Rock of Agesat last to spring up a pure fountain in Heaven, cleansed, purified and made clear as crystal! How terrible if, on the other hand, it should percolate through the black earth of sin and hang in horrid drops in the dark caverns of destruction!   
Such is life! Then make the best use of it, my Friends, because it is fleeting. Look for another life because this life is not a very desirable oneit is too changeable. Trust your life in Gods hands because you cannot control its movements. Rest in His arms and rely on His might, for He is able to do for you exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or thinkand unto His name be glory forever and ever! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **PSALM 39.**

Verse 1. I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me. This is what David saidwhat he had deliberately resolved upon and solemnly determined in his own mind! I said, I will take heed to my ways. That is a good thing for all of us to resolve and to sayI will take heed. To be heedless is to be graceless. No man ever does a good thing by accident. We shall, none of us, get to Heaven by blundering.

I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue. The tongue may be a most powerful instrument of evil. Tongue sins are terrible sins. They are like sparks of fire which may set a whole town on fire. He that can take heed to his tongue will probably be able to manage all the rest of the members of his body. The tongue is the most unmanageable member of our frame and if we sin not with our tongue, we shall most likely be kept from sinning in other ways. I will keep my mouth with a bridle, says David. It should be rendered, with a muzzle. He did not mean that he would merely control his tongue, but that he would silence it altogether!

I will keep my mouth with a muzzle, while the wicked is before me. I do not know whether that was a right resolution on Davids part. Tongues were meant to be used and there are often opportunities of using them to Gods Glory even in the presence of the wicked. Sometimes, we are bound to use our tongue in rebuking their sin, yet we cannot criticize Davids resolution very much because when the wicked are before us, it may be only like casting pearls before swine if we begin to speak to them even upon the best themes. And we may be drawn away, by their company, to speak that which is questionable. So that, often, it may be best to keep our mouth muzzled while the wicked are before us.

2. I was dumb with silence. I was as silent as if I had been dumb. I did not say a word. It seems to me that this silence of the Psalmist was partly sullen and partly judicious. I was dumb with silence.

2. I held my peace, even from good. He was a total abstainer from all speech. Perhaps he felt that he could not speak a little without speaking too much and so he refrained from speech altogether. Yet we must not follow his example too closely in this matter, for there is a time for speech as well as a time for silence. It was not good for David to hold his peace even from good. It is good for us to hold our peace rather than speak unwisely, but it would be better for us to speak wisely, discreetly as Gods Spirit should direct us.

2. And my sorrow was stirred. It is a great relief to sorrow to be able to speak about it. Be not silent in your grief, lest your grief should burn too fiercely within your heart. It is often one of the signs of a failing mind when persons sit quite still and will not tell their grief to anyone. Tell your grief to your God, first of all, and you may also tell it with advantage to some sympathizing friend. But David felt that he could not speak, so his sorrow was stirred, troubled, agitated, like a pent-up fire that must sooner or later burst into a blaze.

3. My heart was hot within me. While I was musing the fire burned. While he was musing, his heart was fusing and there was much that was most confusing to him. He saw the prosperity of the wicked and the oppression of the righteous. He heard the reproaches of the ungodly and he felt the stings of affliction and trial in his own soul. So, as he did not speak, his heart grew hot within him. While I was musing the fire

burned. [See Sermon #576, Volume 10QUIET MUSINGRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

3. Then spoke I with my tongue. We say, Murder will out, and so will misery. Davids heart had become like a volcano and the fire burned so furiously within that he was obliged to let the burning lava flow forth and so give his soul vent. There is no speech like that which comes from a hot heart! That shot from the tongue which has been made red-hot in the heart is sure to tell upon the adversary. Then spoke I with my tongue. And what he said was not unwise. There was nothing of boasting or excitement in itit was a very wise, plain, earnest prayer.

4. LORD. That was a good beginning of Davids speech. When we turn our burning words towards God and not towards men, good will come of them. Davids hot heart finds a vent Godward! This was the wisest thing that he could do, cry unto his God. Lord.

4. Make me to know my end. Did David mean to pray, Let me die, like Elijah did? I am half afraid that he did. And many a time some of Gods servants, in their great heats when their soul has been more full of passion than of faith have prayed in this sense, Make me to know my end. Yet a better meaning may be put upon the Psalmists words and we are bound to put the best meaning upon them that we can. He may have meant, Let me know, Lord, that my sorrows will come to an end, that they are not to last forever. Death may be looked at through the glass of faith till it becomes even a goodly and desirable object! Lord, make me to know my end.

4. And the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. Our days are all measured. They do not come to an end by accident. As merchants measure their yards of silk or cotton goods, so does God measure out life to us. There is not half an inch more or less than God Himself determines that we shall have! If David wanted to know what the measure of his days was, he was trying to pry into the folded leaves of the future. Such prying is both wrong and futileand we may be thankful that we do not know what the measure of our days is in this sense! We do know that at their utmost, they are not likely to exceed the threescore years and ten, or the fourscore years, which now make up the ordinary measure of human life!

5. Behold, You have made my days as an handbreadth. That is a very short measurethe breadth of a hand, the space that we can span with one of our handsyet that is the true measure of our life! You have made my days as an handbreadth.

5. And my age is as nothing before You. What are 70 or 80 years, even if we live as long as that, out of the thousands of years that men have lived on the face of the earth? One mans life seems but a drop in the great ocean of human history. Yet what an insignificant thing human history itself is! Some thousands of years ago there were no men upon this earth, yet what is the history of the whole world compared with eternity? It is not worth speaking of! It is scarcely one tick of the clock of eternity! Why, this world is only like a newly blown bubble and the sun is but a spark fresh from the eternal fire. As compared with the eternal God, man is a nonentity, a nullityand David was right when he said to the LordMy age is as nothing before You.

5. Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah. When he is strongest, calmest, happiest. When he is in his prime, when he is at his besthis best, of which he is so vainis itself vain! Whatever there may be true about man, this is true, that he is unstable and soon passes away. He is constant in nothing but his inconstancy. Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity.

6. Surely every man walks in a vain show. [See Sermon #2346, Volume 40  
EARTHS VANITIES AND HEAVENS VERITIESRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] This world is a mere theater and men strut across its stage acting their various parts. They come and they go as if they were mere figures moved by invisible wires! The most of men do not live at all, but only seem to live, for they have not the true, spiritual, eternal life within them. Every man walks like a performer in a pageant, or like those who march in a procession. We think we are standing still and watching others pass by, but we are, ourselves, part of the vain show and are passing away with the rest!

6. Surely they are disquieted in vain. They fret, they fume, they vex themselves, but it is all in vain. They make a noise, so the Hebrew says, in vain. Hear the clamor of the streets. Hear the buzz of the Exchange. Hear the noise of war, the shouts of conflictit is all in vain, it is all for nothing! You are troubled about your business, troubled about your children, troubled about your wealth, troubled about I know not what surely you are disquieted in vain! Oh, that we could but believe that all this disquietude is only vanity! Then might we live much more peaceful lives.

6. He heaps up riches and knows not who shall gather them. He has cut his corn and it stands in sheaves in the field, but his enemy comes and carts it away! Or if he has gathered it into his granary, it is consumed by rats or mice, or it becomes mildewed and useless! How many there are who spend their lives gathering wealth with the muck rake and then their sons come with the fork and shovel and scatter it quite as quickly as their fathers gathered it! What is the good of getting all this gold togetherand stinting yourself in order to get itwhen the one who has it after you will never thank you for it, or if he did, you would be dead and buried and would know nothing of his gratitude?

7. And now, Lord, what do I wait for? The Psalmist improves as he advances. Now you see that he is cut loose from the world. He has seen the vanity of man and he has seen the vanity of wealth, so he says, Now, Lord, what do I wait for? What is there here, in this land of shadows, that I should wait for? Why do I sit down where nothing good has ever come, or ever can come? The ropes that held the balloon to earth are cut and up it mounts!

7. My hope is in You. This is a glorious hope! This is a hope that finds its all in God! This hope will outlast death and the grave! This hope will be our treasure in eternity! Can each of you truly say this, My hope is in You? Let this be the language of your heart as you speak to your God, This is what I wait forthat I may enjoy Your Presence here and that I may rejoice in Your Presence hereafterI wait for the coming of my Lord! I wait for the time when the Lord shall call me Home.

8. Deliver me from all my transgressions. That is a better prayer than if David had said, Deliver me from all my sorrows. Now he has hit the very center of the target! Deliver me from all my transgressions. So let each one of us pray at this moment, O Lord, I do not ask to be saved from Your rod, but I do ask to be washed from my sin. Do what You will with me, but do forgive me, do sanctify me, do let me be washed in the precious blood of Jesus! Deliver me from all my transgressions.

9. Make me not the reproach of the foolish. Do not let the wicked be able to say, See the sadness of that mans countenance! Look how sullen he looks. His face is like a thundercloudit is clear that a Christian has no joy. Let not the wicked be able to say that, my Lord, but save me from sin and give me the full joy of Your salvation and then they will not be able to reproach me.

9. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because You did it. You will understand this verse much better if we read it in another tense, as it should be readNow I will be dumb. I will not open my mouth because you did it. David was wrong the first time when he was dumb, but he is right this second time. Two things may be very much like one another outwardly, yet very different inwardly. There is a silence which the Christian ought to keep.

10. Remove Your stroke away from me. The child of God who is perfectly resigned to his heavenly Fathers will may yet pray to be delivered from his trouble. Prayer for deliverance from grief is quite consistent with perfect submission to the will of God. We may pray, for Jesus prayed, O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. But we must take care to also add, Nevertheless not as I will, but as You will.

10. I am consumed by the blow of Your hand. You have beaten me sorely! Oh, strike me not again! This is good pleading, for God does not mean to consume His own children! He means to consume our sinsand when He makes us cry, Deliver me from all my transgressions, and when we submit to His holy will, He will soon put His rod away. As soon as you are willing to bear it, you shall not have to bear it any longer. When you submit yourself to the stroke, then the stroke will cease to be given!

11. When You with rebukes do correct man for iniquity, You make his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity. Selah. When God whips His children, He does not play with them. God is in earnest even if we are not. And when He corrects us, He means us to feel His rodand He means us to bear the scars it leaves upon us! There must be real strokes and real smarts before we are likely to be cured of sin and, sometimes, when He is dealing in chastisement with His people, He makes their beauty to depart like a piece of cloth or fur when the moth gets into it and utterly destroys it. What a poor thing beauty is if the moth can eat it up! If a little affliction can take away our beauty, we may well pray for that beauty for which Moses pleaded, Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us. That is a beauty of quite another kind the beauty of Divine Grace which no moth can consume. But if we have not that, our beauty is a poor thing. Let no man, let no woman be vain of beauty which can so soon be gone!

12. Hear my prayer, O LORD. David is dumb, yet he prays. Dumb as to complaints, but eloquent as to pleading with his God.   
12. And give ear unto my cry. The Psalmist goes from pleading to crying. And Believers often thus intensify their prayers. There is something more sorrowful, more earnest, more prevalent about crying unto God than mere ordinary praying. Give ear unto my cry.   
12. Hold not Your peace at my tears. David goes still further, for the most eloquent things in the world are tears. They are the irresistible weapons of weakness. Many a woman, many a beggar, many a child has gained by tears what could not be obtained in any other wayso David pleaded most powerfully when he prayed, Hold not Your peace at my tears.   
12. For I am a stranger with You, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. You do entertain me in Your tent as I have entertained wanderers many a time. I have broken bread with You and eaten of Your salt. Be kind to the stranger and sojourner as You have bidden Your servants to be. Or does David mean that, as God is a Stranger in His own world, so are we while necessarily passing through it?   
13. O spare me. That is a singular petition, for just now he seemed to be wanting to get to the end of his days, yet he says, O spare me, like Elijah, who was afraid to die and so ran away from Jezebel and then prayed to God, Let me die. So are Gods children still a mass of contradictionslonging for death and yet, when death comes, they cry, O spare me! O spare me!  
13. That I may recover strength before I go from here and am no more. Give me a little respite that I may take my nourishment and have my sleep before I go hence to be no more, for soon I shall do that. But first give me a little interlude, wherein I may again take my harp and sing to Your praise. If worldlings cannot understand this mingled experience, Gods children know that this is only one of the many paradoxes with which they are perfectly familiar! In any case, may each one of us be ready when it shall be Gods time for us to go from here and are no more!

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1025 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A VISIT TO THE HARVEST FIELD   
NO. 1025

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

Be patient therefore, Brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and has long patience for it, until he receives the early   
and latter rain. Be you also patient. Establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draws near.   
James 5:7, 8.

THE earth that yields seed to the sower and bread to the eater has received its constitution from God. And it is governed through His wise Providence by fixed laws that are infinitely reliable. And yet, at the same time, with such diversified conditions and minute peculiarities as may well convince us that the Almighty intended the operations of Nature to supply us with spiritual instruction as well as with material good. He who ordained the seed time and the harvest meant to teach us by them. Nor has He left us in vague uncertainty as to the lessons we should learn! In metaphor and parable He has interpreted them to us.

The Author of the Bible is also the Architect of the universe. The Book that is written and the things that are made alike bear witness to His eternal power and Godhead. He who shall study them both will see clearly the idioms of one Author. In the two masterpieces the hand of the same great Artist may be discerned. We are all so dependent upon the labors of the field that we ought at the season of harvest to remember how much we owe to the God of Harvest. It is but common gratitude that we should go to the field awhile, and there hear what God the Lord may have to say to us among the waving sheaves.

No matter what our business may be, the wealth of the country must, after all, to a large extent, depend upon the crops that are produced, and the well-being of the whole state has a greater dependence upon the harvest than many of you could probably imagine. We will not forget the bounties of God. We will not fail, at least, to endeavor to learn the lesson which this bountiful season is intended to teach us. Our Lord Jesus often preached of the sowing and of the reaping. His were the best of sermons and His the choicest of illustrationstherefore we shall do well if all repair to the field, mark the scattering of the corn, and the ingathering of itto enforce the exhortation of the text.

Our subject, tonight, will involve three or four questions How does the farmer wait? What does he wait for? What is his encouragement? What are the benefits of his patient waiting? Our experience is similar to his. We are farmers, so we have to toil hard, and we have to wait longthen the hope that cheers, the fruit that buds and blossoms, and verily, too, the profit of that struggle of faith and fear incident to waiting will all crop up as we proceed.

I. First, then, HOW DOES THE FARMER WAIT? He waits with a reasonable hope for the precious fruit of the earth, and has long patience for it until he receive the early and latter rain. He expects the harvest be

cause he has plowed the fields and sown the grain. If he had not, he would not be an example for our imitation. Had he left his fields fallow, never stirred the clods, and never cast in among them the golden seed, he would be an idiot were he expecting the soil to produce a harvest. Thorns and thistles would it bring forth to himnothing more.

Away with the folly of those who flatter their souls with a prospect of good things in times to come while they neglect the opportunity of sowing good things in the time present! They say they hope it will be well with them at the endbut since it is not well with them now, why should they expect any changemuch less a change contrary to the entire order of Providence? Is it not written, He that sows to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption? Do you expect to sow to the flesh and reap salvation? That is a blessing reserved for him who sows to the Spirit. For he that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

As for the man who scatters nothing but the wild oats of sin, who simply lives to indulge his own passions and determinately resolves to neglect the things that make for his peacehe can but upbraid himself if he expects to reap anything good of the Lord. They that sow to the wind shall reap the whirlwind. They that sow nothing shall reap nothing. They that sow sparingly shall reap sparingly. It is only those who, by Gods Grace, have been enabled to sow abundantly, though they have gone forth weeping, who shall afterwards come again rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them.

Patience by all means, but not that foolish patience which expects something good to turn up in spiritual things, as some fools do in business when they turn aside from legitimate trade to foster bubble schemes. You shall have, my Brother, after all according to what you are, and to what you are fairly going for. If you are a Believer, to you shall be the promiseyou shall share the victories and spoils of your Lord. If you are a careless, godless worldling, to you shall be the fruit of your deeds, and sad and bitter shall be those grapes of Gomorrah that you shall have to eat.

The farmer waits with a reasonable hope. He does not look for grain where he has cast in garlic. Unless, then, that you are a fool, you will, like he, count only on the fruit of your own sowing. While he waits with a patient hope, he is, no doubt, all the more patient of the issue, because his hope is so reasonable. And not only does he wait with patience, but some stress is put upon the length of itand has long patience for the precious fruit of the earth.

Now, Brethren in Christ, our waiting, if it is the work of the Holy Spirit, must have this long patience in it. Are you a sufferer? There are sweet fruits to come from suffering! Not for the present seems it to be joyous but grievous, nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby. Have long patience for those peaceable fruits. You shall be brought out of your trouble, deliverance will be found for you out of your affliction when the discipline for which you were brought into it has been fulfilled.

Have a lot of patience, however, for not the first month does the farmer find a harvest. If he has sown in the winter, he does not expect he will reap in the early springhe does not go forth with his sickle in the month of May and expect to find golden sheaves. He waits. The moons wax and wanesuns rise and set. But the farmer waits till the appointed time is come. Wait you, O Sufferer, till the night is over. Watch after watch you have already passed through. The morning breaks. Tarry you a little longer, for if the vision tarries it shall come. You shall stand in your lot in the end of the days. Before long you shall have a happy exit out of your present trials.

Are you a Worker? Then you need as much patience in working as you do in suffering. We must not expect to see immediate results in all cases from the preaching of the Gospel, from the teaching of Scripture in our classes, from distributing religious literature, or from any other kind of effort. Immediate results may come. Sometimes they do, and they greatly cheer the worker. But it is given to some to wait long, like the farmer, before the fruit reaches maturity. Truth, like the grain of mustard seed, does not wax into a tree tomorrow being sown todayit takes its leisure.

Or, like the leaven in the measure, it does not work in the next moment. It must have its time. If you have some principle to teach that is now obnoxious, go on with it. Perhaps you may never see it popular in your day. Do not mind the fickle winds or fret yourself because of the nipping frosts. Truth is mighty and it will prevail, though it may have a hard fight before it wins the victory. Souls may not be won to God the first time you pray for them, nor the first time you exhort themno, nor the twentieth time!

If you have gone to a sinner once on Christs errand and he has rejected you, go again seven times. No, go again seventy times sevenfor if you should at last succeed by your Masters gracious help, it will well repay you. The long, tedious winter of your waiting will appear as a short span to look back upon when you have reaped the field of your labor. The little patience that you had to exert for a while will seem as nothing, like the travail of the mother when the man-child is born into the world. Hush, then, your sad complaints, and still your petulant wailings

*O dreary life! We cry, O dreary life!   
And still the generations of the birds   
Sing through our sighing.   
And the flocks and herds   
Serenely live while we are keeping strife.*

Be patient, O Worker, for impatience sours the temper, chills the blood, sickens the heart, prostrates the vigor of ones spirit and spoils the enterprise of life before it is ripe for history. Wait, clothed with patience, like a champion clad in steel. Wait with a sweet Grace, as one who guards the faith and sets an example of humility. Wait in a right spiritanxious, prayerful, earnest, submissive to the ways of Godnot doubtful of His will. Disciple of Jesus, learn to labor and to wait. With regard to the result of Christian obedience, the lesson is no less striking. The first thing that a farmer does by way of seeking gain on his farm is to make a sacrifice which could seem immediately to entail on him a loss.

He has some good wheat in the granary, and he takes out sacks full of it and buries it. He is so much the poorer, is he not? At any rate, there is so much the less to make bread for his household. He cannot get it again. It is under the clod, and there, too, it must die. For except it die, it brings not forth fruit. You must not expect, as soon as you become a Christian, that you shall obtain all the gains of your religion. Perhaps you may lose all that you have for Christs sake. Some have lost their lives. They have sown their house and land, relatives, comfort, ease, and at last they have

sown life itself in Christs field, and they seemed, for the time, to be losers.

But, verily I say unto you, this day, if you could see them in their white robes before the Throne of God, rejoicing, you would see how rich a harvest they have reaped, and how the sowing which seemed a loss at first has ended, through Gods abundant Grace, in the greatest eternal gain! Have patience, Brother, have patience. That is a false religion that aims at present worldly advantages. He who becomes religious for the loaves and fishes, when he has eaten his loaves and fishes, has devoured his religion. There is nothing in such piety but pretension. If you can be bought, you can be soldif you have taken it up for gain, you will lay it down for what promises you a better bargain. Be willing to be a loser for Christ, and so prove you are His genuine follower.

The farmer, I say, does not expect immediate reward, but reckons upon being a loser for awhile. He waits, waits with long patience, for the precious fruit of the earth. It is a reasonable waiting on the outset, and not regretful when wearied and worried with delay. And, while the farmer waits, you observe in the text he waits with his eyes upward, he waits until God shall send him the early and the latter rain. He has brains enough for this. Even if he is a worldly man, he knows that the harvest depends not only on the seed he sows and on the soil he cultivates, but upon the rain which he cannot control.

The rain that comes at the bidding of the Almighty. If the skies are brass, the clods will be iron. Unless God shall speak to the clouds, and the clouds shall speak to the earth, the earth will not speak to the corn, and the corn will not make us speak the words of rejoicing. Every farmer is aware of this, and every Christian must remember it. I am to wait, says a sufferer, for Gods help and for the Graces that come by affliction. But I must wait with my eyes upward, for all the plowing of affliction will not profit me, and all the sowing of meditation will not speed me unless God sends His gracious Spirit like showers of heavenly rain. If I am a Worker, I must work. When I wait, I must wait always looking upward.

The keys of the rain clouds which water the earth hang at the girdle of Jehovah. None but the eternal Father can send the Holy Spirit like showers on the Church. He can send the Comforter, and my labor will prosper. It will not be in vain in the Lord. But if He deniesif He withholds this Covenant blessing, ah me, work is useless, patience is worthless, and all the cost is bootlessit is in vain. In spiritual, as in temporal things, it is vain to rise up early and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness. Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.

We must have the dew, O God, or else our seed shall rot under the clod. We must wait, and wait with our eyes upwards, or else our expectation will perish as a still-born child. So with regard to the comfort, and joy, and ultimate fruit of our faith, we must have our eyes upward looking for the coming of the Lord from Heaven, for the day of His appearing will be the day of our manifestation. Our life is hid with Christ now. When He shall appear we shall appear with Him. When He shall be revealed in Glory before the eyes of the assembled multitude, we shall be conspicuous in Glory, too.

Not till then shall the fullness of the reward be bestowed, but the risen saints shall be glorified in the Glorification of their coming Lord. Oh, for more of this living with the eyes upward, less minding of earthly things, and more looking for and hasting unto the coming of the Son of God! Note, however, that while the farmer waits with his eyes upward, he waits with his hands at work, engaged in restless toil. He sows, and it is a busy time. When he sees the green blade, what then? He has to work. Those weeds must not be suffered to outgrow the wheat and choke it. Up and down the field the laborer must go, and the farmer must be at the expense of this. And all along, until the wheat is ripened there is sure to be something to do in this field, so his eyes must be keen, his skill must be taxed, and no drudgery must be disdained.

In all labor there is profit, but nothing is gained without pains. We look up to God. He will not accept the look of a sluggard. The eyes that look up to God must be attended with the hands that are ready for work. So if I suffer and expect the blessing for the suffering, I must spend solitary hours in my chamber seeking and searching. To wit, seeking in prayer, and searching Gods Word for the blessing. If I am a Worker, I must look to God for the result, but then I must also use all the means. In fact, the Christian should work as if all depended upon him, and pray as if it all depended upon God.

He should be always nothing in his own estimation. Yet he should be one of those gloriously active nothings of which God makes great use, for He treats the things that are not as though they were, and gets glory out of them! Yes, the farmer waits. He cannot push on the months. He cannot hasten the time of the harvest home. But he does not wait in silence, in sluggishness and negligence. He keeps to his work and waits, too. So do you, O Christian! Wait for the coming of your Lord, but let it be with your lamps trimmed and your lights burning, as good servants attending to the duties of the house, until the Master of the house returns to give you the reward.

The farmer waits under changeful circumstances, and various contingences. At one time he sees the fair prospect of a good crop. The wheat has come up well. He has never seen more green springing from the ground. But, perhaps, it may be too strong and may need even to be put back. By-and-by, after long showers and cold nights, the wheat looks yellow, and he is half afraid about it. In a while there comes, or he fancies there is a blight or a black smut. Nobody knows what may happen. Only a farmer knows how his hopes and fears alternate and fluctuate from time to time. It is too hot, too cold. It is too dry. It is too wet. It is hardly ever quite right, according to his judgmentor rather according to his unbelief.

He is full of changes in his mind because the season is full of changes. Yet he waits, he waits with patience. Ah dear Friends, when we work for God, how often will this happen! I speak from no inconsiderable experience. There are always changes in the field of Christian labor. At one time we see many conversions, and we bless God that there are so many seals to our testimony. But some of the converts after a while disappoint us. There was the blossom, but it produced no fruit. Then there will come a season when many appear to backslide. The love of many waxes cold. Perhaps we have found in the Church the black smut of heresy. Some deadly heresy creeps in, and the anxious farmer fears there will be no harvest, after all.   
Oh, patience, Sir, patience! Ten thousand farmers fears have been disappointed this year. Many a fretful expression and murmuring word need to be repented of, as the farmer has looked, at last, upon the well-filled ear, and the heavy wheat sheaf. So, too, maybe, O evangelical Worker, it will be with you. When God shall give you a rich return for all you have done for Him, you will blush to think you ever doubted. You will be ashamed to think you ever grew weary in His service. You shall have your regard. Not tomorrow, so waitnot the next day perhaps, so be patient. You may be full of doubts one day, your joys sink low.

It may be rough windy weather with you in your spirit. You may even doubt whether you are the Lords, but if you have rested in the name of Jesusif by the Grace of God you are what you are, if He is all your salvation, and all your desirehave patience, have patiencefor the reward will surely come in Gods good time. Now this is how the farmer waits, and becomes to us the model of patience.

II. Very briefly, in the second place, we have to ask, WHAT DOES THE FARMER WAIT FOR? For we are in this respect like he. He waits for results, for real results, right results. He hopes also rich results. And this is just what we are waiting forwaiting as sufferers for the results of sanctified affliction. May those results be real, may they be right, may they be rich. Oh that we might have every virtue strengthened, every Grace refined by passing through the furnace!

There are great blessings connected with patient endurance as in Jobs case. He had a plenteous harvest, may we have the same. And you Workers, you must work for results, for, though conversion is the work of God, it is in many cases as clearly a product of the holy living, the devout teaching, and the fervent praying of His servants, as anything can be the result from a cause. Go on, go on, and may you have real conversions not pretended conversionsnot such as are sometimes chronicled in newspapersfifty-one conversions of an eveningas if anybody knew! May there be real conversions, and ripe fruits for Jesus in the growth and advance of those who are converted, and may many of them turn out to be such fruit-bearing Christians when they are matured in Grace, that the richest result in the prosperity of the Church may come to you from all your work.

You are waiting for results. And you are, also, dear Brethren, like the farmer, waiting for a reward. All the while till the harvest comes, he has nothing but outlay. From the moment he sows, it is all outgoing until he sells his crops, and then, recovering at once the principal and the interest, he gets his reward. In this world, look not for a recompense. You may have a grateful acknowledgment in the peace, and quiet, and contentment of your own spirit, but do not expect even that from your fellow men.

The pure motive of any man who serves his generation well is generally misrepresented. As a rule the lounger looks on at the laborer not to praise but to blame himnot to cheer him but to chide him. The less he does, the less he will be open to rebuke, and the more he does oftentimes, and the more vigorously, the more he shall be upbraided. Look not for your reward

here.

Suppose men praise you, what is their praise worth? It would not fill your nostrils if you were about to die. The approbation of those who have neither skill nor tastewhat pleasure can it afford the artist? Should one stoop for it, or, having it, lift his head the higher? Our reward is the approbation of God, which He will give of His abundant Grace. He first gives us good works, as one observes, and then rewards us for those good works, as if they were altogether our own! He gives rewards though they are not a debt, but altogether of Grace.

Look for the reward hereafter. Wait a bit, Man, wait a bit. Your reward is not yet. Wait till the week is over, and then shall come the wage. Wait until the sun is gone down, and then there will be the penny for every laborer in the vineyard. Not yet, not yet, not yet. The farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth. This is what we wait for.

III. Thirdly, WHAT IS THE FARMERS ENCOURAGEMENT IN WAITING? Well, he has many. The first is that the fruit he waits for is precious. He waits for the precious fruit of the earth. It is worth waiting for. Who that walks through a corn field, such corn fields as we have seen this year, where the crops are plentiful, but will say, Well, this was, after all, worth all the trouble and all the expense, and all the long patience of that winter which is over and gone?

If the Lord should draw you near unto Himself by your affliction, if He should make His image in you more clear, it will be worth waiting for. And if, after your labors, He should give you some soul for your reward, oh, will it not repay you? Mother, if your dear child should, after all, be brought back from his sinful ways to love his Savior? Sunday school teacher, if some of those little girls should love the name of Jesus, and you should live to see them honored members of the Church of God, will it not be worth waiting for?

It were worth while to preach every Sunday for a million years, if but one soul were brought in at last. I remember Mr. Richard Knill saying if there were one unconverted person, and he were in Siberia, and God had ordained that he should only be saved by all the Christians in all the world (and that would be a vast number), all of them making a journey to Siberia to talk with him, it would be worth all the trouble if the soul were at length brought in. And so it would!

We may wait, therefore, with patience, because the reward of our labor will be precious. Above all, the reward of hearing the Master say, Well done, good and faithful servant, is worth waiting for! Even now to get a word from Him is quite enough to cheer us on, though He is a soft, still voice that speaks it, but oh, the joy of that loud voice, Well done! It were worth going through a thousand perils by land and by sea to come out and win that Well done. We might count it worth while to face the lions of Hell and do battle with Apollyon himself, to snatch but one poor lamb from between their jaws. It were worth while to do all that, I say, if we might hear the Master say to us, Well done, at the last. This, then, encourages us, as well as the farmerthe preciousness of the fruit.

A godly farmer waits with patience, again, because he knows Gods Covenant. God has said, seed time and harvest, summer and winter, shall not cease, and the Christian farmer, knowing this, is confident. Oh, what strong confidences have we who have looked to Christ and who are resting on the faithful word of a Covenant God! He cannot fail us. It is not possible that He should suffer our faith to be confounded. Heaven and earth may pass away, and they shall, but His Word shall not fail. They that sow in faith shall reap abundantly. The glory shall be theirs.

And, Brother Workers, if we do not, for a time, see all the results we expect, yet the Lord has said, Surely all flesh shall see the salvation of God. The day must come when the dwellers in the wilderness shall bow before Him and lick the dust. He has set His king upon His holy hill of Zion, and they that said, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast their cords from us, will have to submit themselves and lick the dust at His feet. Have courage, therefore. The Covenant stands good, the harvest must come as surely as the seed time has come.

Moreover, every farmer is encouraged by the fact that he has seen other harvests. I suppose if the farmer had never heard of a harvest, and had never seen one, it would take some considerable persuasion to get him to sow his seed. But then he knows his father sowed seed and his grandsire, and that the race of men in all generations have put their seed under the clods as an act of faith, and God has accepted their faith, and sent them a return. And, O Brethren, have not we multitudes of instances to confirm our confidence? Let us cheerfully resign ourselves to the Lords will in suffering, for as others of His saints who went before us have reaped the blessing, so shall we!

Let us work on for our Lord and Master, knowing that Apostles and confessors, and a great cloud of witnesses who have gone before have seen great results, and so shall we. Let us patiently tarry till the Lord comes, for as in the first coming those that waited for Him rejoiced, so shall those who are found watching and waiting at His Second Advent. We have not only the promise of God, but that promise fulfilled to tens of thousands who have preceded us. Therefore we should be ashamed to be impatientrather let us patiently wait and work on, till the day breaks, and the harvest comes!

IV. And now, Brethren, do you ask, WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PATIENCE? To patiently wait Gods appointed time is our business. I have shown you how we are to wait, but note thiswhatever benefit there may be in patience, it is very clear there is none in impatience. Suppose a man should be impatient under suffering. Will it diminish his suffering? Will it increase the probabilities of his restoration? We all know that the irritability of temper which is caused by impatience is one of the difficulties which the physician has to battle with.

When the patient is calm there is a better chance of his recovery. If we were near impatient till there was any good to be derived from our fretfulness, we should not be impatient just yet. There is a story told of Mr. Hill being on board a vessel once. It is said he heard the mate swear, and afterwards he heard the captain use a profane oath. I think Mr. Hill interposed as the captain was about to swear again, and said, No, no, let us be fair, let us have everything turn and turn about. Your mate has sworn, and you have had an oath. Now it is my turnmy turn to swear.

The captain looked at him somewhat astonished, and could not but admit that there was a degree of rightness and propriety in every man having his turn. However, Mr. Hill did not swear, and the captain said, I suppose, Sir, you dont mean to take your turn, you dont mean to swear. Oh, yes, said the good old man, I mean to swear as soon as ever I can see the good of it.

We might do the same by our impatience, Brethren. Let us be impatient as soon as ever we can see the use it will serve. If the farmer should want rain just now, his impatience would not influence the clouds and make them pour out their torrents. If your child happened to be very petulant, and have a very noisy tongue, and a mischievous disposition, the mothers impatience would not calm the child, control its temper, still its fitful passion, or subdue its stubborn humor. Whatever happens to you, there is nothing can happen to you worse than your being impatient, for of all troubles in the world that one can be troubled with, an impatient spirit is about the worst.

O that you would endeavor to conquer impatience! It cast Satan out of Heaven, when he was impatient at the honor and dignity of the Son of God. He was impatient at being a servant to his Maker, and was driven from his high estate. Let us be rid of impatience which made Cain kill his brother, and which has done a thousand mischievous things since. May God grant us, like the farmer, to watch and wait patiently. But the benefits of patience are too many for me to hope to enumerate them. Suffice it to say, patience saves a man from great discouragement.

If I expect that God will bless my labors to a large extent the first month, and so strain every nerve and toil with every sinew till my strength is ready to yield, and my spirit begins to flag, and the blessing does not come at the time I looked for, I shall be disheartened. But, if I expect some result, a great result in Gods appointed week of harvest, even though I may not count on seeing it myself at once, I shall keep on renewing my labors, reviving my hopes, and encouraging myself in the Lord my God.

Surely a farmer would give up his farm in sheer despair if he expected a harvest in a months time after sowing. He would be month after month in a very sad way, if waiting to see it were not a condition for which he was thoroughly prepared. If you expect an interval during which your patience will be tried, you will not grow discouraged, because it is absolutely requisite that you should wait. Expect to wait for the Glory. Expect to wait for the reward which God has promised. And while you are waiting on the Lord, your bread shall be certain, and your water shall be sureyou shall often eat meat, thank God, and take courage.

The short days and long nights shall not be all charged with gloom, but full often they shall be tempered with good cheer. When we have patience it keeps us in good heart for service. A man to whom it is given to wait for a reward keeps up his courage, and when he has to wait, he says, It is no more than I expected. I never reckoned that I was to slay my enemy at the first blow. I never imagined that I was to capture the city as soon as ever I had dug the first trench. I reckoned upon waiting, and now that is come, I find that God gives me the Grace to fight on and wrestle on, till the victory shall come.

And patience saves a man from a great deal of haste and folly. A hasty man never is a wise man. He is wise that halts a little, and ponders his ways, especially when adversity crosses his path. I have known Brethren in the ministry get discouraged and leave their pulpits, and repent as long as ever they lived that they left a sphere of labor where they ought to have toiled on. I have known Christian people get discouraged, and touchy, and angryfall out with the Church of which they were membersgo out in the wilderness and leave the fat pastures behind them. They have only had to regret all their lives that they had not a little more patience with their Brethren, and with the circumstances which surrounded them.

Whenever you are about to do anything in a great hurry, pause and pray. The hot fever in your own system ill fits you to act discreetly. While you tarry for a more healthy temperature of your own feelings, there may be a great change in the thermometer outside as to the circumstances that influence you. Great haste makes little speed. He that believes shall not make haste. And as the promise runs, he shall never be confounded. Above all, patience is to be commended to you because it glorifies God. The man that can wait, and wait calmly, astonishes the worldling, for the worldling wants it now.

You remember John Bunyans pretty parable (as you all know it, I will only give the outline)of Passion and Patience? Passion would have all his best things first, and one came in, and lavished before him out of a bag all that the child could desire. Patience would have his best things last, and Patience sat and waited, so when Passion had used up all his joy, and all he sought for, Patience came in for his portion, and as John Bunyan very well remarked, there is nothing to come after the last, and so the portion of Patience lasted forever.

Let me have my best things last, my Lord, and my worst things first. Be they what they may, they shall be over, and then my best things shall last forever and forever. He that can wait has faith, and it is faith that marks the true Christian. He that can wait has Grace, and it is Grace that marks the child of God. O that the Lord would grant to every one of you more and more of this excellent Grace of patience, to the praise and glory of His name! I am well near done. Yet there is one other respect in which our case is like that of the farmer. As the season advances, his anxieties are prone to increase rather than to abate.

If he has had long need of patience while the seasons have succeeded each other, and while organic changes have been in course of development, surely there is a stronger challenge of his patience as the crisis approaches when he shall reap the produce. How anxiously at this season will he observe the skies, watch the clouds, and wait the opportune time to get in his crops and garner them in good condition! Is there no peril that haunts him lest, after all, the blast or the mildew should cheat his hopes? Lest fierce winds should lay the full-grown stems prostrate on the ground? Lest then the pelting showers of rain should drench the wellfilled ears of corn? I might almost call this the farmers last fear, and yet the most nervous fear that agitates his mind.

In like manner, Beloved, we have a closing scene in prospect which may, and will, in all probability, involve a greater trial of faith, and a sterner call for patience than any or all of the struggles through which we have already passed. Perhaps I can best describe it to you by quoting two passages of Scripture, one specially addressed to Workers, the other more particularly to sufferers. The first of these texts, you will find it in Hebrews 10:35, 36Cast not away therefore your confidence, which has great recompense of reward. For you have need of patience, that, after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.

This is sweet counsel for you, O Pilgrim, to Zions city bound. When you were young and strong, you did walk many a weary mile with that staff of promise. It helped you over the ground. Dont throw it aside as useless, now that you are old and infirm. Lean upon it. Rest upon that promise, in your present weakness, which lightened your labor in the days of your vigor. Cast not away your confidence. But, Brethren, there is something more. The Apostle says, You have need of patience, after you have done the will of God. But, why, you will say, is patience so indispensable at this juncture of experience?

Doubtless you all know that we are never so subject to impatience as when there is nothing we can do. All the while the farmer is occupied with plowing, harrowing, tilling, drilling, hoeing, and the like, he is too busy to be fretful. It is when the work is done, and there is nothing more to occupy his hands that the very leisure he has to endure gives occasion to secret qualms and lurking cares. So it ever is with us. While we are laborers together with God, our occupation is so pleasant that we little heed the toil and moil of hard service. But when it comes to a point where we have no province, for it is, God that gives the increase, we are apt to be grievously distrustful. Our unbelief finds full play.

Here it is, Brethren, that after our fight is fought, after our race is run, after our allotted task is finished, there is so much need of patienceof such patience as waits only on God and watches unto prayerthat we may finish our course with joy and the ministry we have received of the Lord Jesus. And what about the second text? Where is that to be found? It is in the early part of this Epistle of James.

Turn to James 1:4 Let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. Oh, how indisposed we all of us are to take this advice! I think I see Paul retiring thrice to wrestle with God in prayer, that He would remove the thorn from his flesh. He felt the rankling, and he craved for relief. He had hardly thought of it as something that must irritate before it could relieve, or as a medicine that must gripe before it could heal. But oh, patience is then worked up to its climax, when the soul so accepts the chastisement from the hand of God that she cannot, and will not, ask Him to change His treatment or alter His discipline.

Seems it not as though patience were a virtue par excellence which puts the last polish on Christian chastity? We will hasten back to the cornfields againI am afraid we were forgetting them. But this time we will not talk so much with the farmer as with the crops. Know you, then, what it is that gives that bright yellow tinge of maturity to those blades which were green and growing? What, think you, imparts that golden hue to the wheat? How do you suppose the farmer judges when it is time to thrust in the sickle?

I will tell you. All the while the corn was growing, those hollow stems served as ducts that drew up nourishment from the soil. At length the process of vegetation is fulfilled. The fibers of the plant become rigid. They cease their office. Down below there has been a failure of the vital power which is the precursor of death. From this time on the heavenly powers work quick and marvelous changes. The sun paints his superscription on the ears of grain. They have reached the last stagehaving fed on the riches of the soil long enough, they are only influenced from above. The time of their removal is at hand, when they shall be cut down, carried away in the team, and housed in the garners.

So, too, Beloved in the Lord, it is with some of you. Do I speak as a prophet? Do I not rather echo a trite observation? The fall of the year is most thickly strewn with the fall of human life. You have long been succored with mercies that have come up from Mother Earth. You have been

exposed to cold dews, chilling frosts, stormy blasts. You have had the trial of the vapory fog, the icy winter, the fickle spring, and the summer drought. But it is nearly all over now. You are ready to depart. Not yet for a brief space has the reaper come. You have need of patience. Having suffered thus far, your tottering frame has learned to bend. Patience, Manpatience!

A mighty transformation is about to be worked on you in a short space. Wait on the Lord. Holiness shall now be legibly, more legibly than ever, inscribed on your forefront by the clear shining of the Sun of Righteousness. The heavenly Farmer has you daily, hourly, in His sight, till He shall say to the angel of His Presence, Put in your sickle. Then, as we pronounce your obituary with the wage of praise due to one in whom God has worked a perfect work, we shall record that you were patient under affliction, resigned to the will of the Lord, and ready to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better. Patience has had her perfect workyou lack nothing. God grant unto you this gracious nunc dimittis when your time for ingathering has come!

Now, I have only spoken to Believers, because as I have already said the unbeliever cannot wait with patience, for he has nothing to wait for. There is nothing for him but a fearful looking for judgment. Oh, it must be an awful thing to go from a life of poverty, or of suffering, or of drudgery here, into the world where the wrath of God abides forever! It matters not what your position here may be, if at the end you enter not into rest. Equally little does it matter what joys or wealth you have here, if after all you are driven from the Lords Presence. May you be led to believe in Jesus. There lies safety. May you rest in His precious blood. There is pardon. There is salvation. God grant it, for Christs sake Amen.

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THE PITY OF THE LORDTHE COMFORT OF THE AFFLICTED

NO. 1845

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, JUNE 14, 1885, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON BEHALF OF THE LONDON HOSPITALS.

Behold, we count them happy which endure. You have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is full of pity, and of tender mercy. James 5:11.

WE are far too apt to entertain hard thoughts of God. The horrible atheism of our depraved nature continually quarrels with the Most High and, when we are under His afflicting hand and things go cross to our will, the evil of our nature becomes sadly evident. When sorely distressed, we are too apt to think and to speak as we ought not to do concerning the Most High. Let us never forget that our hard speeches have all been false speeches and that our suspicions of our God have always been libels upon Him. When we have not thought and spoken well of His name, we have thought and spoken amiss! Looking back, we desire, if possible, to blot out every murmuring thought with our tears and we would cancel every complaining word with humble sorrow. We would eat our bitter words they were all unwarranted and, therefore, with deep repentance we call them back. On taking a survey of our whole life, we see that the kindness of God has run all through it like a silver thread. Goodness and mercy have followed us all our days, always pursuing us even when we have wickedly fled from them.

Even our apparent ills have been real blessings. As I said in prayer, so I say nowI do not know for which I would bless God mostfor my sorrows or for my joys. The best piece of furniture I have ever had in my house is the cross of affliction! Adversity is the richest field in all the farm of life. We have never reaped such a harvest from any seed as from that which fell from our hands while tears were falling from our eyes. When we have gone forth weeping, bearing precious seed, we have invariably come, again, rejoicing, bringing our sheaves with us! O Sufferer, when your bed grew hard beneath you and your pain was exceedingly great, it may be that your groans and complaints were not altogether those of sorrow, but a measure of rebellion mingled with them! For this, be ashamed and confounded! Confess those rebellions! Acknowledge that your hard thoughts were all founded upon error and ask for Grace to be forever at one with your Lord. You who have suffered the loss of property or the loss of beloved friends, you, too, perhaps, have thought of God foolishlyremember those thoughts with shame and be all the more eager, at once, to bear willing testimony that the Lord is good and that His mercy endures forever. It is true, however circumstances may look otherwise, that the Lord is full of pity, and of tender mercy. Whatever may or may not be, the Lord must be good! Set your seal to that Truth of God. Hold up your head and your hand as one who can speak well of His name and say, I will bless the Lord at all times! His praise shall continually be in my mouth!

Let each restored man say, He heals all my diseases. Let each tried one now say, Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. Let the aged man bring the spoils of his experience and lay them down at the feet of the Lord who, up to now, has helped him. Our desire, this morning, will be to help one another to avoid future murmuring. We have really nothing to complain abouteven our disappointments will yet be causes for praise! O, may the Spirit of God now make us wise to avoid such hasty blunders in the future and teach us to know the Lord so well that we may henceforth be at peace with Him, whatever He may do! O that we may never bear false witness against our God! The Apostle James, in this passage, aims at setting us right in our judgments of the Lords dealings that patience may become an easier lesson.

Will you notice that the Apostle, first, in this verse, sites an instructive instance of the tender pity of GodBehold, we count them happy which endure. You have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord. Then, secondly, he makes a consoling statement and lays it down as a matter of doctrine that the Lord is full of pity, and of tender mercy. When we have talked upon those two matters, we shall close by observing the precious lessons which we ought to gather from them, as bees fetch honey from the flowers.

I. Notice that when James is exhorting us to full confidence in God in the hour of trial, he gives us AN INSTRUCTIVE INSTANCE. He quotes the story of Job. In these days everything is doubted and a new theory is sure to run like fire among stubble, for this fickle age delights, like the Athenians, in anything new, however absurd it may be! Hence no part of Scripture has been left alone and, of the Book of Job, it has been said that it is a drama, a fiction, a fine piece of Oriental imagination. But see how the New Testament protects the Old! How can Job be an imaginary character? Does the Spirit of God quote for our guidance a fictitious person? Does He set Job before us as an example when Job never existed? The thing is too absurd to contemplate for a single moment! There was such a person as Job and possibly the present passage may confirm us in the belief that the Patriarch lived in the earliest ages, since this Apostle, when mentioning the Prophets, places Job in the forefront of them and quotes his case in preference to any other.

Take, my brethren, the Prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering, affliction and of patience...You have heard of the patience of Job. He might have mentioned Jacob, or Moses, or David as examples of heroic endurance, but he cites Jobin all probability as being first in order of time and in degree of trial. I conceive him to have been one of the earliest of those gracious persons who walked with God through much tribulationand endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

At any rate, we are certain that James does not bring before us the imaginary actor in an Oriental tale as an argument for patience, for when men are suffering, they have no patience with fictionthey are in no humor for amusementand suffering men will only endure to be comforted by the story of real persons who have literally known the sufferings of life. Should you try to stimulate the afflicted to patience by a piece of fiction, they would turn upon you with indignation and sayYes, you demand a patience of me which was never found in mortal man. You ask me to display a virtue which was never actually exemplified in history and so you are driven to invent a person for my imitation! It is too absurd!

Observe, that when this Apostle introduces Job, it is with the view of pointing out the tender mercy of God in his case. He begins by saying, Behold, we count them happy which endure. The pity and tender mercy of God are to be seen in the happiness of those who are called to suffer. We count them happy which endure. Who counts them happy? It is a counting which is not general. This arithmetic is only known to faith and must be learned of the Lord Jesus. We, that is, the Church of God, count them happy who are counted worthy to suffer for Christs sake. We do not deem those to be happy who sport their lives away and end a wasted life of luxury by a dreadful death in unbelief. We do not count those to be happy who are fattened like the beasts in the pasture, but shall soon be brought to the slaughtersuch are all around uswe sorrow because of them! We are not so foolish as to count those happy who spread themselves like a green bay tree, only to be the sooner laid low by the axe of doom!

We count those happy who endure because our Savior has taught us so to reckon. Did He not say, Blessed are you, when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in Heaven, for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you? Did He not also say, Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted? This is the verdict of the Savior and the true disciple must not dream of disputing with His Master! It is ours to believe that those who endure the will of God are among the happiest of the race, for the inspired Psalmist has said, Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O Lord.

I may venture to say that the more sensible part of mankind, in some measure, concur with the people of God in this accounting. We count that man happy who has passed through trial and hardship with a brave endurance. Such life is of an interesting and manly kind. But life without struggle and difficulty is thin and tasteless. How can a noble life be constructed if there is no difficulty to overcome, no suffering to bear? What was there about Diveshis fine linen and sumptuous fareto make life of? Who envies him? Studying the lives of eminent men, we come to the conclusion that on the whole, it is good for a man to bear the yoke; good for a man to breast the billows; good for a man to pass through fire and through waterand so to learn sublime lessons. When we see what poor, paltry things those are who are nursed in the lap of luxury and, consequently, never come to a real manhood, we count them happy that endure. No wise man would seek to be exempted from the healthy discipline of trouble any more than an intelligent child would wish to be excused from school and to be allowed to play all day and every day in the meadows. Nowe are not butterflies that flit from flower to flowerlife is real, life is earnest and the tonic of sorrow braces and strengthens us to make it so! As a matter of faith and even as a matter of reasonable judgment, we count them happy which endure.

This counting is not mere fancy, but it is a correct estimatethere is a happiness in affliction which none will doubt who have tasted it. Within the rough shell of sorrow, we find a sweet kernel. When we look to the end of affliction; when we see all its comfortable fruit; when we mark what it corrects and observe what it produces, we judge that it is no mean blessing! Happy is the man who has been enabled to endure! He rises from the deeps of woe like a pearl-finder from the sea, rich beyond comparison. He has gained more than he has lost, even though he has lost everything, if he has gained contentment, conformity to the will of God, a deep experience and a surer hope. Beloved, those of us who have done business upon great waters and have endured abundant pain, count them happy that endure, even while they are enduring! The people of God find themselves more buoyant in the most salty seas of sorrow than in other waters. The cross does, in very deed, raise us nearer to Christ when it is fully sanctified! It could not do so if it were not sanctified by the Holy Spirit to that noble endbut under His hand it works out our lasting good. Rare gems glisten in the mines of adversity.

I believe that the child of God seldom trusts God so simply at other times as he does when he is in great trouble. Then the second causes are all knocked away like dog-shores from a new-built vessel and the soul glides like a ship from the stocks into the waters of Grace which are her element. Creatures too often come between us and the Creatorand when they are removed, we see Him more distinctly, whom to see is joy and peace! We never get so near to the source of all heavenly consolation as when earthly comfort is removed far away. God seems never so much a husband to any as to the widow and never so much a father as to the fatherless! Our Lord Jesus assures us that the rich man seldom enters His Kingdomthe general Truth of God which lies within that fact is thisthe wealth which we possess, be it of what kind it may, impoverishes us by making faith more difficult. And it is only by faith that we enter the Kingdom of God. It is hard to learn swimming on dry land, but he that is in the water is driven to strike out. Our troubles are such waters to swim in. We are obligedstrange that we should need such forcing to itwe are obliged, I say, to cast ourselves on God when other helpers fail! It is written, Blessed is he that trusts in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. Thus you see how sorrow compels us to the trust which makes us blessed and thus you see why, we count them happy which endure.

Endurance also works in the child of God a close clinging to God which produces near and dear communion with Him. Have you not, in time of trouble, found yourself admitted to inner chambers which, before, had been closed to you? Oh, the rare fellowship of tried saints! Sorrows reveal to us the Man of Sorrows! Griefs waft us to the bosom of our God! See the little chicks in the sunshinethey are running all over the yard to gather what they can. But a hawk is in the sky and the mother calls them with a sharp alarm. They perceive the danger and now they thrust themselves into her feathers and are hidden beneath her wings. He was a much afflicted man who wrote, He shall cover you with His feathers and under His wings shall you trust. The most delicious of sensations outside of Heaven is to faint away upon the bosom of the Lord! We find strength in helplessness, joy in submission, rest in resignation, Heaven in a full surrender!

It is delightful to look up to a stripping and chastening God and to say to Him, My soul is even as a weaned child. Do what You will, for Your will is my will. I submit myself to the withdrawal of what has so long seemed the only source of my comfort and the fountain of my lifefor You are better to me than all the breasts of consolation. I am sorely wounded, but You have done it and You always do well. Therefore, I will take pleasure in the grief You send. Beloved, that suffering which gives new life to prayer and opens to us the palace gates through which we pass into Divine fellowship is so great a gift that, we count them happy which endure.

Besides, the Lord has a choice way of manifesting Himself unto His servants in their times of weakness. I speak what I know, for I have trod that path which no bird of prey knows, neither has the falcons eye seen itthe path upon which shines the inward personal revelation of God! He draws the curtain about the bed of His chosen sufferer and, at the same time, He withdraws another curtain which before concealed His Glory! He takes away the delights of health and vigor and then He implants energy of another and a higher order, so that the inner man waxes mighty while the outer man decays. So wondrously does Grace work beyond Nature that it transfigures bodily sickness into spiritual health! Men of God have been known to cry, Take me back to the furnace, for there One like unto the Son of God was evidently with me!

When they have had solace in the creature, they have somewhat missed the sweetness of the Creator, and have sighed amid their earthly comforts for the loneliness which afforded them the nearer company of Jesus. I have never known more blissful seasons than those which my Lord vouchsafed me when I was abused by men and had to fight a weary battle. After all, there is no place in all our pilgrim ways which, taken for all in all, has all the charms of the Valley of Humiliation! The tops of the Delectable Mountains are royal spotsfrom them we sometimes see the Golden City! But these are heights too steep for our trembling feet to continually stand uponthe lowly valley suits us better, though flesh and blood find it hard to go downhill. Here the herb, called hearts-ease, grows luxuriantly and he that wears it is happier than the courtier in silk and velvet! Delightful is that well-shaded valley where the shepherds boy sits and sings among his fathers sheep

*He that is down need fear no fall;   
He that is low, no pride;   
He that is humble ever shall   
Have God to be His guide.*

Bunyan truly says, The Valley of Humiliation is, of itself, as fruitful a place as any the crow flies over. It is chiefly so because in its wildernesses the Lord speaks to our hearts. To His child, when passing through the glens of tribulation, the Lord says, Certainly I will be with you. In the furnace of affliction, the Lord manifests Himself to His chosen as He does not to the worldyes, as He does not even to those of His people who are basking in prosperity! Therefore, we count them happy which endure. Brothers and Sisters, do you not see how this changes the face of affliction? This brightens everything, for if it is, in the judgment of those who have experienced it, a happy thing to endure! Then it is true that the Lord is full of pity, and of tender mercy.

Further, the Apostle gives us a hint of another matter. He adds, you have heard of the patience of Job. Now, notice here, the notabilityI had almost said the nobilityof endurance. As one truly says, Jobs bones had lain, this day, in the common morgue of oblivion if it had not been for his suffering and his patience. You have heard of the patience of Job. Who has not? But you would have never heard of Job if he had always been prosperous! His flocks and his herds, his gold and his silver, his children and their banquets would, none of them, have earned immortality for his name. But his poverty and his sickness have done it! He had been simply an Oriental sheik, honored in his own day, but forgotten like his fellows, had not the malice of Satan and the Grace of God forced him into notice. He was knighted on the battlefield. The stream of time has rolled over every other prince of his age and we have never heard of them but, you have heard of the patience of Job! Who gets a patent of nobility from the Throne of God unless it is by endurance? The names of the heroes of the Cross are written in black ink with a heavy pen!

Even in worldly histories it is by enduring hardness that men build their memorials. Who that has read the classics has not heard of Mutius Scaevola? And why? He was a valiant man, but he did not win his name by a common deed in battle. His fights are unrecorded, but you have heard of his laying his right hand upon the burning coals of an altarto let Porsenna see how a Roman could endure pain without shrinking. When he suffered his right hand to burn, he was writing his name in his countrys annals. A thousand instances prove that only by endurance can names be engraved in the brass of history! To make a man a manto bring his manhood forward and to make other men see itthere must be endurance! Read the lives of any who have become the leaders of our raceread the stories of any that are written in the beadroll of fameand you shall find that not without trial did they come to be renowned.

Poor tailors, husbandmen and apprentices live in the story of the Church of God because they counted not their lives dear to them for Christs sake. Simple maids and wives, unlettered and poor, are heard of, to this day, and shall be heard of in eternity because they were burned as martyrs for the Truth of God! Who would have heard of Ann Askew if it were not that she was put upon the rack and, when every bone was out of joint and all her body was in exquisite torture, she baffled her tormentors! Well did she say

*I am not she that list   
My anchor to let fall   
For every drizzling mist.   
My ships substantial.*

She that could suffer and sing gained high rank among the ladies of the Covenant. He who is content to go down to a dishonorable grave may choose the bastards portion and escape the rodbut the true-born child of God has no such desire! You may, if you please, enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, but if God intends to honor you, you will choose to suffer affliction with the people of God! If you would reign in Christs Kingdom, you must drink of His cup and be baptized with His baptism. Do not, therefore, look down upon those who suffer, but rather look up to them as among the higher classes of our race. The trials of Job elevated him into the peerage of the saints and, therefore, we gather from this honorable result of endurance, that the Lord is full of pity, and of tender mercy, when He sends afflictions to His beloved ones.

Once again, in order to see the pity of God in sorrow, we must see the Lords end in it, for, says the Apostle, You have seen the end of the Lord. Gods end in affliction is that which proves that He is full of pity and of tender mercy. Does it not strike you as rather a singular thing that when James wants to show us that the Lord is full of pity and of tender mercy, he points us to Job on a dunghill with all his property gone, with his children dead, with his wife ill-advising him, with his friends provoking him and he covered with sores from head to foot? Who can see the pity and tender mercy of God there? Nobody who is blind, but he who has had his eyes opened by the Spirit of God can see it because he does not look so much at the process as at the resulthe stays not with the crucible and the furnace, but joyously gazes upon the pure gold which comes from the refining pot! We see not so much

how Grace works as what it works. The design of the Lord is more to be noted than the method He pursues!

First, remember that the Lords end in sending affliction to His people is corrective. Sanctified sorrow is a sharp frost which kills the germs of spiritual disease. Our griefs, like a hailstorm, break off the buds from the branches of sin so that they do not produce the black, accursed fruit of actual transgression! How much we owe to the knife which cuts out the canker and the gangrene! Christs vines would soon be in an evil case if it were not for the Pruner. Let us bless God that though, before we were afflicted, we went astray, yet now, by the sanctifying processes of His Providence and Grace, we have learned to keep His Word! Look at the corrective influence of sorrow and you will not quarrel with the rod in a fathers hands.

Moreover, affliction is sent for the display of Grace. Our graces lie asleep within us like slumbering soldiers until affliction strikes its terrible drum and awakens them. You shall not know that there is a bird in the woods if you are quiet. But if you break a branch, they will become visible, and thus affliction, passing through our soul, startles all our graces and we perceive themand God is honored thereby. You cannot see the stars while the sun shines! Wait till it is dark and then you shall behold them! Many a Christian Grace is quite imperceptible until the time of trialand then it shines out with great luster. All this supposes that Grace is there, but if it is lacking, trial discovers the lack. You know not what spirit you are of till you have been under tribulation. You count yourself rich, but in the fire your gold is tested. You reckon that your house is well built, but the flames find out the wood, hay and stubble. Self-knowledge is never sure if it come not of tests and temptations. Therefore, we count them happy who endure because they are less likely to be deceived. God is to be praised for the discovery of our graces, for thus affliction becomes a blessing without disguise.

Further, our trials are an education for the future. I do not think Job was fit to have any more substance until his heart had been enlarged by trouble. Then he could bear twice as much as before. A man of God is not prepared to enjoy success till he has tasted defeat. Many an heir of Heaven will never be fit for Heaven till, first of all, he has been brought near to the gates of Hell. You have been strengthened and prepared and made ready for a nobler future by your late experience of grief. A traveler said to me, yesterday, speaking of the heat, how different it is from cold, for the more you suffer heat, the less you can endure it. But the more you are tried with cold, the more you can bear it, for it hardens you. I am sure it is so as to the influences of prosperity and adversity. Prosperity softens and renders us unfit for more of itself. But adversity braces the soul and hardens it to patience.

Beloved, I would not have you forget that the end of the Lord is always with His tried people to give them greater happiness as the result of it. Jobs double portion was an instructive type of what God does with His children in some form, or other, after trial. You have seen the end of the Lord. Job came to the end of his words with great bitterness and sorrow of heartbut Gods end was not yetand when it came, it was glorious and full of joy for His servant! Make note in Job 31:40, it is written, The words of Job are endedended amid thistles and cocklebut the end of the Lord was very different, for He loaded His servant with pieces of money, earrings of gold and blessed his latter end more than his beginning! Your end, O you that are tossed with tempest and not comforted, shall come forth from your God when He shall lay your stones with fair colors and your foundations with sapphire! He will restore your soul even in this life and give you joy and rest out of your sorrow!

As for the life to come, how little do we take it into our estimate! It is as the main ocean and this life is no better than the village brook! The sorrows of time are a mere pins prick, at the most, if we contrast them with the joy eternal! What shall we think of these temporary inconveniences when we reach eternal happiness? We shall look back upon our passing grief with wonder that we ever made so much of it! When the sunshine bursts upon us, we shall smile to think of the flying clouds. We shall laugh to think that we were so depressed by our light affliction which is but for a moment! The far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory will cause us to despise the trivial trials of our mortal life. All this makes me say and makes you see that the end of the Lord is LOVEand that, in the trouble which He sends He is stillfull of pity, and of tender mercy.

II. Secondly, OUR APOSTLE MAKES A CONSOLING STATEMENTthe Lord is full of pity, and of tender mercy. Observe that this is the teaching of Gods Holy Word and, therefore, if we have, at this moment, no evidence of it perceptible to sight or sense, we are bound to believe it all the same. I ask the child of God to settle this in his mind. Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. Though as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well near slipped, yet surely God is good to His own people. Whatever appears to conflict with this, nothing can possibly shake the certainty of this fact that, the Lord is full of pity, and of tender mercy. O weeping heir of Heaven, though your Father scourges you, believe this, for He scourges every son whom He receives! And this also is true, that He receives every son whom He scourges! Rest your heart upon this. Do not be persuaded by man or devil to think ill of your God. He has a fathers heart even when He makes you feel the strokes of His hand. Your God cannot be unkind to you. He cannot forsake you. Has He not said, Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet will I not forget you?

*Such pity as a father has   
Unto his children dear   
Like pity shows the Lord to such   
As worship Him in fear.*

Do you believe this?

But, further, the text tells us that this truth may be seen. And though it is a matter of faith, yet it may be also a matter of sight. You have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is full of pity. This is so plain that you can see it! See, then, the pity of God in upholding His people under trouble. He presses down with one hand, but He lifts up with the other. Though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion. His dealings with us are of the nature of the raindrop and the sunbeamthese are united in fashioning the Covenant rainbow. Beloved, it is true, the Lord has burdened you. Is it not also true that He has sustained you? Above is the billow, but, underneath are the everlasting arms. See the pity of God in this!

How often the mercy of God is seen in sickness and suffering by His mitigating the pain and loss! One ounce more and the back had broken, but that ounce never came. One breath more and the ship, that even then staggered before the gale, would have been driven to the bottom of the sea, but that breath of wind did not come. There is always a restraining of affliction, even in the hour of severest trial. Those who are washed in the blood of Jesus shall never be drowned in the sea of sorrow.

Observe, also, the tender pity of God in forgiving the sin of His suffering people. I bless the Lord that He has not taken notice of what I have thought and said when I have been greatly depressed and distracted by pain. Our Lord knows that the spirit is willing, even when the flesh is weak, and He thinks still kindly of us. If He did mark my foolish despondencies, what could I say but, Lord, have mercy upon Your foolish child? When your child has a fever, it may be he is fretful and begins to talk foolishly. Maybe he says unkind things against those very persons whom, in his heart, he loves best. Do you ever say to the child, afterwards, John, I am very grieved that you said such shocking things about me and about your mother? Far from it! You say, Poor dear, he does not know what he is sayinghe is wandering in his mind. So does God deal with our naughtiness when we are under His handwhen He sees that it is rather weakness than willfulness. He is full of pity and full of compassion and blots out the transgressions of His people

See how the tenderness and pity of God are also seen in the revelations He makes to His saintsbut of that I have spoken, though I would not have you forget it.

So, also, in the overruling of our sorrows, His love is conspicuous. He often sends a great sorrow that we may not be compelled to bear a greater one. By fire He prevents conflagration. By pain He kills a greater pain. If you had not endured a certain trouble you might have been visited by seven troubles, each one more terrible than your present one. Thank God for the preventive operations of His Providence! Bless Him, above all, for the sweet rewards that come to His tried people when, afterwards, they bear the comfortable fruits of righteousness and especially when He comes to them in the riches of His Grace and turns their midnight into everlasting day.

In closing the second head I should like to say I wish we could all read the original Greek, for this word, The Lord is full of pity, is a specially remarkable one. It means literally that the Lord has many bowels, or a great heart, and so it indicates great tenderness. The god in whom some believe is unable to feelthey lay it down in their theology as an axiom that God cannot feel. This, however, I take leave to deny. God is able to do all things. I cannot regard Him as though He were a block of wood, or a mass of iron unable to feel. On the contrary, He is represented to us as greatly feelingthe God of a great heart! You know how a sensitive person is affected at the sight of suffering. Some persons cannot bear to see a creature in painthey are unmanned, thereby, and begin to weep like children. Our God is not only full of pity, but

very full of pitynot only of mercy, but of tender mercy. Our Lord Jesus Christ, when He was here on earth, was the image of the Father and we often read of Him that, He was moved with compassion. After this sort are we to think of the great God who is full of pity towards suffering men.

The other word is the complement of the firstand of tender mercy. There is, then, you see, in these two words, pity for misery and mercy for sin. There is inward pity in the heart of God and outward action in the mercy of God. There is sympathy for suffering and Grace for guilt. These two things make up what we need. That God should pity our griefs and forget out sinsthat God should think kindly of us and act helpfully towards usthese are our greatest needs. What a sea of goodness is in my textfull of pity, and of tender mercy! Believe you, then, of God, and see it to be true that for the woes of man He has a tender heart!

Forget not that word, In all their afflictions He was afflicted, and the angel of His Presence saved them. Our God is not cold and hard, but full of pity! He is infinitely just and will assuredly punish sinbut side by side with His justice stands His love! He is as full of pity as if He had forgotten to be righteous. Indeed, He is much more so, for were He less righteous, He would be less kind. If you would see His goodness and His justice blended, behold the Son of God upon the tree, dying in our place. Never doubt His tenderness who gave His Only-Begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

III. Now I have to close with THE LESSONS TO BE LEARNED out of the whole subject. I will but hint at them.   
The first is be patient. The whole context teaches us patience. Read the chapter at home and see how James continues to say, Be patient. Be patient for this reason, that God is full of pity, and of tender mercy. A person going to a surgeon will bear sharp pain when he is convinced that by such pain his cure will be worked. If a man proposes to gash me with a lance, I decline his offer. But if I know that I shall die unless the incision is made and, if I believe that an intolerable pain will thus be the result, I say, Welcome the knife. Let him cut without mercy, if, by it he intends mercy. It might be unmerciful to stay the hand in such a case.   
Such knowledge should make us patient under Divine chastisement. The Lord never grieves us because He likes to grieve us. He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. There is a necessity for every sorrow. Though now, for a season, we are in heaviness, there is a necessity for it. Do not kick against the goad, lest it prick you all the more. Be silent before God, lest He rebukes you for your foolish speech. When the sheep is being shorn, if it kicks, it will be cut with the shears. But if it will lie quite still, the shearer will take off all the wool and never harm the flesh. Lie still, Brothers and Sisterslet the Good Shepherd clip as He pleases! Though He may cut very close to the skin, He is full of pity and will only rid you of that which would harm you.  
The next lesson is, be penitent. You unconverted ones here, today, if you are suffering and sorrowful, I want you to feel that God is sending this sorrow in love to your souls. He smites you that you may turn to Him in repentance. He chastens you that He may bring you to Himself, that you may not perish forever. He is full of pity. His hand is strong to smite, but it is also strong to save. Return to your Father, O you prodigal! Though you have spent your substance, though you have brought yourself to rags, return to your Fatherthere is bread enough in His house and, better still, there is love enough in His heart to welcome even you! See, He hastens to meet you as soon as your face is toward Him, for He is ready to forgive! Oh, you that have been hardened by your distresses, repent of this wickedness, lest, like Pharaoh, you are plagued even to destruction! Seek the Lord while He may be found! Call upon Him while He is near. He welcomes all who repent. He is eager to forgive! Delay no longer. O Spirit of the Lord, hasten the returning sinner!   
The last lesson is, be full of pity. If God is full of pity and of tender mercy, children of God, you are to imitate Him and to be full of pity, too. This Truth of God is to be remembered at all times. And, just now, you have an opportunity of showing your pity towards the poor and sick of this great city. When you relieve the needs of a man in health, you may possibly assist him in his vices, but in helping the sick poor you can do no wrong. The door of a hospital is open for good and only for good. I am concerned to know that there are many beds unoccupied and many suffering persons kept out of the hospitals from lack of funds. Whole wards are rendered useless for lack of income. In some cases the authorities are compelled to use those wards for persons who can pay for attendance and though this is a good thing, yet I cannot forget that those who cannot pay are thus deprived of what they need so much more than others.   
You that have been sick, yourselves, should give liberally, today, out of sympathy. You that have never been sick ought to give twice as much out of gratitude. Yet I must correct myselfthose who have been afflicted and healed should feel both sympathy and gratitudeand so should give the double of those from whom I have asked double liberality. Let us try to give to this fourfold degree! When the box is passed round, be full of pity and of tender mercy, like your Father and your Godand then the hospitals will be largely helped this day.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONPsalm 103.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK103 (VERSION III.), 214, 195.  
Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #3255 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE PEARL OF PATIENCE   
NO. 3255

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 1911.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY AFTERNOON IN JANUARY, 1880.

You have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is full of pity and of tender mercy. James 5:11.

[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon upon the whole verse is #1845, Volume 31 THE PITY OF THE LORDTHE COMFORT OF THE AFFLICTED read/download the entire sermon free of charge at http://www.spurgeongems.org .]

WE need to be reminded of what we have heard, for we are far too ready to forget. We are also so slow to consider and meditate upon what we have heard that is profitable to have our memories refreshed. At this time we are called upon to recollect that we have heard of the patience of Job. We have, however, I trust, gone beyond mere hearing, for we have also seen in the story of Job that which it was intended to set vividly before our minds eye. You have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord. The Romish priest professes to make men hear the voice of the Gospel by seeing, but the Scriptural way is to make men see the Truth of God by hearing. Faith, which is the souls sight, comes by hearing. The design of the preaching of the Gospel to the ear is to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ. Inward sight is the result of all fruitful hearing!

Now, that which is to be seen in the Scriptures is somewhat deeper and calls for more thought than that which is merely heard. You have heard of the patience of Joban interesting history which a child may understand, but it needs, Divine teaching to see to the bottom of that narrative, to discover the pearl which lies in the depths of it! It can only be said of enlightened disciples, You have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is full of pity and of tender mercy. At the same time, that which is seen is also more precious to the heart and more bountifully enriches the soul than anything which is only heard. I count it no small enrichment of our mind to have heard of the patience of Jobit comforts and strengthen us in our endurance, but it is as infinitely better thing to have seen the end of the Lord, and to have perceived the undeviating tenderness and pity which are displayed even in His sorest chastisements. This is, indeed, a choice vein of silver, as he that has dug in it is far richer than the more superficial person who has only heard of the patience of Job, and so has only gathered surface truth. The patience of Job, as we hear of it is like the shell of some rare nut from the Spice Islandsfull of fragrance. But the end of the Lord, when we come to see it, is as the kernel which is rich beyond expression with a fullness of aromatic essence!

Note well the reason why the text reminds us of what we have heard and seen. When we are called to the exercise of any great virtue, we need to call in all the helps which the Holy Spirit has bestowed upon us. All our wealth of hearing and seeing we shall have need to spend in our heavenly warfare. We shall be forced full often to gird up the loins of our mind by the recollection of examples of which we have heard, such as that of Job, and then to buckle up that belt and brace it fast with what we have. The patience of Job shall gird us and that end of the Lord which we have seen shall be the fastening of the band. We shall need all before our work is done. In the present case, the virtue we are called to exercise is that of patience and, therefore, to help us to do it, we are reminded of the things that we have heard and seen, because it is a Grace as difficult as it is necessary, and as hard to come at as it is precious when it is gained!

The text is preceded by a triple exhortation to patience. In the 7th verse we read, Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. And again, Behold, the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and has long patience for it, until he receives the early and latter rain. Be you also patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draws near. Further on, in the 10

th verse, we read, Take my brethren, the Prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering, affliction and patience. Are we thrice exhorted to patience? Is it not clear that we have even now much need of it? We are, most of us, deficient in this excellent Grace and because of it we have missed most privileges and have wasted many opportunities in which we might have honored God, might have commended religion and might have been exceedingly profited in our own souls. Affliction has been the fire which would have removed our dross, but impatience has robbed the mental metal of the flux of submission which would have secured its proper purification. It is unprofitable, dishonorable, weakeningit has never brought us gainand never will.

I suppose we are three times exhorted to patience because we shall need it much in the future. Between here and Heaven we have no guarantee that the road will be easy, or that the sea will be glassy. We have no promise that we shall be kept like flowers in a conservatory, from the breath of frost, or that, like fair queens, we shall be veiled from the heat of the sun.

The voice of Wisdom says, Be patient, be patient, be patient. You may need a threefold measure of it. Be ready for the trial. I suppose, also, that we are over and over again exhorted to be patient because it is so high an attainment. It is no childs play to be dumb as the sheep before her shearers and to lie still while the shears are taking away all that warmed and comforted us. The mute Christian under the afflicting rod is no everyday personage. We kick out like oxen which feel the goad for the first time! We are, most of us, for years as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. Be patient, be patient, be patient, is the lesson to be repeated to our hearts many times, even as we have to teach children over and over again the same words till they know them by heart. It is the Holy Spirit, ever patient under our provocations, who calls us to be patient. It is Jesus, the unmurmuring Sacrifice, who charges us to, be patient. It is the long-suffering Father who bids us be patient. O you who are soon to be in Heaven, be patient for yet a little while and your reward shall be revealed!

Upon these two things we will indulge a brief meditation. First, we are bidden to be patient and it is not an unheard of virtue. You have heard of the patience of Job. And, secondly, we are bidden to be patient and it is not an unreasonable virtue, for you have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is full of pity and of tender mercy.

I. IT IS NOT AN UNHEARD OF VIRTUE TO BE PATIENTYou have heard of the patience of Job.  
Observe well that the patience of Job was the patience of a man like ourselves, imperfect and full of infirmity, for as one has well remarked, we have heard of the impatience of Job as well as of his patience! I am glad the Divine Biographer was so impartial, for had not Job been somewhat impatient, we might have thought his patience to be altogether inimitable and above the reach of ordinary men. The traces of imperfection which we see in Job prove all the more powerfully that Divine Grace can make grand examples out of common constitutions and that keen feelings of indignation under injustice need not prevent a mans becoming a model of patience. I am thankful that I know that Job did speak somewhat bitterly and proved himself a man, for now I know that it was a man like myself who said, The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. It was a man of flesh and blood such as mine, who said, Shall we receive good at the hands of God, and shall we not receive evil? Yes, it was a man of like passions with myself who said, Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.   
You have heard of the patience of your Lord and Master, and tried to copy it, and half despaired! But now you have heard of the patience of His servant, Job, and knowing as Job did that your Redeemer lives, you should be encouraged to emulate him in obedient submission to the will of the Lord! You have heard of the patience of Job, that is, the patience of a greatly tried man. That is a very trite, yet necessary remarkJob could not have exhibited patience if he had not endured trial. And he could not have displayed a patience whose fame rings down the ages till we have heard of it, if he had not known extraordinary affliction! Reflect then, that it was the patience of a man who was tried in his estate. All his wealth was taken! Two or three servants were leftleft only to bring him evil tidingseach one saying, I only am escaped alone to tell you. His flocks and his herds were gone. The house in which his children had met was a wreck and the princely man of Uz sat upon a dunghilland there were none so mean as to do him reverence. You have heard of the patience of Job in loss and povertyhave you not seen that if all estates should fail, God is still your portion?   
Job was caused to suffer sharp relative troubles. All his children were snatched away without a warning, dying at a festival where, without being culpably wrong, men are usually unguarded and, in a sense, unready, for the spirit is in déshabille. His children died suddenly and there was a grievous mystery about it, for a strange wind from the wilderness smote the four corners of the house and overthrew it in an instant! And such an occurrence must have connected itself in Jobs mind either with the judgment of God or with Satanic influencea connection full of the most painful thoughts and surmises! The death of his dear ones was not a common or a desirable one, and yet all had so been taken. Not a son or daughter was left him. All gone! All gone! He sits among the ashes a childless man. You have heard of the patience of Job. Oh, to have patience under bereavements, patience even when the insatiate Archer multiplies His arrows!   
Then, and I here speak most to myself, You have heard of the patience of Job under personal affliction. It is well said by one who knew mankind cruelly well, that, we bear the afflictions of other people very easily, but when it touches our bone and our flesh, trial assumes an earnest form and we have need of unusual patience. Such bitter pain as Job must have suffered, we have probably, none of us, known anything to the same degree. And yet we have had weary nights and dreary days. Each limb has claimed a prominence in anguish and each nerve has become a road for armies of pains to march over! We know what it is to feel thankful tears in our eyes merely for having been turned over in bed. Job, however, far excels us. You have heard of the patience of Job, and you know how he sinned not when from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet he was covered with irritating boils!   
In addition to all this, Job bore what is perhaps the worst form of trial, namely, mental distress. The conduct of his wife must have much grieved him when she tempted him to curse God and die. However she meant it, or however her words may be translated, she evidently spoke like a foolish woman when her husband needed wise consolation. And then those miserable comfortershow they crowned the edifice of his misery! Cold-blooded mortals sneer at sentimental grievances, but I speak from my heart when I affirm that griefs which break no bones and take not a coin from our store may yet be among the sharpest whips of sorrow! When the iron enters into the soul, we know the very soul of suffering! See how Jobs friends fretted him with arguments and worried him with accusations. They rubbed salt into his wounds! They cast dust into his eyes. Their tender mercies were cruel, though well-intentioned. Woe to the man who in his midnight hour is hooted at by such owls! Yet the hero of patience sinned not. You have heard of the patience of Job. Jobs was in all respects a most real trouble, he was no mere dyspeptic, no hysterical inventor of imaginary evil. His were not fancied losses nor minor calamities. He had not lost one child out of a numerous family, nor a few thousands out of a vast fortune, but he was brought to sad bereavement, abject poverty and terrible torment of body and mind! But despite it all, You have heard of the patience of Job, and heard more of his patience than of his afflictions! What a mercy to have heard of such a man and to know that one of our own race passed through the seventimes heated furnace and yet was not consumed!  
The patience of Job was the patience of a man who endured up to the very end. No break-down occurred. At every stage he triumphed and to the utmost point he was victorious! Traces of weakness are manifest, but they are grandly overlaid by evidences of gracious power. What a marvelous man was he with all those aches and pains, still bearing witness to his God, But He knows the way that I take: when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold. He reasons well even in the heat of his passionate zeal for his character. He reasons bravely, too, and catches up the points of his adversaries like a trained logician. He holds fast his integrity and will not let it go. And best of all, he cries, I know that my Redeemer lives and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. Oh, glorious challenge of a dying man to his Immortal Kinsman!   
The enemy could not triumph over Jobhe threw him on a dunghill and it became his throne, more glorious than the ivory throne of Solomon! The boils and blisters with which the adversary covered the Patriarch were more honor to him than a warriors gilded body armor. Never was the arch-fiend more thoroughly beaten than by the afflicted Patriarch! And instead of pitying the sufferer, my pity curdles into contempt for that fallen spirit who must there have gnawed his own heart and drunk deep draughts of gall and wormwood as he saw himself foiled at all points by one who had been put into his power and one, too, of the feeble race of man! Surely, in this he experienced a foretaste of the bruising threatened at Edens gate as to be given him by the womans Seed! Yes, Job endured unto the end and, therefore, he stands as a pillar in the house of the Lord. Cannot we also endure unto the end? What hinders Divine Grace from glorifying itself in us?

We may once more say that the patience of Job is the virtue of one who thereby has become a great power for good. You have heard of the patience of Job. Yes, and all the ages have heard of the patience of Joband Heaven has heard of the patience of Job and Hell has heard of it, tooand not without results in each of the three worlds. Among men, the patience of Job is a great, mortal and spiritual force. This morning, when musing upon it, I felt ashamed and humbled, as thousands have done before me. I asked myself, What do I know of patience when I compare myself with Job? And I felt that I was as unlike the great Patriarch as I well could be. I recollect a minister who had been somewhat angered by certain of his people and, therefore, preached from the text, And Aaron held his peace. It was remarked that the preachers likeness to Aaron reached no further than the fact that Aaron held his peace and the preacher did not. May we not penitently confess that our likeness to Job is much of the same order? He was patient and we are not. Yet, as I thought of the patience of Job, it caused me to hope! If Job was patient under trial and affliction, why should I not be patient too? He was but a manwhat was worked in one man may be done in another! He had God to help him and so have I. He could fall back upon the living Redeemer so can I and why should I not? Why should I not attain to patience as well as the man of Uz? It made me feel happy to believe in human capacity to endure the will of God, the Holy Spirit instructing and upholding! Play the man, beloved Friend! Be not cut down! What God has done for one, He can do for another. If the man is the same and if the great God is the same, and be sure He is, we, too, may attain to patience in our limited circle! Our patience may be heard of among those who prize the fruits of the Spirit!   
II. I will not detain you, lest I weary you, except to say, in the second place, IT IS NOT AN UNREASONABLE VIRTUE TO BE PATIENT for, according to our text, there is great love and tenderness in it. You have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is full of pity and of tender mercy.   
We must have seen, in Jobs story, if we have regarded it aright, that the Lord was in it all. It is not a narrative in which the devil is the sole actorthe great Lord of All is evidently present. He it was who challenged Satan to consider Job and then questioned him as to the result. Less seen than the Evil One, the Lord was nevertheless present at every act of the drama. God was not away while His servant suffered! In fact, if there was any place where the thoughts of God were centered more than anywhere else in Providence at that time, it was where the perfect and upright man was bearing the brunt of the storm. The Lord was ruling, too. He was not present as a mere spectator, but as master of the situation! He had not handed over the reins to Satanfar from it, for every step that the enemy took was only by express permission from the Throne of God. He allowed him to strip his servant, but he set the limit, Only upon himself put not forth your hand. When to complete the test, the enemy was permitted to plague his body, the Lord added, But save his life. The ruling hand is always on the curb. The Dog of Hell is allowed to snap and snarl, but his chain is not removed and the collar of Omnipotent restraint is on him. Come, dear Friends, you that are in trouble, remember that God is in your sorrow, ruling it to its desired end and checking it that it should go no further than according to His will! And you neither have suffered, nor in the future will suffer any more than He in Infinite Love permits!   
Moreover, the Lord was blessing Job by all his tribulation. Untold blessings were coming to the grand old man while he seemed to be losing all. It was not simply that he obtained a double portion at the end, but all along, every part of the testing process worked out his highest good. Now have we seen the end of the Lord and that end is unmingled goodness! The Lord was standing by every moment to stop the refining process when it had come to the proper point, so that no more of it should happen than was really beneficial and, at the same time, no less than should secure His gracious purpose. True mercy is bound, at times, to seem rough, for it might be a great and lifelong evil for the surgeon to stop the knife before its work is done. The Lord was wisely tender and tenderly wise with Joband even in his case the sore affliction was not allowed to proceed a single degree beyond the necessary point of intensity.   
And when we come to look all Jobs life through, we see that the Lord in mercy brought him out of it all with unspeakable advantage. He who tested with one hand supported with the other! Whatever Satans end might be in tempting the Patriarch, God had an end which covered and compassed that of the destroyerand that end was answered all along the line, from the first loss which happened among the oxen to the last taunt of his three accusers! There was never a question, in the heights of Heaven as to the ultimate issue! Eternal Mercy was putting forth its irresistible energy, and Job was made to bear up though the trial and to rise from it a wiser and a better man!   
Such is the case with all afflicted saints. We may well be patient under our trials, for the Lord sends them. He is ruling in all our circumstances. He is blessing us by them, He is waiting to end them and He is pledged to bring us through. Shall we not gladly submit to the Father of our spirits? Is not this our deepest wish, Your will be done? Shall we quarrel with that which blesses us? Shall we repine when the end of the trouble is so near and so blessed? No! We see that the Lord is full of pity and of tender mercy and, therefore, we will be patient.   
Beloved, let us accept future sorrow with joy, for it is Divine Love which will add to our years whatever sorrowful seasons may yet come to us. Jobs life might have ended in the first period without the trial, but if the Patriarch, with perfect knowledge of all things, could have had his choice, would he not have chosen to endure the trial for the sake of all the blessing which came of it? We would never have heard of the patience of Job if he had continued in his prosperityand that first part of his life would have made a very poor commonplace history as compared with what we now find in the pages of Scripture! Camels, sheep, servants and children make up a picture of wealth, but we can see this any day! The rare sight is the patiencethis it is which raises Job to his true glory! God was dealing well with His faithful servant and even rewarding his uprightness when He counted him worthy to be tried. The Lord was taking the surest and kindest way to bless and honor one who was a perfect and an upright manone that feared God and eschewed evil.   
The Lord was full of pity to permit sharp trial to come upon Job for his good. There was more tender mercy in subjecting him to it than there would have been in screening him from it. False pity would have permitted the good man to die in his nest, but true pity put a thorn into it and made him mount aloft as the eagle! It was great mercy, after all, which took him out of the state in which he washed his steps with butter, and cast him into the mire, for thus he was weaned from the world and made to look the more eagerly for a better portion.   
No doubt, in Jobs character, the Lord saw certain failings which we cannot see, which He desired to remove and perhaps He also marked some touches of Grace which needed to be suppliedand Divine Love undertook to complete his perfect character. Perhaps his prosperity had sunned him till he had grown somewhat hard in tone and sharp in judgment and, therefore, the Lord would soften and mellow his gracious spirit. The things lacking were no common virtues, for in these he was perfect, but certain rich and rare tints of the higher lifeand these could not be imparted by any other means than severe suffering. Nothing more could really be done for Job but by this special agency, for doubling the number of his camels and sheep would only enlarge his cares. Since he already had enough children, too, he had a sufficient family and of all earthly things, abundance. But to give him twice the Divine Grace, twice the experience, twice the knowledge of God, perhaps twice the tenderness of character he had always possessed, was a mode of enrichment which the tender and compassionate Lord adopted out of the greatness of His wisdom and favor. Job could only thus be made doubly rich in the rarest of all treasuresand the All-Merciful adapted that method.   
Examining the matter from another point of view, it may appear that Job was tried in order that he might be better able to bear the extraordinary prosperity which the Lord had resolved to pour upon him. That double portion might have been too much for the Patriarch if he had not been lifted into a higher state. If abundance is hard to bear, superfluity is even worse and, therefore, to those He loves, the Lord gives more Grace.   
Job by his trials and patience received not only double Grace, and double wealth, but double honor from God. He had stood very high in the peerage of the excellent as a perfect and an upright man before his trial, but now he is advanced to the very highest rank of spiritual nobility. Even our children call him the most patient man under pains and suffering. He rose from the knighthood of sincere goodness to the peerage of heroic endurance. At first he had the honor of behaving admirably amid wealth and ease, but he was in the end elevated to sit among those who glorify God in the fires. Benevolence, justice and truth shone as bright stars in the sky of his heavenly character, but now the moon of patience silvers all and lights up the scene with a superior beauty! Perhaps the Lord may love some of us so specially that He means to put upon us the dignity of enduranceHe will make us knights, not of the golden fleece, but of the iron Cross! What but great pity and tender mercy could plan such a lot for our unworthy selves?

Once more, Job by his trials and the Grace of God was lifted up into the highest position of usefulness. He was useful before his trial as few men of wealth and influence have been, but now his life possesses an enduring fruitfulness which blesses multitudes every day! Even we who are here this afternoon have heard of the patience of Job. All the ages have this man for their teacher. Brothers and Sisters, we do not know who will be blessed by our pains, by our bereavements, by our crosses if we have patience under them! Specially is this the case with Gods ministers, if He means to make much of them, their path to usefulness is up the craggy mountains side. If we are to comfort Gods afflicted people, we must, first, be afflicted ourselves. Tribulation will make our wheat fit to be bread for saints. Adversity is the choicest book in our library, printed in black letters, but grandly illuminated! Job makes a glorious comforter and preacher of patience, but no one turns either to Bildad, Zophar, or Eliphaz, who were miserable comforters because they had never been miserable. You, dear Sisters, whom God will make daughters of consolation to your families, must in your measure pass through a scholarship of sufferinga sword must pass through your own hearts if you are to be highly favored and blessed among women. Yet, let us all remember that affliction will not bless us if it is impatiently borne. If we kick at the goad, it will hurt us, but it will not act as a fitting stimulus. If we rebel against Gods dispensations, we may turn His medicines into poisons and increase our grief by refusing to endure them. Be patient, be patient, be patient and the dark cloud shall drop a sparkling shower! You have heard of the patience of Job. Imitate it. You have seen the end of the Lord. Rejoice in it. He is full of pity and of tender mercy. Yield yourselves to Him. Divine Spirit, plant in us the sweet flower of patience, for our patient Savior s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **ROMANS 8:1-22.**

This precious Chapter reminds us of the description of the land of Havilah, where there is gold, and the gold of that land is good.   
Verse 1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are to

Christ Jesus. [See Sermon #1917, Volume 32IN CHRIST NO CONDEMNATION Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] There is no

condemnation to themit is gone, and gone forever. Not only is part of it removed, but the whole of it is gone. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. This is their legal status before Godin Christ Jesus, without condemnation. And this is their character

1. Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Their daily conversation is according to their new spiritual nature and according to the guidance of the Holy Spiritnot according to their fleshly nature and the guidance of self and Satan.

2. For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the Law of life and death. It cannot any longer rule me and it cannot now condemn me. I am free from it, for I am now under the new and higher Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

3, 4. For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. [See Sermons #699,

Volume 12SIN CONDEMNED AND EXECUTED BY CHRIST JESUS and #2228, Volume 37THE LAWS FAILURE AND FULFILLMENTRead/download both sermons, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] If there are any men in the world who keep the Law of God, they are the very persons who do not hope to be saved by the keeping of it, for they have by faith found righteousness in Christ! And now by love and gratitude they are put under the power of the Law of the spiritual life in Christ and they so live, by Gods Grace, that they do manifest the holiness of the Law in their lives.

5. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh. They care for nothing elsethey are satisfied as long as their appetites are gratified. They are of this world and the things of this world fill them to the brim.

5. But they that are after the Spirit [do mind] the things of the Spirit. Spiritual joys, spiritual hopes, spiritual pursuitsthese belong only to those who are spiritual!

6. For to be carnally mindedTo be fleshly minded   
6. Is death. That is what it comes to, for the flesh comes to death at last and, after death, it goes to corruption. If we live after that carnal fashion, this will be the end of our livingdeath.   
6. But to be spiritually minded is life and peace. For the spirit will never die and the spirit has that within it which will bring it perfect peace.   
7, 8. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Those that have never been born-again, so as to be in the Spirit, are still just as they were bornin the fleshso they cannot please God. Do what they may, there is an essential impurity about their nature so that they cannot be well-pleasing unto God. We must be born-again! We must become spiritual by the new birth which is worked by the Holy Spirit or else it is impossible for us to please God! O you who are trying your best to please God apart from the new birth and apart from Christ, see how this iron bar is put across your paththey that are in the flesh cannot please God. Go, then, to Him and ask Him to give you of His Spirit that you may be spiritual and no longer carnal!   
9. But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. It does not matter what he calls himselfhe may be a preacher, he may be a bishopif he has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His, and if he has the Spirit of Christ, though he may be the most obscure person on earth, he belongs to Christ!   
10. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin. The Grace of God has not changed the bodyit still remains earth, dustworms meatand it must die unless Christ should come and transform it by His coming. The body is dead because of sin and, therefore, come those aches and pains, that heaviness, that weariness, that decay, those infirmities of age which we experience as long as we bear about with us this body of death!   
10. But the Spirit is life because of righteousness. There is a living power within us which triumphs over this dying, decaying body! So we rejoice notwithstanding all our afflictions, trials and depressions.   
11. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you. There is to be an emancipation even for this poor flesha translation and a Glory, for it is yet in Christ.   
12. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the

flesh. [See Sermon #96, Volume 2THE CHRISTIANA DEBTORRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Certainly not, for we owe the

flesh nothing! It keeps us down and hampers us. It is a hindrance to us and we certainly owe it nothing! So let us not be subservient to it, let us not consult or even consider it and especially let us never come under its fatal bondage!

13. For if you live after the flesh, you shall die. It is a dying thing, and you shall die if you live after its dying fashion.   
13. But if you, through the SpiritThat living, immortal power.   
13, 14. Do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God. [See Sermon #1220, Volume

21THE LEADING OF THE SPIRIT, THE SECRET TOKENS OF THE SON OF GODRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Oh, high dignity and

blessed privilege! As soon as we get away from the dominion of the flesh and come to be led by the Spirit of God, and so become spiritual men, we have the evidence that we are the sons of God, for God is a Spirit, so His sons must be spiritual.

15. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear. We did have it once, and it worked some good effect upon us for the time being. When we were under the Law, we felt ourselves to be in slavery, and that made us go to Christ for liberty.

15. But you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Oh, blessed, blessed state of heart to feel that now we are born into the family of God and that the choice word which no slave might ever pronounce may now be pronounced by us, Abba! It is a childs word, such as a little child utters when he first opens his mouth to speak, and it runs the same both backwards and forwardsAB-BA. Oh to have a childlike spirit that in whatever state of heart I am, I may still be able to say, in the accents even of spiritual infancy, Abba, Father!

16. The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the

children of God. [See Sermons #339, Volume 6THE SONS OF GOD; #402, Volume 7THE JOINT-HEIRS AND THEIR DIVINE PORTION and #2961, Volume 51HEIRS OF GOD Read/download all these sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] What better

testimony can we have than that of these two witnesses, first of our own spirit and then of the Holy Spirit, Himself, that we are the children of God? Note that this is not spoken concerning everybody. The doctrine of the universal Fatherhood of God is a doctrine of the fleshnot of the Spiritit is not taught anywhere in Gods Word. This is a Fatherhood which relates only to those who are spiritualwe are born into it by the new birth and brought into it by an act of Divine Grace in adoption. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, this is a special privilege that belongs only to those who are spiritual!

17, 18. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the Glory which shall be revealed in us. Do we suffer now? Then let us wait for something better that is yet to come! Yes, we do suffer, and in this we are in accord with the whole creation of God, for the whole creation is just now, as it were, enduring birth pangs. There is something better coming, but meanwhile it is troubled and perplexed, moaning and groaning.

19-22 . For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. See how it often weeps in the superabundant rain that seems like a minor deluge! Note how, at times, Creations very bowels seem to be tossed and torn with pain and agony by volcanoes and earthquakes. Mark the tempests, tornadoes, hurricanes and all kinds of ills that sweep over the globe, leaving devastation in their track! And the globe itself is wrapped in swaddling bands of mist, and shines not out like its sister stars in its pristine brightness and splendor. The animal creation, too, wears the yoke of bondage. How unnecessarily heavy have men often made that yoke!

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1137 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

TO SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS AND OTHER SOUL-WINNERS   
NO. 1137

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 19, 1873, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one converts him, let him know, that he which converts the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. James 5:19, 20.

JAMES is pre-eminently practical. If he were, indeed, the James who was called, The Just, I can understand how he earned the title, for that distinguishing trait in his character shows itself in his Epistle, and if he were the Lords brother, he did well to show so close a resemblance to his great Relative and Master who commenced His ministry with the practical Sermon on the Mount.

We ought to be very grateful that in the Holy Scriptures we have food for all classes of Believers and employment for all the faculties of the saints. It was right that the contemplative should be furnished with abundant subjects for thoughtPaul has supplied themhe has given to us sound doctrine, arranged in the symmetry of exact order. He has given us deep thoughts and profound teachings. He has opened up the deep things of God. No man who is inclined to reflection and thoughtfulness will be without food so long as the Epistles of Paul are extant, for he feeds the soul with sacred manna.

For those whose predominating affections and imagination incline them to more mystic themes, John has written sentences aglow with devotion and blazing with love. We have his simple but sublime Epistles, Epistles which, when you glance at them, seem in their wording to be fit for children, but when examined, their sense is seen to be too sublime to be fully grasped by the most advanced of men. You have from that same eagledeyed and eagle-winged Apostle the wondrous visions of the Revelation where awe, devotion and imagination may enlarge their flight and find scope for the fullest exercise.

There will always be, however, a class of persons who are more practical than contemplative, more active than imaginative. And it was wise that there should be a James, whose main point should be to stir up their pure minds by way of remembrance and help them to persevere in the practical Graces of the Holy Spirit. The text before me is perhaps the most practical utterance of the whole Epistle. The whole Epistle burns, but this ascends in flames to Heaven! It is the culmination as it is the conclusion of the letter. There is not a word to spare in it. It is like a naked sword, stripped of its jeweled scabbard and presented to us with nothing to note but its keen edge.

I wish I could preach after the fashion of the text, but if I cannot, I will at least pray that you may act after the fashion of it. Downright living for the Lord Jesus is sadly needed in many quarters. Christian garnishing we have enough of, but solid, everyday, actual work for God is what we need. If our lives, however unornamented they may be by leaves of literary or polite attainments, shall, nevertheless, bring forth fruit unto God in the form of souls converted by our efforts, it will be well. They will then stand forth before the Lord with the beauty of the olive trees, which consist in its fruitfulness.

I call your attention very earnestly to three matters. First, here is a special case dealt withIf any of you do err from the truth, and one converts him. While speaking of that special case the Apostle declares a general fact, He who converts the sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins. When I have spoken of these two points, I mean, thirdly, to make a particular application of the textnot at all intended by the Apostle, but I believe abundantly justifiedan application of the text to increased effort for the conversion of children.

I. First, then, here is A SPECIAL CASE DEALT WITH. Read the verse and you will see that it was that of a backslider from the visible Church of God. The words, If any of you, must refer to a professed Christian. The erring one had been named by the name of Jesus and for awhile had followed the Truth of God. But in an evil hour he had been betrayed into doctrinal error and had erred from the Truth. It was not merely that he fell into a mistake upon some lesser matter which might be compared to the fringe of the Gospel, but he erred in some vital doctrinehe departed from the faith in its fundamentals. There are some Truths of God which must be believedthey are essential to salvationand if not heartily accepted the soul will be ruined. This man had professed orthodoxy, but he turned aside from the Truth on an essential point.

Now, in those days the saints did not say, as the sham saints do now, We must be largely charitable and leave this Brother to his own opinion. He sees the Truth of God from a different standpoint and has a rather different way of putting itbut his opinions are as good as our ownand we must not say that he is in error. That is at present the fashionable way of trifling with Divine Truth and making things pleasant all round. Thus the Gospel is debased and another gospel propagated. I should like to ask modern Broad Churchmen whether there is any doctrine of any sort for which it would be worth a mans while to burn or to lie in prison. I do not believe they could give me an answer, for if their latitudinarianism is correct, the martyrs were fools of the first magnitude!

From their writings and their teachings, it appears to me that the modern thinkers treat the whole compass of revealed Truth with entire indifference and, though perhaps they may feel sorry that wilder spirits should go too far in free thinking, and though they had rather they would be more moderate, yet, upon the whole, so large is their liberality that they are not sure enough of anything to be able to condemn the reverse of it as a deadly error. To them black and white are terms which may be applied to the same color, as you view it from different standpoints. Yes, and so are equally true in their esteem. Their theology shifts like the Goodwin Sands and they regard all firmness as so much bigotry. Errors and truths are equally comprehensible within the circle of their charity.

It was not in this way that the Apostles regarded error. They did not prescribe large-hearted charity towards falsehood, or hold up the errorist as a man of deep thought whose views were refreshingly original. Far less did they utter some wicked nonsense about the probability of there living more faith in honest doubt than in half the creeds. They did not believe in justification by doubting, as our neologians do. They set about the conversion of the erring professorthey treated him as a person who needed conversionand viewed him as a man who, if he were not converted, would suffer the death of his soul and be covered with a multitude of sins.

They were not such easy-going people as our cultured friends of the school of modern thought, who have learned, at last, that the Deity of Christ may be denied, the work of the Holy Spirit ignored, the Inspiration of Scripture rejected, the Atonement disbelieved and regeneration dispensed with! They say the man who does all this may be as good a Christian as the most devout Believer! O God, deliver us from this deceitful infidelity which, while it does damage to the erring man, and often prevents his being reclaimed, does yet more mischief to our own hearts by teaching us that Your Truth is unimportant, falsehood a trifle and so destroys our allegiance to the God of Truth and makes us traitors, instead of loyal subjects, to the King of kings!

It appears from our text that this man, having erred from the Truth, followed the natural logical consequence of doctrinal error and erred in his life as well, for the 20th verse, which must, of course, be read in connection with the 19th , speaks of him as a sinner converted from the error of his way. His way went wrong after his thought had gone wrong. You cannot deviate from Truth without being wrong, in some measureat any rate, deviating from practical righteousness. This man had erred from right acting because he had erred from right

believing. Suppose a man shall imbibe a doctrine which leads him to think little of Christ? He will soon have little faith in Him and become little obedient to Him and so will wander into self-righteousness or licentiousness.

Let him think lightly of the punishment of sin and it is natural that he will commit sin with less compunction and burst through all restraints. Let him deny the need of the Atonement and the same result will follow if he acts out his belief. Every error has its own outgrowth, as all decay has its appropriate fungus. It is in vain for us to imagine that holiness will be as readily produced from erroneous as from truthful doctrine! Do men gather grapes off thorns, or figs off thistles? The facts of history prove the contrary.

When the Truth of God is dominant, morality and holiness are abundant. But when error comes to the front, godly living retreats in shame. The point aimed at with regard to this sinner in thought and deed was his conversionthe turning of him around, the bringing him to right thinking and to right acting. Alas, many professed Christians do not look upon

backsliders in this lightneither do they regard them as hopeful subjects for conversion. I have known a person who has erred hunted down like a wolf. He was wrong to some degree, but that wrong has been aggravated and dwelt upon till the man has been worried into defiance! The fault has been exaggerated into a double wrong by ferocious attacks upon it. The manhood of the man has taken sides with his error because he has been so severely handled. The man has been compelled, sinfully, I admit, to take up an extreme position and to go further into mischief, because he could not stand to be denounced instead of being reasoned with.

And when a man has been blameworthy in his life, it will often happen that his fault will be blazed abroad, retailed from mouth to mouth, and magnified until the poor erring one has felt degradedand having lost all self-respecthas given way to far more dreadful sins. The object of some professors seems to be to amputate the limb rather than to heal it. Justice has reigned instead of Mercy. Away with him! He is too foul to be washed, too diseased to be restored! This is not according to the mind of Christ, nor after the model of Apostolic Churches. In the days of James, if any erred from the Truth and from holiness, there were Brethren found who sought their recovery and whose joy it was, thus, to save a soul from death and to hide a multitude of sins.

There is something very significant in that expression, Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth. It is akin to that other word, Considering yourself, also, lest you also be tempted, and that other exhortation, Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. He who has erred was one of yourselves, one who sat with you at the Communion Table, one with whom you took street counsel. He has been deceived and by the subtlety of Satan he has been decoyed. But do not judge him harshly. Above all do not leave him to perish unpitied. If he never was a saved man, he is still your Brother and it should be your business to bring back the prodigal, and so to make glad your Fathers heart. Still, for all his slips, he is one of Gods children.

Follow him up and do not rest till you lead him home again. And if he is not a child of God. If his professed conversion was a mistake, or a pretenceif he only made a profession, but had not the possession of vital godlinessyet still follow him with sacred importunity of love remembering how terrible will be his doom for daring to play the hypocrite and profane holy things with his unhallowed hands. Weep over him if you feel compelled to suspect that he has been a willful deceiver, for there is sevenfold cause for weeping. If you cannot resist the feeling that he never was sincere, but crept into the Church under cover of a false profession, I say, sorrow over him the more, for his doom must be the more terrible and, therefore, the greater should be your commiseration for him. Seek his conversion, still.

The text gives us clear indications as to the persons who are to aim at the conversion of erring Brethren. It says, If any of you do err from the truth, and one converts him. One what? One minister? No, anyone among the Brethren. If the minister shall be the means of the restoration of a backslider, he is a happy man and a good deed has been done. But there is nothing said here concerning preachers or pastors, not even a hint is givenit is left open to any member of the Church. And the plain inference, I think, is thisthat every Church member seeing his Brother err from the truth, or else in practice, should set himself, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to this business of converting this special sinner from the error of his way.

Look after strangers by all means, but neglect not your Brothers and Sisters. It is the business, not of certain officers appointed by the vote of the Church hereunto, but of every member of the body of Jesus Christ, to seek the good of all the other members. Still there are certain members upon whom in any one case this may be more imperative. For instance, in the case of a young Believer, his father and his mother, if they are Believers, are called upon by a sevenfold obligation to seek the conversion of their backsliding child. In the case of a husband, none should be so earnest for his restoration as his wifeand the same rule holds good with regard to the wife. So, also if the connection is that of friendship, he with whom you have had the best acquaintance should lie nearest to your heartand when you perceive that he has gone aside, you should, above all others, act the shepherd towards him with kindly zeal.

You are bound to do this to all your fellow Christians, but doubly bound to do it to those over whom you possess an influence which has been gained by former intimacy, by relationship, or by any other means. I beseech you, therefore, watch over one another in the Lord and when you see a Brother overtaken in a fault, you which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness. You see your dutydo not neglect it! Brethren, it ought to cheer us to know that the attempt to convert a man who has erred from the Truth of God is a hopeful one. It is one in which success may be looked for and when the success comes it will be of the most joyful character.

Verily it is a great joy to capture the wild, wandering sinner, but the joy of joys is to find the lost sheep which was once really in the fold and has sadly gone astray. It is a great thing to transmute a piece of brass into silver, but to the poor woman it was joy enough to find the piece of silver which was silver, already, and had the kings stamp on it, though for awhile it was lost. To bring in a stranger and an alien and to adopt him as a son suggests a festivalbut the most joyous feasting and the loudest music are for the son who was always a son, but had played the prodigaland yet after being lost was found, and after being dead was made alive again!

I say, ring the bells twice for the reclaimed backslider! Ring them till the steeple rocks and reels! Rejoice doubly over that which had gone astray and was ready to perish, but has now been restored. John was glad when he found poor backsliding, but weeping Peter, who had denied his Master. He cheered and comforted him, and consorted with him till the Lord, Himself, had said, Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me? It may not appear so brilliant a thing to bring back a backslider as to reclaim a harlot or a drunkbut in the sight of God it is no small miracle of Grace and to the instrument who has performed it, it shall yield no small comfort.

Seek, then, my Brothers and Sisters, those who were of us but have gone from us! Seek those who still linger in the congregation but have disgraced the Church and are put away from us, and rightly so, because we cannot countenance their uncleanness. Seek them with prayers, tears and entreaties, if perhaps God may grant them repentance that they may be saved. Here I would say to any backsliders who are present, let this text cheer you if you have a desire to return to God. Return, you backsliding children, for the Lord has bid His people seek you! If He had not cared for you He would not have spoken of our search after you. But having put it so and made it the duty of all His people to seek those who err from the faiththere is an open door before youand there are hundreds who sit waiting like porters at the gate to welcome you!

Come back to the God whom you have forsaken, or if you never did know Him, O that this day His Spirit may break your hearts and lead you to true repentance, that you may in real truth be saved! God bless you, poor Backsliders! If He does not save you, a multitude of sins will be upon you and you must eternally die. God have mercy upon you, for Christs sake.

II. We have opened up the special case and we have now to dwell upon a GENERAL FACT. This general fact is important and we are bound to give it special attention, since it is prefaced with the words, Let him know. If any one of you has been the means of bringing back a backslider, it is said, Let him know. That is, let him think of it, be sure of it, be comforted by it, be inspirited by it. Let him know it, and never doubt it. Do not merely hear it this morning, beloved fellow Laborer, but let it sink deep into your heart.

When an Apostle Inspired of the Holy Spirit, says, Let him know, I evoke you, do not let any indolence of spirit forbid your ascertaining the full weight of the Truth. What is it that you are to know? To know that he who converts a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death! This is something worth knowing, is it not? To save a soul from death is no small matter. Why, we have men among us whom we honor every time we cast our eyes upon them, for they have saved many precious lives! They have manned the lifeboat or they have plunged into the river to rescue the drowning. They have been ready to risk their own lives amid burning timbers that they might snatch the perishing from the devouring flames. True heroes, these, far worthier of renown than your bloodstained men of war. God bless the brave hearts! May England never lack a body of worthy men to make her shores illustrious for humanity.

When we see a fellow creature exposed to danger our pulse beats quickly and we are agitated with desire to save him. Is it not so? But the saving of a soul from death is a far greater matter! Let us think what that death is! It is not non-existence. I do not know that I would lift a finger to save my fellow creature from mere non-existence! I see no great hurt in annihilationcertainly nothing that would alarm me as a punishment for sin. Just as I see no great joy in mere eternal existence if that is all that is meant by eternal life, so I discern no terror in ceasing to be. I would as soon not be as be, so far as mere colorless being or not being is concerned.

But eternal life in Scripture means a very different thing to eternal existence. It means existing with all the faculties developed in fullness of joy existing not as the dried herb in the hay, but as the flower in all its beauty. To die, in Scripture, and, indeed, in common language, is not to cease to exist! Very wide is the difference between the two words to die and to be annihilated. To die as to the first death is the separation of the body from the soulit is the resolution of our nature into its component elements. To die the second death is to separate the man, soul and body, from his God, who is the life and joy of our manhood. This is eternal destruction from the Presence of the Lord and from the Glory of His power. This is to have the palace of manhood destroyed and turned into a desolate ruin for the howling dragon of remorse and the hooting owl of despairforever.

The descriptions which Holy Scripture gives of the second death are terrible to the last degree. It speaks of a worm that never dies. A fire that never can be quenched. Of the terror of the Lord and tearing in pieces. Of the smoke of their torment which goes up forever and ever. And of the pit which has no bottom. I am not about to bring all these terrible things together, but there are words in Scripture which, if pondered, might make the flesh creep and the hair stand on end at the very thought of the Judgment to come. Our joy is that if any of us are made, in Gods hands, the means of converting a man from the error of his ways, we shall have saved a soul from this eternal death! That dreadful Hell the saved one will not know. That wrath he will not feel. That being banished from the Presence of God will never happen to him! Is there not a joy worth worlds in all this?

Remember the addition to the picture. If you have saved a soul from death you have introduced it into eternal life. By Gods good Grace there will be another chorister among the white-robed host to sing Jehovahs praise! Another hand to smite eternally the harp strings of adoring gratitude. Another sinner saved to reward the Redeemer for His passion. Oh, the happiness of having saved a soul from death! And it is added, that in such case you will have covered a multitude of sins. We understand this to mean that the result of the conversion of any sinner will be the covering up of all his sins by the atoning blood of Jesus. How many those sins are, in any case, none of us can tell, but if any man is converted from the error of his ways, the whole mass of his sins will be drowned in the red sea of Jesus blood and washed away forever.

Now remember, your Savior came to this world with two objectsHe came to destroy death and to put away sin. If you convert a sinner from the error of his ways you are made like He in both these works. After your manner, in the power of the Spirit of God, you overcome death by snatching a soul from the second death, and you also put away sin from the sight of God by hiding a multitude of sins beneath the Propitiation of the Lord Jesus. Observe here that the Apostle offers no other inducement for soul-winners. He does not say if you convert a sinner from the error of his

ways you will have honor. True philanthropy scorns such a motive!

He does not say if you convert a sinner from the error of his ways you will have the respect of the Church and the love of the individual. Such will be the case, but we are moved by far nobler motives! The joy of doing good is found in the good itselfthe reward of a deed of love is found in its own result. If we have saved a soul from death and hidden a multitude of sins, that is payment enough, though no ear should ever hear of the deed and no pen should ever record it. Let it be forgotten that we were the instrument, if good is but effected. It shall give us joy even if we are not appreciated and are left in the cold shade of forgetfulness. Yes, if others wear the honors of the good deed which the Lord has worked by us, we will not murmurit shall be joy, enough, to know that a soul has been saved from deathand a multitude of sins have been covered.

And, dear Brothers and Sisters, let us remember that the saving of souls from death honors Jesus, for there is no saving souls except through His blood. As for you and for me, what can we do in saving a soul from death? Of ourselves nothing, any more than that pen which lies upon the table could write Pilgrims Progress! Yet let a Bunyan grasp the pen and the matchless work is written. So you and I can do nothing to convert souls till Gods eternal Spirit takes us in handbut then He can do wonders by us and get Himself glory by usand it shall be joy enough for us to know that Jesus is honored and the Spirit magnified! Nobody talks of Homers pen. No one has encased it in gold, or published its illustrious achievements. Nor do we wish for honor among menit will be enough for us to have been the pen in the Saviors hand with which He has written the Covenant of His Grace upon the fleshy tablets of human hearts. These are golden wages for a man who really loves his Master Jesus is glorifiedsinners are saved.

Now I want you to notice, particularly, that all that is said by the Apostle, here, is about the conversion of one person. If any of you do err from the truth, and one converts him, let him know that he who converts the sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death. Have you ever wished you were a Whitfield? Have you ever felt, young man, in your inmost soul, great aspirations to be another McCheyne, or Brainerd, or Moffat? Cultivate the aspiration, but at the same time be happy to bring one sinner to Jesus Christ, for he who converts one is bid to know that no mean thing is done! He has saved a soul from death and covered a multitude of sins. And it does not say anything about the person who is the means of this work. It is not said, If a minister shall convert a man, or if some noted eloquent Divine shall have worked it.

If this deed shall be performed by the least babe in our Israel. If a little child shall tell the tale of Jesus to its father. If a servant girl shall drop a tract where some one poor soul shall find it and receive salvation. If the most humble preacher at the street corner shall have spoken to the thief or to the harlot, and such shall be saved, let him know that he that turns any sinner from the error of his ways, whoever he may be, has saved a soul from death and covered a multitude of sins! Now, Beloved, what comes out of this but these suggestions? Let us long to be used in the conversion of sinners! James does not speak concerning the Holy Spirit in this passage, nor of Jesus Christ, for he was writing to those who would not fail to remember the important Truths of God which concern both the Spirit and the Son of God. But yet it may be right, here, to remind you that we cannot do spiritual good to our fellow creatures apart from the Spirit of God. Neither can we be blessed to them if we do not preach to them Jesus Christ and Him crucified. God must use us, but oh, let us long to be used! Pray to be used and cry to be used!

Dear Brothers and Sisters, let us purge ourselves of everything that would prevent our being employed by the Lord! If there is anything we are doing, or undoing, any evil we are harboring, or any Grace we are neglecting which may make us unfit to be used of God, let us pray the Lord to cleanse, mend and scour us till we are vessels fit for the Masters use. Then let us be on the watch for opportunities of usefulness. Let us go about the world with our ears and our eyes open, ready to take advantage of every occasion for doing good. Let us not be content till we are useful and make this the main design and ambition of our lives. Somehow or other we must, and will, bring souls to Jesus Christ!

As Rachel cried, Give me children, or I die, so may none of you be content to be barren in the household of God! Cry and sigh until you have snatched some brand from the burning and have brought at least one to Jesus Christ, that so you, also, may have saved a soul from death and covered a multitude of sins.

III. And, now, a few minutes, only, to the point which is not in the text. I want to make A PARTICULAR APPLICATION of this whole subject to the conversion of children. Beloved Friends, I hope you do not altogether forget the Sunday school. And yet I am afraid a great many Christians are scarcely aware that there are such things as Sunday schools at all. They know it by hearsay but not by observation. Probably in the course of 20 years they have never visited the school, or concerned themselves about it. They would be gratified to hear of any success accomplished, but though they may not have heard anything about the matter, one way or the other, they are well content.

In most Churches you will find a band of young and ardent spirits giving themselves to Sunday school work. But there are numbers of others who might greatly strengthen the school who never attempt anything of the sort. In this they might be excused if they had other work to do. But, unfortunately, they have no godly occupation but are mere killers of timewhile this work which lies ready to hand, and is accessible and demands their assistanceis entirely neglected. I will not say there are any such sluggards here, but I am not able to believe that we are quite free from them, and therefore I will ask Conscience to do its work with the guilty parties.

Children need to be saved! Children may be saved! Children are to be saved by instrumentality! Children may be saved while they are children. He who said, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven, never intended that His

Church should say, We will look after the children by-and-by when they have grown up to be young men and women. He intended that it should be a subject of prayer and earnest endeavor that children, as children, should be converted to God! The conversion of a child involves the same work of Divine Grace and results in the same blessed consequences as the conversion of an adult.

There is the saving of the soul from death, in the childs case, and the hiding of a multitude of sins. But there is this additional matter for joy that a great preventive work is done when the young are converted. Conversion saves a child from a multitude of sins. If Gods eternal mercy shall bless your teaching to a little prattler, how happy that boys life will be compared with what it might have been if it had grown up in folly, sin, shame and had only been converted after many years! It is the highest wisdom and the truest prudence to pray for our children that while they are yet young their hearts may be given to the Savior

*It will save them from a thousand snares, To mind religion young.   
Grace will preserve their following years,   
And make their virtues strong.*

To reclaim the prodigal is well, but to save him from ever being a prodigal is better! To bring back the thief and the drunk is a praiseworthy action, but so to act that the boy or girl shall never become a thief or a drunk is far better!

Therefore Sunday school instruction stands very high in the list of philanthropic enterprises and Christians ought to be most earnest in it. He who converts a child from the error of his way prevents, as well as covers, a multitude of sins. And, moreover, it gives the Church the hope of being furnished with the best of men and women. The Churchs Samuels and Solomons are made wise in their youth. Davids and Josiahs were tender of heart when they were tender in years. Read the lives of the most eminent ministers and you shall usually find that their Christian history began early. Though it is not absolutely necessary, yet it is highly propitious to the growth of a well-developed Christian character, that its foundation should be laid on the bottom of youthful piety.

I do not expect to see the churches of Jesus Christ ordinarily built up by those who have, through life, lived in sin, but by the bringing up in their midst, in the fear and admonition of the Lord, young men and women who become pillars in the House of our God. If we want strong Christians we must look to those who were Christians in their youth. Trees must be planted in the courts of the Lord while yet young if they are to flourish well and long. And, Brothers and Sisters, I feel that the work of teaching the young has, at this time, an importance superior to any which it ever had before, for at this time there are abroad those who are creeping into our houses and deluding men and women with their false doctrine. Let the Sunday schools of England teach the children well!

Let them not merely occupy their time with pious phrases, but let them teach them the whole Gospel and the Doctrines of Grace intelligently. And let them pray over the children and never be satisfied unless the children are turned to the Lord Jesus Christ and added to the Churchand then I shall not be afraid of Popery. Popish priests said of old that they could have won England back, again, to Rome, if it had not been for the catechizing of the children. We have laid aside catechisms, I think with too little reason, but at any rate, if we do not use godly catechisms we must bring back decided, plain, simple teachingand there must be pleading and praying for the conversion of the childrenthe immediate conversion of children unto the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Spirit of God waits to help us in this effort. He is with us if we are with Him. He is ready to bless the most humble teacher and even the infant classes shall not be without a benediction. He can give us words and thoughts suitable to our little auditory. He can so bless us that we shall know how to speak a word in season to the youthful ear. And oh, if it is not so, if teachers are not found, or, being found, are unfaithful, we shall see the children that have been in our schools go back into the world like their parentshating religion because of the tedium of the hours spent in Sunday schooland we shall produce a race of infidels, or a generation of superstitious persons! The golden opportunity will be lost and most solemn responsibility will rest upon us. I pray the Church of God to think much of the Sunday school. I beseech all lovers of the nation to pray for Sunday schools. I entreat all who love Jesus Christ and would see His kingdom come, to be very tender towards all youthful people and to pray that their hearts may be won to Jesus.

I have not spoken, this morning, as I should like to speak, but the theme lies very near my heart. It is one which ought to press heavily upon all our consciences, but I must leave it. God must lead your thoughts into it. I leave it, but not till I have asked these questionsWhat have you been doing for the conversion of children, each one of you? What have you done for the conversion of your own children? Are you quite clear upon that matter? Do you ever put your arms around your boys neck and pray for him and with him? Father, you will find that such an act will exercise great influence over your lad. Mother, do you ever talk to your little daughter about Christ and Him Crucified? Under Gods hands you may be a spiritual as well as a natural mother to that well-beloved child of yours.

What are you doing, you who are guardians and teachers of youth? Are you clear about their souls? You weekday schoolmasters, as well as you who labor on Sundayare you doing all you should that your boys and girls may be brought, early, to confess the Lord? I leave it with yourselves. You shall receive a great reward if, when you enter Heaven, as I trust you will, you shall find many dear children there to welcome you into eternal happiness! It will add another Heaven to your own Heaven, to meet with heavenly beings who shall salute you as their teacher who brought them to Jesus. I would not wish to go to Heaven alonewould you?

I would not wish to have a crown in Heaven without a star in it because no soul was ever saved by my meanswould you? There they go, the sacred flock of blood-bought sheep! The great Shepherd leads them. Many of them are followed by twins, and others have, each one, their lamb. Would you like to be a barren sheep of the great Shepherds flock? The scene changes. Hearken to the tramping of a great host! I hear their war music.

My ears are filled with their songs of victory! The warriors are coming home and each one is bringing his trophy on his shoulder, to the honor of the great Captain. They stream through the gate of pearl! They march in triumph to the celestial Capitol, along the golden streets, and each soldier bears with him his own portion of the spoil. Will you be there? And being there will you march without a trophy and add nothing to the pomp of the triumph? Will you bear nothing that you have won in battle, nothing which you have ever taken for Jesus with your sword and with your bow?

Again, another scene is before me: I hear them shout the harvest home and see the reapers bearing, everyone, his sheaf. Some of them are bowed down with the heaps of sheaves which load the happy shoulders these went forth weeping, but they have come again rejoicingbringing the sheaves with them. Yonder comes one who bears but a little handful, but it is rich grainhe had but a tiny plot and a little seed corn entrusted to himand it has multiplied well according to the rule of proportion. Will you be there without so much as a solitary ear? Never having plowed nor sown, and therefore never having reaped? If so, every shout of every reaper might well strike a fresh pang into your heart as you remember that you did not sowand therefore could not reap.

If you do not love my Master, do not profess to do so! If He never bought you with His blood, do not lie to Him and come to His Table and say that you are His servant! But if His dear wounds bought you, give yourself to Him and if you love Him feed His sheep and feed His lambs! He stands here unseen by my sight, but recognized by my faith! He exhibits to you the marks of the wounds upon His hands and His feet, and He says to you, Peace be unto you! As My Father has sent Me, even so I send you. Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, and know this, that he that converts a sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

Good Master, help us to serve you! Amen.   
PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONJames 5.   
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CONVERSION   
NO. 45

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, OCTOBER 7, 1855, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

Brethren, if any of you do err from the Truth and one converts him, let him know that he who converts the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death,   
and shall hide a multitude of sins.   
James 5:19, 20.

THE true Believer is always pleased to hear of anything which concerns the salvation of his own soul. He rejoices to hear of the Covenant plan drawn up for him from all eternity, of the great fulfillment on the Cross at Calvary, of all the stipulations of the Savior, of the application of them by the Holy Spirit, of the security which the Believer has in the Person of Christ and of those gifts and Graces which accompany salvation to all those who are heirs thereof. But I feel certain that deeply pleased as we are when we hear of things touching our own salvation and deliverance from Hell, we, as preachers of God and as new creatures in Christ, being made like unto Him, have true benevolence of spirit and, therefore, are always delighted when we hear, speak, or think concerning the salvation of others! Next to our own salvation, I am sure as Christians we shall always prize the salvation of other people. We shall always desire that what has been so sweet to our own taste may also be tasted by others. And what has been of so inestimably precious a value to our own souls may also become the property of all those whom God may please to call unto everlasting life. I am sure, Beloved, now that I am about to preach concerning the conversion of the ungodly, you will take as deep an interest in it as if it were something that immediately concerned your own souls! After all, such were some of you once! You were unconverted and ungodly! And had not God taken thought for you and set His people to strive for your souls, where had you been? Seek then, to exercise that charity and benevolence towards others which God and Gods people first exercised towards you.

Our text has in it, first of all, a principle involvedthat of instrumentality. Brethren, if any of you do err from the Truth and one converts him, let him know that he who converts the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death. Secondly, here is a general fact stated He who converts the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. And thirdly, there is a particular application of this fact made. Brethren, if any of you do err from the Truth and one converts himthat is the same principle as when a sinner is convertedfrom the error of his way.

I. First then, here is a great principle involveda very important one that of INSTRUMENTALITY. God has been pleased in His inscrutable wisdom and intelligence to work the conversion of others by instrumentality. True, He does not in all cases do so, but it is His general way. Instrumentality is the plan of the universe. In the new creation it is almost always Gods invariable rule to convert by means of instruments. Now we will make one or two brief remarks upon this first principle.

First then, we say that instrumentality is not necessary with God. God can, if He pleases, convert souls without any instruments whatever. The mighty Maker who chooses to use the sword sometimes can, if He pleases, slay without it. He who uses the workman, the trowel, and the hammer can, if He so sees fit, build the house in a moment! And from the foundation-stone even to the topstone thereof can complete it by the Words of His own mouth. We never hear of any instrumentality used in the conversion of Abraham. He lived in a land in the midst of idolaters. He was called from Ur of the Chaldees and from there God called him and brought him to Canaan by an immediate voicedoubtless from aboveby Gods own agency without the employment of any Prophet. For we read of none who could, as far as we can see, have preached to Abraham and taught him the Truths of God. Then in modern times we have a mighty instance of the power of God in converting without human might. Saul, on his journey towards Damascusupon his horse, fiery and full of fury against the children of Godis hastening to hail men and women and cast them into prison. To bring them bound unto Jerusalem. But suddenly a voice is heard from Heaven, Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute Me? And Saul was a new man! No minister was his spiritual parent, no book could claim him as its convert. No human voice, but the immediate utterance of Jesus Christ, Himselfat once, then and there, and upon the spotbrought Saul to know the Truth!

Moreover there are some men who never seem to need conversion at all. For we have one instance in Scripture of John the Baptist, of whom it is said, he was filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mothers womb. And I do not know but what there are some who very early in life have a change of heart. It is quite certain that all infants, (who doubtless being, each of them, elect, do ascend to Heaven), undergo a change of heart without instrumentality. And so there may be some concerning whom it may be written that though they were born in sin and shaped in iniquity, yet they were so early taught to know the Lord, so soon brought to His name, that it must have been almost without instrumentality at all! God can, if He pleases, cast the instrument aside! The mighty Maker of the world who used no angels to beat out the great mass of Nature and fashion it into a round globe. He who without hammer or anvil fashioned this glorious world can, if He pleases, speak, and it is done! He can command, and it shall stand fast! He needs not instruments, though he uses them.

Secondly, we make another remark, which is that instrumentality is very honorable to God, and not dishonorable. One would think, perhaps, at first sight that it would reflect more glory to God if He effected all conversions, Himself, without the use of men. But that is a great mistake. It is as honorable to God to convert by means of Christians and others, as it would be if He should effect it alone. Suppose a workman has power and skill with his hands, alone, to fashion a certain article? But you put into his hands the worst tools you can find! You know he can do it well with his hands but these tools are so badly made that they will be the greatest impediment you could lay in his way. Well now, I say if a man with these bad instruments, or these poor toolsthings without edges, that are broken, that are weak and frailis able to make some beautiful fabric, he has more credit from the use of those tools than he would have had if he had done it simply with his hands! The tools, so far from being an advantage, were a disadvantage to him. So far from being a help, are, of my supposition, even a detriment to him in his work! So with regard to human instrumentality. So far from being any assistance to God, we are all hindrances to Him. What is a minister? He is made by God a means of salvation, but it is an amazing thing that anyone so faulty, so imperfect, so little skilled, should yet be blessed of God to bring forth children for the Lord Jesus! It seems as amazing as if a man could fashion rain from fire, or if he could fabricate some precious alabaster vase out of the refuse of the dunghill! God in His mercy does more than make Christians without meansHe takes bad means to make good men and so He even reflects credit on Himself because His instruments are, all of them, such poor things! They are all such earthen vessels that they do not even set out the glory of the gold which they holdlike the foil that sets forth the jewel, or like the dark spot in the painting that makes the light more brilliant! And yet the dark spot and the foil are not, in themselves, costly or valuable. So God uses instruments to set forth His own Glory and to exalt Himself.

This brings us to the other remark, that usually God does employ instruments. Perhaps in one case out of a thousand men are converted by the immediate agency of Godso indeed are all, in one sense. But usually, in 99 cases out of a hundred, God is pleased to use the instrumentality of His ministering servants of His Wordof Christian men or some other means to bring us to the Savior. I have heard of someI remember them, nowwho were called like Saul, at once from Heaven. We can remember the history of the Brother who, in the darkness of the night, was called to know the Savior by what he believed to be a vision from Heaven or some effect on his imagination. On one side he saw a black tablet of his guilt and his soul was delighted to see Christ cast a white tablet over it. And he thought he heard a voice that said, I am He that blots out your transgressions for My own sake and will not remember your sins. He was a man converted almost without any instrumentality. But you do not meet with such a case often. Most persons have been convinced by the pious conversation of sisters, by the holy example of mothers, by the minister, by the Sunday school teacher, or by the reading of tracts or Scripture. Let us not, therefore, believe that God will often work without instruments! Let us not sit down silently and say, God will do His own work. It is quite true He will. But then He does His work by using His children as instruments. He does not say to the Christian when he is converted, Sit down. I have nothing for you to do but I will do all Myself and have all the Glory. No. He says, You are a poor weak instrument. You can do nothing. But lo, I will strengthen you and I will make you thrash the mountains and beat them small, and make the hills as chaff and so shall I get more honor through your having done it than if I would, had My own strong arm flattened the mountains and broken them in pieces!

Now another thought, and that is If God sees fit to make use of any of us for the conversion of others, we must not, therefore, be too sure that we are, ourselves, converted. It is a most solemn thought that God makes use of ungodly men as instruments for the conversion of sinners! And it is strange that some most terrible acts of wickedness have been the means of the conversion of men. When Charles II ordered the Book of Sports to be read in churches, and after the service, the clergyman was required to read to all the people to spend the afternoon in what are called harmless diversions and games that I will not mention hereeven that was made the means of conversion! For one man said within himself, I have always disported myself thus on the Sabbath. But now to hear this read in church! How wicked we must have become! How the whole land must be corrupt. It led him to think of his own corruption and brought him to the Savior! There have been words proceeding, I had almost said from devils, which have been the means of conversion. Grace is not spoiled by the rotten wooden spout it runs through. God did once speak by an ass to Balaam but that did not spoil His Words. So He speaks, not simply by an ass, which He often does, but by something worse than that! He can fill the mouths of ravens with food for an Elijah, and yet the raven is still a raven. We must not suppose because God has made us useful, that we are, therefore, converted!

But then another thing. If God in His mercy does not make us useful to the conversion of sinners, we are not, therefore, to say we are sure we are not the children of God. I believe there are some ministers who have had the painful labor of toiling from year to year without seeing a single soul regenerated. Yet those men have been faithful to their charge and have well discharged their ministry. I do not say that such cases often occur, but I believe they have occurred sometimes. Yet, mark you, the end of their ministry has been answered, after allfor what is the end of the Gospel ministry? Some will say it is to convert sinners. That is a collateral end. Others will say it is to convert the saints. That is true. But the proper answer to give isit is to glorify God! And God is glorified even in the

damnation of sinners! If I testify to them the Truth of God and they reject His Gospelif I faithfully preach His Truth and they scorn itmy ministry is not therefore void. It has not returned to God void, for even in the punishment of those rebels, He will be glorified! Even in their destruction, He will get Himself honor. And if He cannot get praise from their songs, He will at last get honor from their condemnation and overthrow when He shall cast them into the fire forever! The true motive for which we should always labor is the Glory of God in the conversion of souls, and the building up of Gods people. But let us never lose sight of the great end. Let God be glorified! And He will be, if we preach His Truth faithfully and honestly. Therefore, while we should seek for souls, if God denies them unto us, let us not say, I will not have other mercies that He has given. Rather let us comfort ourselves with the thought that though they are not saved, though Israel is not gathered in, God will glorify and honor us at last!

One thought more upon this subject God, by using us as instruments, confers upon us the highest honor which men can receive. O Beloved, I dare not dilate upon this! It should make our hearts burn at the thought of it. It makes us feel thrice honored that God should use us to convert soulsand it is only the Grace of God which teaches us, on the other hand, that it is Grace, and Grace, alone, which makes us useful which can keep us humble under the thought that we are bringing souls to the Savior! It is a work which he who has once entered, if God has blessed him, cannot renounce! He will be impatient. He will long to win more souls to Jesus. He will think that labor is but ease, so that by any means he may save some and bring men to Jesus. Glory and honor, praise and power be unto God that He thus honors His people! But when He exalts us most, we will still conclude with, Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Your name be all the Glory forever and ever!

II. Secondly, we come to the GENERAL FACT. He who converts the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. The choicest happiness which mortal breast can know is the happiness of benevolenceof doing good to our fellow creatures. To save a body from death is that which gives us almost Heaven on earth! Some men can boast that they have sent so many souls to Hellthat they have hurled many of their fellows out of the world. We meet, now and then, a soldier who can glory that in battle he struck down so many enemythat his swift and cruel sword reached the heart of so many of his enemies. But I dont count that glory! If I thought I had been the means of the death of a single individual, I think I would scarcely rest at night, for the uneasy ghost of that murdered wretch would stare me in my eyes! I would remember I had slain him and, perhaps, sent his soul, unshaven and unwashed, into the Presence of his Maker. It seems amazing to me that men can be found to be soldiersI say not if it is right or wrongstill, I wonder where they can find the men. I know not how, after a battle, they can wash their hands of blood, wipe their swords and put them byand then lie down to slumber and their dreams be undisturbed! I think the tears would fall hot and scalding on my cheeks at night and the shrieks of the dying, and the groans of those approaching eternity would torture my ears! I know not how others can endure it! To me it would be the very portal of Hell, if I could think I had been a destroyer of my fellow creatures.

But what bliss it is to be the instrument of saving bodies from death! Those monks on Mount St. Bernard, surely must feel happiness when they rescue men from death. The dog comes to the door and they know what it means. He has discovered some poor weary traveler who has lain him down to sleep in the snow and is dying from cold and exhaustion. Up rise the monks from their cheerful fire, intent to act the good Samaritan to the lost one! At last they see him! They speak to him but he answers not. They try to discover if there is breath in his body and they think he is dead. They take him up, give him remedies. And hastening to their hostel they lay him by the fire and warm and chafe him, looking into his face with kindly anxiety, as much as to say, Poor creature! Are you dead? When, at last, they perceive some heaving of the lungs, what joy is in the breast of those brethren, as they say, his life is not extinct. I think if there could be happiness on earth, it would be the privilege to help to chafe one hand of that poor, almost dying man and be the means of bringing him to life again! Or suppose another case. A house is in flames and in it is a woman with her child who cannot, by any means, escape. In vain she attempts to come down stairs. The flames prevent her. She has lost all presence of mind and knows not how to act. The strong man comes and says, Make way! Make way! I must save that woman! And cooled by the genial streams of benevolence, he marches through the fire! Though scorched and almost stifled, he gropes his way. He ascends one staircase, then another. And though the stairs totter, he places the woman beneath his arm, takes the child on his shoulder and down he comes! Twice a giant, having more might than he ever possessed before, he has jeopardized his life and, perhaps, an arm may be disabled, or a limb taken away, or a sense lost, or an irretrievable injury done to his bodyyet he claps his hands, and saysI have saved lives from death! The crowd in the street hail him as a man who has been the deliverer of his fellow creatures, honoring him more than the monarch who had stormed a city, sacked a town, and murdered myriads!

But ah, Brothers and Sisters, the body which was saved from death today, may die tomorrow! Not so the soul that is saved from deathit is saved FOREVER! It is saved beyond the fear of destruction! And if there is joy in the breast of a benevolent man when he saves a body from death, how much more blessed must he be when he is made the means in the hands of God of saving a soul from death, and hiding a multitude of sins. Suppose that by some conversation of yours, you are made the means of delivering a soul from death! My Friends, you are apt to imagine that all conversions, under God, are done by the minister. You make a great mistake! There are many conversions effected by a very simple observation from the most humble individual. A single spoken word may be more the means of conversion than a whole sermon! There you sit before me. I thrust at you, but you are too far off. Some Brother, however, addresses an observation to youit is a very stab with a short poignard in your heart. God often blesses a short pithy expression from a friend, more than a long discourse from a minister! There was once, in a village where there had been a revival in religion, a man who was a confirmed infidel. Notwithstanding all the efforts of the minister and many Christian people, he had resisted all attempts and appeared to be more and more confirmed in his sin. At length the people held a Prayer Meeting especially to intercede for his soul. Afterwards God put it into the heart of one of the Elders of the Church to spend a night in prayer on behalf of the poor infidel.

In the morning the Elder rose from his knees, saddled his horse and rode down to the mans smithy. He meant to say a great deal to him, but he simply went up to him, took him by the hand and all he could say was, O Sir! I am deeply concerned for your salvation! I am deeply concerned for your salvation! I have been wrestling with God all this night for your salvation! He could say no more, his heart was too full. He then mounted on his horse and rode away. Down went the blacksmiths hammer and he immediately went to see his wife. She said, What is the matter with you? Matter enough, said the man, I have been attacked with a new argument this time. There is elder B\_\_\_. He has been here this morning. And he said, I am concerned about your salvation. Why now, if he is concerned about my salvation, it is a strange thing that I am not concerned about it. The mans heart was clean captured by that kind word from the Elder. He took his own horse and rode to the Elders house. When he arrived there, the Elder was in his parlor, still in prayer. And they knelt down together. God gave him a contrite spirit and a broken heart and brought that poor sinner to the feet of the Savior! There was a soul saved from death, and a multitude of sins covered.

Again, you may be the means of conversion by a letter you may write. Many of you have not the power to speak or say much. But when you sit down alone in your chamber, you are able, with Gods help, to write a letter to a dear friend of yours. Oh, I think that is a very sweet way to endeavor to be useful! I think I never felt so much earnestness after the souls of my fellow creatures as when I first loved the Saviors name. And though I could not preach and never thought I would be able to testify to the multitude, I used to write texts on little scraps of paper and drop them anywhere, that some poor creatures might pick them up and receive them as messages of mercy to their souls. There is your brother. He is careless and hardened. Sister, sit down and write a letter to him! When he receives it, he will perhaps smile, but he will say, Ah, well! It is Betsys letter, after all! And that will have some power. I knew a gentleman whose dear sister used to write to him often concerning his soul. I used, said he, to stand with my back up against a lamppost, with a cigar in my mouth, perhaps at two oclock in the morning to read her letter. I always read them. And I have, he said, wept floods of tears after reading my sisters letters. Though I still kept on the error of my ways, they always checked methey always seemed like a hand pulling me away from sin. A voice crying out, Come back! Come back! And at last a letter from her, in conjunction with a solemn Providence, was the means of breaking his heart and he sought salvation through his Savior!

Againmany nave been converted by the example of true Christians. Many of you feel that you cannot write or preachyou think you can do nothing! Well, there is one thing you can do for your Masteryou can live Christianity. I think there are more people who look at the new life in Christ written out in you than they will in the old life that is written in the Scriptures. An infidel will use arguments to disprove the Bible, if you set it before himbut, if you do to others as you would they should do to you. If you give of your bread to the poor and disperse to the needy, living like Jesus, speaking words of kindness and love. If you live honestly and uprightly in the worldhe will say, Well, I thought the Bible was all hypocrisy. But I cannot think so now, because there is Mr. So-and-Solook how he lives! I could believe my infidelity if it were not for him. The Bible certainly has an effect upon his life and, therefore, I must believe it.

And then how many souls may be converted by what some men are privileged to write and print! There is Dr. Doddridges Rise and Progress of Religion. Though I decidedly object to some things in it, I wish that everybody had read that book, so many have been the conversions it has produced! I think it more honor to have written Watts Psalms and Hymns, than Miltons Paradise Lost, and more glory to have written that book of old Wilcocks, A Drop of Honey. Or the tract that God has used so muchThe Sinners Friendthan all the books of Homer! I value books for the good they may do to mens souls. Much as I respect the genius of Pope, or Dryden, or Burns, give me the simple lines of Cowper that God has used in bringing souls to Him. Oh, to think that we may write and print books which shall reach poor sinners hearts! The other day my soul was exceedingly gladdened by an invitation from a pious woman to go and see her. She told me she had been ten years on her bed and had not been able to stir from it. Nine years, she said, I was dark, blind, and unthinking. But my husband brought me one of your sermons. I read it and God blessed it to the opening of my eyes. He converted my soul with it. And now, all glory to Him! I love His name! Each Sabbath morning, she said, I wait for your sermon. I live on it all the week as marrow and fatness to my spirit. Ah, I thought, here is something to cheer the printers and all of us who labor in that good work! One good brother wrote to me this week, Brother Spurgeon, keep your courage up. You are known in multitudes of households of England and you are loved, too. Though we cannot hear you, or see your living form, yet throughout our villages your sermons are scattered. And I know of cases of conversion from them, more than I can tell you. Another friend mentioned to me an instance of a clergyman of the Church of England, a canon of a cathedral who frequently preaches my sermons on the Sabbathwhether in the cathedral or not, I cannot say, but I hope he does. Oh, who can tell, when these things are printed, what hearts they may reach, what good they may effect? Words that I spoke three weeks ago, eyes are now readingwhile tears are gushing from them as they read! Glory be to God most high!

But, after all, preaching is the ordained means for the salvation of sinners, and by this, ten times as many are brought to the Savior as by any other. Ah, my Friends, to have been the means of saving souls from death by preachingwhat an honor! There is a young man who has not long commenced his ministerial career. When he enters the pulpit, everybody notices what a deep solemnity there is upon him, beyond his years. His face is white and blanched by an unearthly solemnity. His body is shriveled up by his labor. Constant study and midnight lamps have worn him awaybut when he speaks he utters wondrous words that lift the soul up to Heaven! And the aged saint says, Well! Never did I go so near to Heaven as when I listened to his voice! There comes in some young man who listens and criticizes his aspect. He thinks it is by no means such as to be desiredbut he listens. One thought strikes him, then another. See that manhe has been moral all his lifebut he has never been renewed. Now tears begin to flow down his cheeks. Just put your ear against his breast and you will hear him groan out, God be merciful to me a sinner. Ah, good reward for a withered frame or a ruined constitution! Or, take another case. A man is preaching the Word of God. He is standing up to deliver his Masters message and in steals some poor harlot. Such a case I knew not long ago. A poor harlot determined she would go and take her life on Blackfriars Bridge. Passing by these doors one Sunday night, she thought she would step in and, for the last time, hear something that might prepare her to stand before her Maker. She forced herself into the aisle and she could not escape until I rose from the pulpit. The text was, See you this woman? I dwelt upon Mary Magdalene and her sinsher washing the Saviors feet with her tears and wiping them with the hair of her head. There stood the womanmelted away with the thought that she should thus hear herself described and her own life painted. Oh, to think of saving a poor harlot from death, to deliver such an one from going down to the grave and then, as God pleased, to save her soul from going down to Hell! Is it not worth ten thousand lives if we could sacrifice them all on the altar of God? When I thought of this text, yesterday, I could only weep to think that God should have so favored me! Oh, Men and Women, how can you better spend your time and wealth than in the cause of the Redeemer? What holier enterprise can you engage in than this sacred one of saving souls from death and hiding a multitude of sins? This is a wealth that you can take with youthe wealth that has been acquired under God by having saved souls from death and covered a multitude of sins!

I know there are some now before the Throne who first wept the penitential tear in this House of Prayer and who thanked God that they had listened to this voice. And I think they still have a tender and affectionate love for him whom God honored thus. Minister of the Gospel, if you on earth are privileged to win souls, I think when you die, those spirits will rejoice to be your guardian angels! They will say, Father, that man is dying whom we love, may we go and watch him? Yes, says God, you may go, and carry Heaven with you. Down come the spirits, ministering angels and oh, how lovingly they look on us! They would, if they could, strike out the furrow from the forehead and take away the cold clammy sweat with their own blessed hands! They must not do it. But oh, how tenderly they watch that suffering man who was made the means of doing good to their souls! And when he opens his eyes to immortality, he shall see them like guards around his bed and hear them say, Come with us, thrice welcome, honored servant of God. Come with us! And when he speeds his way upwards towards Heaven on strong wings of faith, these spirits who stand by him will clap their wings behind him and he will enter Heaven with many crowns upon his head, each of which he will delight to cast at the feet of Jesus! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, if you turn a sinner from the error of his ways, remember you have saved a soul from death, and hidden a multitude of sins!

III. The APPLICATION I can only just mention. It is thisthat he who is the means of the conversion of a sinner does, under God, save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins. Particular attention ought to be paid to backsliders. For in bringing backsliders into the Church, there is as much honor to God as in bringing in sinners. Brethren, if any of you do err from the Truth, and one converts him. Alas, the poor backslider is often the most forgotten! A member of the Church has disgraced his profession, the church excommunicated him and he was accounted a heathen and a publican. I know of men of good standing in the Gospel ministry who, ten years ago, fell into sin. And that is thrown in our teeth to this very day! Do you speak of them? You are at once informed, Why, ten years ago they did so-and-so. Brethren, Christians ought to be ashamed of themselves for taking notice of such things so long afterwards! True, we may use more caution in our dealings. But to reproach a fallen Brother for what he did so long ago is contrary to the spirit of John, who went after Peter three days after he had denied his Master with oaths and curses! Nowadays it is the fashion, if a man falls, to have nothing to do with him! Men say, He is a bad fellow, we will not go after him. Beloved, suppose he is the worstis not that the reason why you should go most after him? Suppose he never was a child of God suppose he never knew the Truth of Godis not that the greater reason why you should go after him? I do not understand your mawkish modesty, your excessive pride that wont let you go after the chief of sinners! The worse the case, the more is the reason why we should go.

But suppose the man is a child of God and you have cast him off remember, he is your Brother. He is one with Christ as much as you are! He is justified, he has the same righteousness that you have. And if, when he has sinned, you despise him, then you despise his Master. Take heed! You, yourself, may be tempted and may one day fall. Like David, you may walk on the top of your house rather too high and you may see something which shall bring you to sin. Then what will you say if the Brethren pass you by with a sneer and take no notice of you? Oh, if we have one backslider connected with our Church, let us take special care of him! Dont deal harshly with him. Remember you would have been a backslider, too, if it were not for the Grace of God. I advise you, whenever you see professors living in sin, to be very shy of them. But if, after a time, you see any sign of repentance, or if you do not, go and seek out the lost sheep of the house of Israel. For remember that if one of you do err from the Truth, and one converts him, let him remember, that he who converts the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

Backsliders, who feel your misery, I will come after you one moment! Poor backslider, you were once a Christian. Do you hope you were? No, you say, I believe I deceived myself and others. I was no child of God. Well, if you did, let me tell you that if you will acknowledge that, God will forgive you! Suppose you did deceive the Churchyou are not the first who did it. There are some members of this Church, I fear, who have done so and we have not found them out. I tell you, your case is not hopeless! That is not the unpardonable sin! Some who have tried to deceive the very Elect of God have yet been delivered! And my Master says He is able to save to the uttermost (and you have not gone beyond the uttermost) all who come unto Him! Come then, to His feetcast yourself on His mercy. And though you did once enter His camp as a spy, He will not hang you up for it, but will be glad to get you as a trophy of mercy! But if you were a child of God and can say honestly, I know I did love Him and He loved me, I tell you He still loves you! If you have gone ever so far astray, you are as much His child as ever! Though you have run away from your Father, come back, come back! He is still your Father. Think not He has unsheathed the sword to slay you. Say not, He has cast me out of the Family. He has not! His heart yearns for you right now. My Father loves you! Come, then, to His feet and He will not even remind you of what you have done! The prodigal was going to tell his Father all his sins and ask him to make him one of his hired servants, but the Father stopped his mouth. He let him say that he was not worthy to be called his son, but he would not let him say, make me as an hired servant. Come back and your Father will receive you gladly! He will put His arms around you and kiss you with the kisses of His love! And He will say, I have found this, My son who was lost. I have recovered this sheep that had gone astray. My Father loved you without worksHe justified you irrespective of them! You have no less merit, now, than you had then! Come and trust and believe in Him!

Lastly, you who believe you are not backsliders, if you are not saved, remember that a soul is saved from death and a multitude of sins hidden. Oh, my Friends, if I might but be a hundred-handed man to catch you all, I would love to be so. If anything I would say could win your soulsif by preaching here from now till midnight, I might by any possibility capture some of you to the love of the SaviorI would do it! Some of you are speeding your way to Hell blindfolded! My Hearers, I do not deceive you, you are going to Hell as fast as time can carry you! Some of you are deceiving yourselves with the thought that you are righteous, but you are not so. Many of you have had solemn warnings and have never been moved by them. You have admired the way in which the warning has been given, but the thing, itself, has never entered your heart. Hundreds of you are without God and without Christ, strangers to the commonwealth of Israeland may I not plead with you? Is a gloomy religious system to hold me captive and never let me speak? Why, poor Hearts, do you know your sad condition? Do you know that God is angry with the wicked every day? Do you know that the way of transgressors is hard? That he that believes not is condemned already? Has it never been told you that he that believes not shall be damned? And can you stand damnation? My Hearers, could you make your bed in Hell? Could you lie down in the pit of Hell? Do you think it would be an easy portion for your souls to be rocked on waves of flames forever, and to be tossed about with demons in the place where hope cannot come? You may smile now, but will not smile soon. God sends me as an ambassador. But if you listen not to me, He will not send an ambassador, next time, but an executioner! Soon there will be no wooing words of mercythe only exhortation you will hear will be the dull cold voice of Death who shall say, Come with me. Then you will not be in the place where we sing Gods praises and where righteous prayers are daily offered. The only music you will hear will be the sighs of the damned, the shrieks of fiends and the yelling of the tormented! O may God in His mercy snatch you as brands from the fire to be trophies of His Grace throughout eternity! The way to be saved is to renounce your works and ways with grief, and fly to Jesus. And if now you are a conscience-stricken sinner, that is all I want! If you will confess that you are a sinner, that is all God requires of you and even that He gives you! Jesus Christ says, Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Do you hear His wooing words? Will you turn from His sweet looks of mercy? Has His Cross no influence? Have His wounds no power to bring you to His feet? Ah, then what can I say? Only the arm of the Spirit, which is mightier than man, can make hard hearts melt and bow stubborn wills to the ground!

Sinners, if you confess your sins this morning, there is a Christ for you. You need not say, Oh, that I knew where to find Him. The Word is near you, on your lips, and in your heart. If you will, with your heart, believeand with your mouth confess the Lord Jesus, you shall be saved, for, he that believes and is baptized shall be saved. And he that believes not shall be damned.

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

THREEFOLD SANCTIFICATION   
NO. 434

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 9, 1862, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Sanctified by God the Father. Sanctified in Christ Jesus. Jude 1:1. 1 Corinthians 1:2. Through sanctification of the Spirit.   
1 Peter 1:2.

MARK, Beloved, the union of the Three Divine Persons in all their gracious acts. We believe that there is one God, and although we rejoice to recognize the Trinity, yet it is ever most distinctly a Trinity in Unity. Our watch-word still isHear O Israel, the LORD our God is one LORD. How unwisely do those young Believers talk, who make preferences in the Persons of the Trinitywho think of Christ as if He were the embodiment of everything that is lovely and gracious, while the Father they regard as severely just but destitute of kindness.

And how foolish are those who magnify the decree of the Father, or the atonement of the Son, so as to depreciate the work of the Spirit. In deeds of Divine Grace none of the Persons of the Trinity act apart from the rest. They are as united in their deeds as in their essence. In their love towards the chosen they are One, and in the actions which flow from that great central source they are still undivided.

Especially I would have you notice this in the case of sanctification. While we may, without the slightest mistake, speak of sanctification as the work of the Spirit, yet we must take heed that we do not view it as if the Father and the Son had no part in it. It is correct to speak of sanctification as the work of the Father, of the Spirit, and of the Son. Still does Jehovah say, Let Us make man in our Own image after Our likeness, and thus we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.

My Brethren, I beg you to notice and carefully consider the value which God sets upon real holiness, since the Three Persons are represented as co-working to produce a Church without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Those men who despise holiness of heart are in direct conflict with God. Holiness is the architectural plan upon which God builds up His living temple. We read in Scripture of the beauties of holiness. Nothing is beautiful before God but that which is holy. All the glory of Lucifer, that son of the morning, could not screen him from Divine abhorrence when he had defiled himself by sin.

Holy, Holy, Holythe continual cry of cherubimis the loftiest song that a creature can offer, and the noblest that the Divine Being can accept. See then, He counts holiness to be His choice treasure. It is as the seal upon His heart and as the signet upon His right hand. He could as soon cease to be, as cease to be holy, and sooner renounce the sovereignty of the world than tolerate anything in His presence contrary to purity, righteousness and holiness. I pray you, you who profess to be followers of Christ, set a high value upon purity of life and godliness of conversation.

Value the blood of Christ as the foundation of your hope, but never speak disparagingly of the work of the Spirit which is your meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. Yes, rather, prize itprize it so heartily that you dread the very appearance of evil. Prize it so that in your most ordinary actions you may be, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, showing forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

My design was to have entered at large upon the doctrine of sanctification this morning. I intended to use the word sanctification in the mode in which it is understood among theologians. For you must know that the term sanctification has a far narrower meaning in bodies of divinity than it has in Scripture. But in studying the subject I found myself lost in its ever-widening extent, so that I concluded to attempt less in the hope of efficiently doing more.

On some future occasion we will enter at length into the Spirits work, but now I only call attention to the fact that sanctification is treated in Scripture in various ways. I think we may do some service in illuminating the understanding of Believers, if we shall this morning draw their attention not to the theological but to the Scriptural uses of the term sanctification, and show that, in Gods Holy Word, it has a much wider meaning than is accorded to it by systematic divines.

It has been well said that the Book of God, like the works of God, is not systematically arranged. How different is the freedom of nature from the orderly precision of the scientific museum! If you visit the British Museum you see all the animals there placed in cases according to their respective orders. You go into Gods world and find dog and sheep, horse and cow, lion and vulture, elephant and ostrich roaming abroad as if no zoologist had ever ventured to arrange them in classes. The various rocks are not laid in order as the geologist draws them in his books, nor are the stars marked off according to their magnitudes.

The order of Nature is variety. Science does but arrange and classify, so as to assist the memory. So systematic divines, when they come to deal with Gods Word, find Scriptural truths put, not in order for the classroom, but for common life. The systematic divine is as useful as the analytical chemist, or the anatomist, but still the Bible is not arranged as a body of divinity. It is a handbook to Heaven. It is a guide to eternity, meant for the man at the plow, as much as for the scholar at his table. It is a primer for babes, as well as a classic for sages.

It is the humble, ignorant mans book, and though there are depths in it in which the elephant may swim, yet there are shallows where the lamb may wade. We bless God that He has not given us a body of divinity in which we might lose ourselves, but that He has given us His own Word, put into the very best practical form for our daily use and edification.

It is a recognized truth among us, that the Old Testament very often helps us to understand the New, while the New also expounds the Old. With Gods Word, self-interpretation is the best. Diamond cut diamond is a rule with a goldsmithso must it be with a Scriptural student. They who would know best, Gods Word, must study it in its own light. I. Now, in the Old Testament we find the word sanctify very frequently, indeed, and it is used there in three senses. Let me call your attention to the first one. The word sanctify in the Old Testament frequently has the meaning of setting apart. It means the taking of something which was common before, which might legitimately have been put to ordinary uses, and setting it apart for Gods service, alone. It was then called sanctified or holy. Take, for instance, the passage in the 13th chapter of Exodus at the 2nd verse. Sanctify unto me all the first-born.

On account of the destruction of the first-born of Egypt, God claimed the first-born of men and the first-born of cattle to be His. The tribe of Levi was set apart to be the representatives of the first-born, to stand before the Lord to minister day and night in His tabernacle and in His temple. Those who were thus set apart to be priests and Levites were said to be sanctified. There is an earlier use of the term in the 2nd chapter of Genesis, at the 3rd verse. It is said, And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.

It had been an ordinary portion of time before, but He set it apart for His own service, that on the seventh day man should do no work for himself, but rest and serve his Maker. So in Leviticus 27:14, you read, And when a man shall sanctify his house to be holy unto the Lord, etc., which was meant as a direction to devout Jews who set apart a house or field to be Gods. Intending that either the produce of the field or the occupation of the house should be wholly given either to Gods priests or Levites, or in some other way set apart to holy uses.

Now, nothing was done to the house. There were no ceremonies. We do not read that it was cleansed or washed or sprinkled with blood. But the mere fact that it was set apart for God was considered to be a sanctification. So in the most notable of instances in the Book of Exodus 29:44, we read that God said, I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, by which plainly enough was meant that He would set it apart to be His house, the special place of His abode, where between the wings of the cherubim the bright light of the Shekinah might shine forth, the glorious evidence that the Lord God dwelt in the midst of His people.

To the same effect are such as the following: The sanctification of the altar, instruments and vessels, in Numbers 7:1, the setting apart of Eleazer the son of Abinadab, to keep the ark of the Lord while it was at Kirjathjearim, 1 Samuel 7:1, and the establishment of cities of refuge in Joshua 20:7, where in the original we find that the word rendered appointed is the same which elsewhere is translated sanctified. It plainly appears from the Old Testament that the word sanctify sometimes has the meaning simply, and only, of setting apart for holy uses.

This explains a text in John 10:36, Say you of Him whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world, you blaspheme, because I said I am the Son of God? Jesus Christ there speaks of Himself as sanctified by His Father. Now He was not purged from sin, for He had none. Immaculately conceived, gloriously preserved from all touch or stain of evil, He needed no sanctifying work of the Spirit within Him to purge Him from dross or corruption. All that is here intended is that He was set apart. So in that notable and well known passage in John 17:19, And for their sakes I sanctify Myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth, by which, again, He meant only that He gave Himself up especially to Gods serviceto be occupied only with His Fathers business.

He could say, It is My meat and My drink to do the will of Him that sent Me and to finish His work. Brethren, you understand, now, the text in Jude, Sanctified by God the Father. Surely it means that God the Father has especially set apart His people or sanctified them. Not that God the Father works operatively in the Believers heart, although Paul tells us it is God that works in us to will and to dothat belongs immediately and effectively to the Holy Spiritbut He in the decree of election separated unto Himself a people who were to be sanctified to Himself forever and ever.

He, by the gift of His Son, redeemed for them, them from among men that they might be holy. And He by continually sending forth the Spirit fulfils His Divine purpose that they should be a separate people sanctified from all the rest of mankind. In this sense every Christian is perfectly sanctified already. We may speak of Believers as those who are sanctified by God the Father, that is to say, they are set apart. They were set apart before they were created, they were legally set apart by the purchase of Christ, they are manifestly and visibly set apart by the effectual calling of the Spirit of Divine Grace. They are, I say, in this sense, at all periods sanctified. And speaking of the work as it concerns God the Father, they are completely sanctified unto the Lord forever.

Is not this doctrine clear enough to you all? Leave the doctrine a moment, and let us look at it practically. Brothers and Sisters, have we ever realized this Truth of God as we ought to do? When a vessel, cup, altar, or instrument was set apart for Divine worship, it was never used for common purposes again. No man but the priest might drink out of the golden cup. The altar might not be trifled with. Gods brazen laver was not for ordinary washing. Even the tongs upon the altar and the snuffers for the lamps were never to be profaned for any common purpose whatever.

What a suggestive and solemn fact is this! If you and I are sanctified by God the Father, we ought never to be used for any purpose but for God. What, you say, not for ourselves? My Brethren, not for ourselves. You are not your own. You are bought with a price. But must we not work and earn our own bread? Verily, you must, but still not with that as your object. You must still be diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Remember, if you are servants, you are to serve not with eye service as men-pleasers but serving the Lord. If any man shall say I have an occupation in which I cannot serve the Lord, leave it, you have no right in it.

But I think there is no calling in which man can be found, certainly no lawful calling, in which he may not be able to say, Whether I eat or drink, or whatever I do, I do all to the glory of God. The Christian is no more a common man than was the altar a common place. It is as great a sacrilege for the Believer to live unto himself, or to live unto the world, as you and I could have profaned the most holy place, used the holy fire for our own kitchen, or the censer for common perfume, or the candlestick for our own chamber.

These things were Godsnone might venture to appropriate them and we are Godsand must be used only for Him. Oh, Christians, would that you could know this! You are Christs men, Gods menservants of God through Jesus Christ. You are not to do your own works. You are not to live for your own objects. You are to say at all times, God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus. You are practically to take this for your motto, For me to live is Christ and to die is gain. I fear nine out of ten professing Christians have never recognized this fact. They think if they were to devote a part of their substance that would do, or a part of their time will suffice.

Oh, Christ did not buy a part of youBrothers and SistersJesus Christ did not purchase a part of you! He bought all of youbody, soul and spiritand He must have you, the whole man. Oh, if you are to be partly saved by Him and partly by yourselves, then live to yourselves. But if God has wholly set you apart to be vessels of mercy fitted for His use, do not rob the Lord! Treat not as common cups those things which are as the bowls of the altar.

There is another practical thought here. It was a crime which brought destruction upon Babylon when Belshazzar in his drunken frolic cried, Bring forth the cups of the Lord, the goodly spoil of the temple at Jerusalem. They brought the golden candlestick and there it stood flaming high in the midst of the marble hall. The despot, surrounded by his wives and his concubines, filled high the bowl with the foaming draught, and bidding them pass round the cups of Jehovah, the heathen, the worshippers of idols, drank confusion to the God of Heaven and earth.

In that moment, just as the sacred vessel touched the sacrilegious lips, a hand was seen mysteriously writing out his doomYou are weighed in the balances and found wanting. This was the crime which filled up the ephah of his sin. Now was the measure of his iniquity fully accomplished. He had used for lascivious and drunken purposes, vessels which belonged to Jehovah, the God of the whole earth. Oh, take heed, take heed, you that profess to be sanctified by the blood of the Covenant, that you reckon it not to be an unholy thing! See to it that you make not your bodies which you profess to be set apart to Gods service, slaves of sin, or your members servants of iniquity unto iniquity. Lest, O Professors, you should hear in that hour the voice of the recording angel as he cries, You are weighed in the balances and found wanting.

Be you clean, you that bear the vessels of the Lord. And you Beloved who hope that you are Christs. and have a humble faith in Him this morning, see that you walk circumspectly, that by no means you prostitute to the service of sin that which was set apart in the eternal Covenant of Grace to be Gods. alone. If you and I are tempted to sin, we must reply, No! Let another man do that, but I cannot. I am Gods man. I am set apart for Himhow shall I do this great wickedness and sin against God? Let dedication enforce sanctification. Think of the dignity to which God has called youJehovahs vessels, set apart for the Masters use.

Far from you, far from you be everything which would make you impure. When Antiochus Epiphanes offered a sow on the altar of the Lord in the temple at Jerusalem, his awful death might have been easily foretold. Oh, how many there are who make a high profession who have offered unclean flesh upon the altars of God! So many have made religion a stalking-horse to their own emolument, and espoused the faith to gain esteem and applause among men! What says the Lord concerning such? Vengeance belongs unto Me, I will recompense says the Lord (Heb. 10:30).

Their god was their belly. They gloried in their shame. They minded earthly thingsand they die justly accursed. Spots are they in your solemn feastswandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. But, you Beloved, be not carried away with the error of the wickedkeep yourselves unspotted from the world.

II. Secondly, in the Old Testament, the word sanctify is now and then used in another sense, one which I do not perceive to be hinted at in our Biblical Encyclopedias, but which is needed to make the subject complete. The word sanctify is used, not only to signify that the thing is set apart for holy uses but that it is to be regarded, treated, and declared as a holy thing. To give you an instance. There is a passage in Isaiah 8:13, which is to the point, when it is saidSanctify the Lord of Hosts, Himself.

You clearly perceive that the Lord does not need to be set apart for holy uses. And the Lord of Hosts needs not to be purified, for He is Holiness itself. It means adore and reverence the Lordwith fear and trembling approach His throneregard Him as the Holy One of Israel. But let me give you other instances. When Nadab and Abihu, as recorded in the tenth of Leviticus, offered sacrifice to God, and put strange fire on the altar, the fire of the Lord went forth and consumed them. And this was the reason givenI will be sanctified in them that come near Me.

The Lord did not mean that He would be set apart, nor that He would be made holy by purification, but that He would be treated and regarded as a most Holy Being with whom such liberties were not to be taken. And again in Numbers 20:12, on that unfortunate occasion when Moses lost his temper and smote the rock twice, saying, Hear now, you rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock? The Lord said that he should see the promised land but should never enter it, the reason being Because you believed Me not, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel.

By which He meant that Moses had not acted as to honor Gods name among the people. A yet more familiar instance occurs in what is commonly called The Lords Prayer. Our Father which are in Heaven, sanctified be Your name. The word hallowed is simply an English variation, the Greek is sanctified be Your name. Now we know that Gods name does not need purifying, or setting apartso that the sense here can only be, Let Your name be reverenced and adored throughout the whole earth and let men regard it as being a sacred and holy thing.

My beloved Brethren, have we not some light here concerning our second textSanctified in Christ Jesus. If the word sanctified may mean regarded as holy and treated as such, can you not see how in Christ Jesus the saints are regarded by God as being holy and treated as such? Mark, we do not lay that down as being the only meaning of the text, for we shall have to show that another sense may be attached to it.

There are Brethren who have enlarged upon our being sanctified in Christ and have almost forgotten the work of the Spirit. Now, if they only speak of our being sanctified in Christ, in the sense of being treated as holy, in fact as being justified, we have no quarrel with them. But if they deny the work of the Spirit, they are guilty of deadly error. I have sometimes heard the term used, imputed sanctification, which is sheer absurdity. You cannot even use the term, imputed justification. Imputed righteousness is correct enough and implies a glorious doctrine.

But justification is not imputed, it is actually conferred. We are justified through the imputed righteousness of Christ, but as to being imputedly sanctified, no one who understands the use of language can so speak. The term is inaccurate and unscriptural. I know it is said that the Lord Jesus is made of God unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. But this sanctification is not by imputation, nor does the text say so. Why, you might as readily prove imputed wisdom,

or imputed redemption by this text, as force it to teach imputed sanctification!

It is a fact that for the sake of what Jesus Christ did, Gods people, though in themselves partially sanctified and being yet subject to sin, are for Christs sake treated and regarded as if they were perfectly holy. But this, according to theological definitions, is rather justification than sanctification. It must, however, be admitted that the Scripture sometimes uses the word sanctification in such a manner as to make it tantamount to justification. This, however, we can clearly see, that Gods people have access with boldness to the Lord, because they are regarded through Christ as though they were perfectly holy.

Oh, Brethren, think of this for a moment. A holy God cannot have dealings with unholy men. A holy Godand is not Christ Jesus God? cannot have communion with unholiness, and yet you and I are unholy. How, then, does Christ receive us to His bosom? How does His Father walk with us and find Himself agreed? Because He views us, not in ourselves, but in our great federal Head, the Second Adam. He looks at us

*Not as we were in Adams fall,   
When sin and ruin covered all;   
But as well stand another day,   
Fairer than suns meridian ray.*

He looks on the deeds of Christ as ourson His perfect obedience and sinless life as ours, and thus we may sing in the language of Hart *With your spotless garments on,   
Holy as the Holy One.*

We may boldly enter into that which is within the veil, where no unholy thing may come, yet where we may venture because God views us as holy in Christ Jesus. This is a great and precious doctrine. But still, since the use of the term sanctification in any other sense than that in which it is commonly employed as meaning the work of the Spirit, tends to foster confused notions and really does, I fear, lead some to despise the work of the Spirit of God, I think it is better in ordinary conversation between Christians to speak of sanctification without confounding it with what is quite a distinct act, namely, justification through the imputed righteousness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Yet, if we hear a Brother so talk, we must not be too severe upon him, as though he assuredly erred from the faith, for in Scripture, the terms sanctification and justification are frequently used interchangeably and Christs righteousness made the subject matter of both works of Divine Grace.

III. We now come to the usual sense in which the word sanctification is employed. It means actually to purify or make holy. Not merely to set apart nor to account holy, but to make really and actually so in nature.

You have the word in this sense in many places in the Old Testament. You will find it in Exodus 19:10, 11, 12. On the third day God was about to proclaim on the top of Sinai His Holy Law and the mandate went forth, Sanctify the people today and tomorrow, which sanctification consisted in certain outward deeds by which their bodies and clothes were put into a clean state and their souls were brought into a reverential state of awe.

In the third of Joshua you find when the children of Israel were about to pass the Jordan, it was said, Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you. They were to prepare themselves to be beholders of a scene so augustwhen Jordan was driven back and the river was utterly dried up before the feet of the priests of God. There was in this case an actual purification. Men in the old times were sprinkled with blood and thus sanctified from defilement and considered to be pure in the sight of God.

Now this is the sense in which we view our third text, Sanctification through the Spirit, and this, I repeat, is the general sense in which we understand it in common conversation among Christian men.

Sanctification begins in regeneration. The Spirit of God infuses into man the new principle called the spirit, which is a third and higher nature, so that the believing man becomes body, soul and spirit. And in this he is distinct and distinguished from all other men of the race of Adam. This work, which begins in regeneration, is carried on in two waysby vivification and by mortification. That is, by giving life to that which is good, and by sending death to that which is evil in the man. Mortification, whereby the lusts of the flesh are subdued and kept under. And vivification, by which the life which God has put within us is made to be a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.

This is carried on every day in what we call perseverance, by which the Christian is preserved and continued in a gracious state, and is made to abound in good works unto the praise and glory of God. And it culminates, or comes to perfection, in Glory, when the soul, being thoroughly purged, is caught up to dwell with holy beings at the right hand of the Majesty on High. Now, this work, though we commonly speak of it as being the work of the Spirit, is quite as much the work of the Lord Jesus Christ as of the Spirit.

In looking for texts on the subject, I have been struck with the fact that where I found one verse speaking of it as the Spirits work, I found another in which it was treated as the work of Jesus Christ. I can well understand that my second text, Sanctified in Christ Jesus, has as great a fullness of meaning as the third, Sanctification through the Spirit. Lend me your attention. I fear that not many of you will be interested, except those of you who have a share in this precious work. Others may think the subject too dry for them. Oh that they may yet know how precious to Believers is the purifying work of sanctification!

Sanctification is a work in us, not a work for us. It is a work in us and there are two agentsone is the Worker who works this sanctification effectuallythat is the Spirit. And the other, the Agent, the efficacious means by which the Spirit works this sanctificationJesus Christ and His most precious blood. Suppose, to put it as plainly as we can, there is a garment which needs to be washed. Here is a person to wash it, and there is a bath in which it is to be washed. The Person is the Holy Spirit but the bath is the precious blood of Christ. It is strictly correct to speak of the Person cleansing, as being the Sanctifierit is quite as accurate to speak of that which is in the bath and which makes it clean as being the Sanctifier, too.

Now, the Spirit of God sanctifies us. He works it effectively. But He sanctifies us through the blood of Christ, through the water which flowed with the blood from Christs side. To repeat my illustrationhere is a garment which is black. A fuller, in order to make it white, uses niter and soap, both the fuller and the soap are cleansers. So both the Holy Spirit and the atonement of Christ are Sanctifiers. I think that will be plain enough.

Let us enlarge upon the doctrine. The Spirit of God is the great Worker by whom we are cleansed. I shall not, this morning, quote the texts. Most of you have the Baptist Confession of Faith, published by Passmore and Alabaster. And the Catechism, which are generally distributed among the families of the Church. They will furnish you with abundance of texts on that subject, for this is a doctrine which is generally received among usthat it is the Spirit of God who creates in us a new heart and a right spirit, according to the tenor of the CovenantA new heart will I give them and a right spirit will I put within them. I will put My Spirit within them, and they shall walk in My ways.

He renews and changes the natureturns the bias of the willmakes us seek after that which is good and right, so that every good thing in us may be described as the fruit of the Spirit. And all our virtues and all our Graces are efficiently worked in us by the Spirit of the living God. Never, I pray you, Brethren, never, never forget this! Oh, it will be an ill day for any Church when the members begin to think lightly of the work of the Holy Spirit within us! We delight to magnify the work of Christ for us, but we must not depreciate the work of the blessed Spirit in us.

In the days of my venerable predecessor, Dr. Gill, who was in the opinion, even of ultra-Calvinists, sound to the core, this pernicious evil broke out in our Church. There were some who believed in what was, Imputed Sanctification, and denied the work of the blessed Spirit. I was reading last night in our old Church Book, a note written there in the doctors own handwriting, as the deliberate opinion of this Church

AgreedThat to deny the internal sanctification of the Spirit, as a principle of Divine Grace and holiness worked in the heart, or as consisting of Divine Grace communicated to and implanted in the soul, which, though but a begun work and as yet incomplete, is an abiding work of Grace and will abide, notwithstanding all corruptions, temptations and snares, and be performed by the Author of it until the day of Christ, when it will be the saints meetness for eternal gloryis a grievous error, which highly reflects dishonor on the blessed Spirit and His operations of Grace on the heart, is subversive of true religion and powerful godliness and renders persons unfit for Church communion.

Why, it is further agreed, that such persons who appear to have embraced this error be not admitted to the communion of this Church. And should any such who are members of it appear to have received it and continued in it, that they be forthwith excluded from it. Two members then present declaring themselves to be of the opinion condemned in the above resolution and also a third person who was absent but who was well known to have been under this awful delusion, were consequently excluded that evening.

No, more, a person of another Church who held the opinion thus condemned, was forbidden to commune at the Table, and his pastor at Kettering was written to upon the subject, warning him not to allow so great an errorist to remain in fellowship. The doctor thought the error to be so deadly that he used the pruning knife at once. He did not stop till it spread, but he cut off the very twigs. And this is one of the benefits of Church discipline when we are enabled to carry it out under Godthat it does nip error in the very budand thus those who as yet are not infected are kept from it by the blessed Providence of God through the instrumentality of the Church.

We have always held, and still hold and teach that the work of the Spirit in us, whereby we are conformed unto Christs image, is as absolutely necessary for our salvation, as is the work of Jesus Christ, by which He cleanses us from our sins.

Pause here one moment and let me not distract your minds while I say that while the Spirit of God is said in Scripture to be the Author of sanctification, yet there is a visible agent which must not be forgotten. Sanctify them, said Christ, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Young men of the Bible Class, look up the passages of Scripture which prove that the instrument of our sanctification is the Word of God. You will find that there are very many. It is the Word of God which sanctifies the soul. The Spirit of God brings to our minds the commands and precepts and doctrines of the Truths of God and applies them with power.

These are heard in the ear, and being received in the heart, they work in us to will and to do of Gods   
good pleasure. How important, then, that the Truths of God should be preached. How necessary that you never tolerate a ministry which leaves out the great doctrines or the great precepts of the Gospel. The Truth of God is the Sanctifier and if we do not hear the Truth, depend upon it, we shall not grow in sanctification. We only progress in sound living as we progress in sound understanding. Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my paths.

Do not say of such-and-such an error, Oh, it is a mere matter of opinion. If it is a mere matter of opinion today, it will be a matter of practice tomorrow. No man has an error of judgment, without sooner or later having an error in practice. As every grain of Truth is a grain of diamond dust, prize it all. Hold fast the Truths of God which you have received and which you have been taught. Hold fast the form of sound words. And in this day when articles are ridiculed, when creeds are despised hold fast to that which you have received that you may be found faithful among the faithless. For by so holding the Truth of God shall you be sanctified by the Spirit of God. The Agent, then, is the Spirit of God working through the Truth.

But now let me bring you back to my old figure. In another sense we are sanctified through Christ Jesus, because it is His blood and the water which flowed from His side in which the Spirit washes our heart from the defilement and propensity of sin. It is said of our LordChrist also loved the Church and gave Himself for it. That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle or any such thing.

Remember again, Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them Brethren. I say again, there are hundreds of texts of this kind. You shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins. God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.

In that memorable passage where Paul, struggling with corruption, exclaims, Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?the answer is not concerning the Holy Spirit. But he says, I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Space forbids the multiplication of texts. But there are many passages to the effect that our sanctification is the work of Jesus Christ. He is our Sanctifier, for He filled the sacred laver of regeneration in which we are washed, filled it with His blood and with the water which flowed from His sideand in this, by the Holy Spirit, we are washed.

There is no being sanctified by the Law. The Spirit does not use legal precepts to sanctify usthere is no purification by mere dictates of moralitythe Spirit of God does not use them. No, just as when Marahs waters were bitter, Moses, to make them sweet, commanded them to take a tree and cast it into the waters, and they were sweet, so the Spirit of God, finding our natures bitter, takes the tree of Calvary, casts it into the stream, and everything is made pure. He finds us lepers, and to make us clean He dips the hyssop of faith in the precious blood and sprinkles it upon us and we are clean.

There is a mysterious efficacy in the blood of Christ not merely to make satisfaction for sin but to work the death of sin. The blood appears before God and He is well-pleased. It falls on uslusts wither and old corruptions feel the death stroke. Dagon falls before the ark and although the stump is left and corruptions still remain, yet Christ shall put an end to all our inbred sins and through Him we shall mount to Heaven perfect, even as our Father, which is in Heaven, is perfect.

Just as the Spirit only works through the Truth, so the blood of Christ only works through faith. Young men of the Catechumen and Bible Classes, again I say, turn to your Bibles at your leisure and look up the many passages which speak of faith as sanctifying the soul and purifying the mind. Our faith lays hold on the precious atonement of Christ. It sees Jesus suffering on the tree and it saysI vow revenge against the sins which nailed Him there. And thus His precious blood works in us a detestation of all sin and the Spirit, through the Truth of God, working by faith, applies the precious blood of sprinklingand we are made clean and are accepted in the Beloved.

I am afraid that I have confused and darkened counsel with words. But, I think I may have suggested some trains of thought which will lead you to see that Holy Scripture teaches us a sanctification, not narrow and concise, so as to be written down with a short definition as in our creed booksbut wide, large and expansive. A work in which we are sanctified by God the Father, sanctified in Christ, and yet have our sanctification through the Spirit of God.

Oh, my dear Hearers, strive after practical holiness. You that love Christ, do not let any say of youThere is a Christian, but he is worse than other men. It is not our eloquence, our learning, our fame, or our wealth, that can ever commend Christ to the worldit is the holy living of Christians. I was speaking, the other day, to a Brother minister about this Bi-centenary movement, which I fear will be an immense injury to Christs Church. I feared, lest it should be made an opportunity for strife among Brethren. Error must be corrected but love must not be wounded.

He remarked, and I thought it was so truthful, that the only way by which Dissent flourished of old was by the then superior holiness of its ministers, so that while the Church clergyman was hunting, the Dissenting minister was visiting the sick. And said he, This is the way in which we shall lose power, if our ministers become political and worldly, it will be all over with us. I have never shunned to rebuke, when I thought it necessary, but I hate contention. The only allowable strife is to labor who can be the most holy, the most earnest, the most zealouswho can do the most for the poor and the ignorantand who can lift Christs Cross the highest.

That is the way to lift up the members of any one particular denominationby the members of that body being more devout, more sanctified, more spiritual-minded than others. All mere party fights will only create strife, animosities, and bickeringand are not of the Spirit of God. But to live unto God and to be devoted to Himthis is the strength of the Church. This will give us the victory, God helping usand unto His name shall be all the praise.

As for persons here who are not converted and are unregenerate, I cannot address you about sanctification. I have opened a door this morning, but you cannot enter. Only remember, that if you cannot enter into this, you cannot enter into Heaven, for

*Those holy gates forever bar   
Pollution, sin and shame.   
None shall obtain admission there,   
But followers of the Lamb.*

May it be yours, by Gods Grace, to come humbly and confess your sins and ask and find forgiveness. And then, but not till then, there is hope that you may be sanctified in the Spirit of your mind. The Lord bless you for Jesus sake. Amen.

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #948 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A STRING OF PEARLS   
NO. 948

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 28, 1870, BY C. H. SPURGEON   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in Heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.   
1 Peter 1:3-5.

THE persons whom Peter addressed were in great need of comfort. They were strangers, strangers scattered far from home. They had in consequence to suffer manifold trials and therefore needed plenteous consolations. Such is our position in a spiritual sense. We, too, are strangers and foreigners. We are pilgrims and sojourners below, and our citizenship is in Heaven. We also require the Word of comfort, for while our banishment lasts, we look for tribulations. The persons whom Peter addressed were Gods chosen, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, and one sure result of Divine election is the worlds enmity. If you were of the world, the world would love his own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

So you too, my Brethren, chosen out from among men, to be the peculiar people of God, must expect to be partakers of the Crossfor the servant is not greater than his Lord. Since they persecuted Him they will also persecute you. Therefore to you, as to those of old by Peter, the Word of consolation is sent this day. The Apostle also addressed the sanctified. Through the Holy Spirit they had been sanctified and set apart. To the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus they had been brought. They were a people who had purified their souls in obeying the Truth of God through the Spirit.

And rest assured no man can do this without encountering fiery trials. He who swims with the stream shall find all things go easily with him until he reaches the waterfall of destruction. But he who stems the torrent must expect to breast many a raging billow. And therefore to such the strong consolations of the Gospel are necessary. Speak we then this morning to the same characters as those addressed by Peter, even to you who are not of the world, but strangers. To you who are chosen of God, and therefore the object of the enmity of man. To you who maintain the separated life of true holiness, and are therefore opposed by the profane.

You have need of comfort, and in the Word, and by the Holy Spirit, your need is more than met. Our Apostle cheers these troubled hearts by exciting them to a song of praise. I might almost entitle these three verses a New Testament Psalm. They are stanzas of a majestic song. You have here a delightful hymn. It scarcely needs to be turned into verseit is in itself

essential poetry.

Now, my Brethren, to lead the mind to praise God is one of the surest ways of uplifting it from depression. The wild beasts of anxiety and discontent which surround our bivouac in the wilderness will be driven away by the fire of our gratitude and the song of our praise. When the Psalm recounts with joyous gratitude the mercies which God has given us, it supplants distress by thankfulness, even as the fir tree and the myrtle take the place of the thorn and the brier where the Gospel works its wonders.

In these three verses we have a string of pearls, a necklace of diamonds, a cabinet of jewelsno, the comparisons are poorwe have something far better than all the riches of the earth can ever typify. You have here the heritage of the chosen of God. Your heritage, Beloved, your own peculiar portion if you belong to Christ this day.

We shall conduct you through this mine of treasure, and ask you to dwell upon each blessing, that your souls may be comforted, and that you, lifting up your hearts in blessing, and praising the God of all Grace, may forget your cares and sorrows, and find a young Heaven begun belowa Paradise blooming amid the desert. There are seven choice things in the text, a perfect number of perfect things. One might see more than seven, but these will exhaust all our time. Therefore we shall speak briefly upon each one.

First, I see in the text as the source of all the rest, ABUNDANT MERCY. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope. No other attribute could have helped us had Mercy refused. As we are by nature, Justice condemns us, Holiness frowns upon us, Power crushes us, Truth confirms the threat of the Law and Wrath fulfils it. It is from the mercy of our God that all our hopes begin.

Mercy is needed for the miserable, and yet more for the sinful. Misery and sin are fully united in the human race, and Mercy, here, performs her noble deeds. My Brethren, God has vouchsafed His mercy to us, and we must thankfully acknowledge that in our case His mercy has been abundant mercy.

We were defiled with abundant sin, and only the multitude of His loving kindnesses could have put those sins away. We were infected with an abundance of evil, and only overflowing mercy can ever cure us of all our natural disease, and make us meet for Heaven. We have received abundant Grace up till now. We have made great drafts upon the Exchequer of God, and of His fullness have all we received Grace for Grace. Where sin has abounded, Grace has much more abounded. Will you, my fellow Debtor, stand still awhile and contemplate the abundant mercy of our blessed God?

A river deep and broad is before you. Track it to its fountain headsee it welling up in the Covenant of Gracein the eternal purposes of Infinite Wisdom. The secret source is no small spring, no mere bubbling fountain, it is a very geyser, leaping aloft in fullness of power. The springs of the sea are not comparable with it. Not even an angel could fathom the springs of eternal love or measure the depths of Infinite Grace.

Follow now the streammark it in all its course. See how it widens and deepens, how at the foot of the Cross it expands into a measureless river! Mark how the filthy come and wash. See how each polluted one comes up milk-white from the washing! Note how the dead are brought to be bathed in this sacred stream, and mark how they live the moment that they touch its wave. Mark how the sick are laid upon the bank, and if but the spray of the river falls upon them they are made whole!

See how on either bank rich verdure clothes the land! Wherever this stream comes, all is life and happiness. Observe along the margin the many trees whose leaves never wither, and whose fruits in season are always brought to maturity. These all draw their life from this flood, and drink from this river of God, which is full of water. Fail not with gladsome eye to note the thousand boats of fairest sail which scud along the mighty river with colors flying, each vessel laden with joy. Behold how happily they are borne along by the current of mercy to the ocean of infinite felicity!

Now we reach the mighty main of mercy, dare you attempt with wings of faith to fly over that glassy sea? No shore gives boundary to that great deep, no voice proclaims its length and breadth. But from its lowest deeps and all along its unruffled bosom I hear a voice which says, Here is Love. Touching the Almighty, we cannot find Him out, but this we know, that His love towards His elect surpasses all conception, even

*Imaginations utmost stretch   
In wonder dies away.*

Turn to the words of the text a moment, for there is great suggestiveness in them. It is Gods great mercy that is spoken of here. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy. Everything in God is on a grand scale. Great powerHe shakes the world. Great wisdomHe balances the clouds. His mercy is commensurate with His other attributes, it is Godlike mercy! Infinite mercy! You must measure His Godhead before you shall compute His mercy. My Soul, think for awhileyou have drank out of this exceeding great and wide sea, and it is all yours to drink from forever!

Well may it be called abundant, if it is infinite. It will always be abundant, for all that can be drawn from it will be but as the drop of a bucket to the sea itself. The mercy which deals with us is not mans mercy, but Gods mercy, and therefore boundless mercy. But note again, it is the mercy of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the mercy of God in Christ. Gods mercy is always special, but His mercy in Christ is especially special.

I know not how else to describe it. His mercy in Nature is bright. His mercy in Providence is conspicuous. But His mercy in His dear Son, His mercy in the Incarnate GodHis mercy through the perfect Sacrificethis is mercys best wine kept to the last. This is mercys fat things full of marrow. When I see Jesus descending from Heaven to earth, Jesus bleeding, Jesus paying all the debts of His people, I can well understand that the mercy of God in Christ must be abundant mercy.

Note carefully another word, it is the mercy of the Father. You have read this last week, I dare say, and felt sickened as you read, the fearful stories of the wounded and their sufferings on the battlefield. You have read also descriptions of how the wounded, when they are brought into the many German towns are met by their compatriots, who rejoice in their victories, but at the same time lament for the valiant men who are maimed for life. You stand on the platform of the railway station, a stranger, and you see a fine young man with an arm shot away, looking sickly and pale from pain and hardships, and you pity him.

I know you pity him from your heart, but an elderly man rushes before you, it is his father. And as he looks upon his son, whom he sent to the war so manly, so strong, so full of health and vigornow reduced to the mere ghost of what he washe pities as a stranger cannot. His inmost heart is moved with compassion for his son. The mercy of the Lord to us is not the mercy of a stranger to a stranger, but the mercy of a Father towards his own dear children. Such mercy has the Lord had on me, and I weep for joy as I tell of it.

Like as a father pities his children, so has He pitied me. I know if He had not loved me He could not have treated me so tenderly. Such pity, such mercy has He had on you. And He is still the same. Do you not rejoice to think that you participate in abundant mercy, Divine mercy, the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, a Fathers mercy, the mercy of our God and Father? O reach to the height of the textone more step will do it.

The Father who is thus tender to us, is also the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And therefore such a Father as can be found nowhere else. The Father of Him who is the Perfect and the Ever-Blessed, is also your Father. And all His mercy belongs to you. Let us congratulate each other, my Brothers and Sisters in the faith. Let us shake off all thoughts of our poverty and all trembling because of our trials. We are rich and abound, for Heavens abundant mercy belongs to us. Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name.

II. The next great blessing in the text is that OF INCORRUPTIBLE LIFE. Mark that, O Believer. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again unto a lively hope. One of the first displays of Divine mercy which we experience is being begotten again. Our first birth gave us the image of the first Adam earthly. Our second birth, and that alone, gives us the image of the second Adam, which is heavenly.

To be begotten once may be a curseto be begotten again is everlastingly and assuredly a blessing. To be born once may be a subject for eternal bewailingto be born a second time will be the theme of a joyful and unending song. My Brethren, saints are begotten again unto a lively hope in the hour of their regeneration, when they are born again from above.

Have we been so born? If we have, we enjoy a blessing far exceeding anything which the natural man can dream of. The Holy Spirit comes upon the chosen in the hour appointed and creates in them a new heart and a right spirit. In a supernatural manner a new principle is implanted, a new life is created within the soul. Just as assuredly as our first birth gives us being from our former nothingness, our new life brings us from utter death into the world of spirit, and into newness of life. We are new born by the incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever. Ours is not the fancied regeneration of those who impute to a mere ceremony, invented by men, a change which is altogether of Gods own working. It is not an imaginary charm worked by incantations and sprinkling over an unconscious baby. It is a real creation, a true lifenot fictitiousbut actual and operative, and one which is found to reveal itself in righteousness and true holiness.

You shall know this new life by the faith and the repentance which always come with it wherever God Himself is pleased to work it. The new life of a Christian is Divine in its originGod has begotten us. The new life comes not from manit is worked by the operation of the Holy Spirit. As certainly as God spoke, and it was done, in the creation of the world, so He speaks in the heart of man, and it is doneand the new creature is born. The new life in us, as it has a Divine origin, has also a Divine Nature. You are made partakers of the Divine Nature.

The life of a Christian is the life of GodGod dwells in him. The Holy Spirit Himself enters the Believer and abides in him, and makes him a living man. Therefore, from its Divine Nature, the inner life of the Believer can by no possibility ever be destroyed. You must first destroy the Godhead before you can quench the spark of the eternal flame that burns within the Believers bosom. Has not the Apostle told us it is a living and incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever?

What a great mystery is this, but at the same time what a blessing! To be born again, to be born from above, to be born by the power of God into a discernment of spiritual truths. To hear spiritual voices, to see spiritual sights, and to be worshippers in spirit and in truth of God, who is a Spirit. God grant that if we have never known this we yet may be created anew in Christ Jesus.

Observe, dear Brethren, to be begotten again is a very marvelous thing. Suppose a man is born into this world, as is too frequently the case, with a predisposition to some sad hereditary disease. There he is, filled with disease, and medicine cannot eject the unwelcome tenant from his body. Suppose that mans body could be altogether new born, and he could receive a new body pure from all sicknessit would be a great mercy. But, O my Brothers and Sisters, it does not approach to regeneration!

Because our supposition only deals with the body, while the new birth renews the soul, and even implants a higher nature. Regeneration overcomes not a mere material disease, not an infliction in the flesh, but the natural depravity of the heartthe deadly disorder of the soul. We are born again, and by that means we are delivered from the power of corruption. The new nature having no depravity in it, nor tendency to sin, it cannot sin because it is born of God.

The moment the heavenly life is implanted it begins to war with the old nature, and continues to struggle violently with itthere is a deadly enmity between the two. The new nature will never be reconciled to the old, or the old one to the new, but the new will conquer and overcome the evil. You have smiled at the pleasant fiction of old men being ground young again in a millbut that marvel would be nothing compared with this the old man made young would still be the same man. And placed in the same circumstances, he would develop into the same character.

But here is the old man crucified and a new man created in the Divine image! Who can estimate the privilege of receiving a Heaven-born Nature, which, however weak and feeble it may be at the first, is ever-living, and by the power of God will gain the ultimate victory? Let us then rejoice and be glad! We may be very poor today, but we are born from above. We may be much afflicted, but what of that if we are the twice-born sons of Heaven? We may be despised and rejected, but the heavenly light has shone

upon our eyes. We have been regenerated, we have passed from death unto life. Here is ceaseless cause for gratitude and joy, and if we rightly consider it, we may forget our griefs.

III. A third blessing strictly connected with this new life, is A LIVELY HOPE. He has begotten us again unto a lively hope. Could a man live without hope? Men manage to survive the worst condition of distress when they are encouraged by a hope. But is not suicide the natural result of the death of hope? Yes, we must have a hope, and the Christian is not left without one. He has a lively hope, that is to say, first, he has a hope within him, real, true, and operative.

Some mens hopes of Heaven are not living hopes, for they never stir them to action. They live as if they were going to Hell, and yet they coolly talk about hoping that all will be well with them at last! A Christians hope purifies him, excites him to diligence, makes him seek after that which he expects to obtain. A student at the University hoping to gain a prize uses his best endeavors, burns the midnight oil, strains all his faculties that he may reach the mark which will ensure his passing the exams.

Even thus the Christian with a lively hope devotes himself to obtaining the blessings which God has promised in His Word. The Lord has begotten us to a lively hope, that is to say, to a vigorous, active, operating hope. It is a lively hope in another sense, namely, that it cheers and enlivens. The swimmer who is ready to sink, if he sees a boat nearing him, plucks up courage and swims with all his strength because now he expects that his swimming will be of effectual service to him. The Christian amid the waves and billows of adversity retains his hope, a glorious hope of future bliss, and therefore he strikes out like a man towards the heavenly shore. Our hope buoys up the soul, keeps the head above water, inspires confidence and sustains courage!

It is also called a living hope, because it is imperishable. Other hopes fade like withering flowers. The hopes of the rich, the boasts of the proudall these will die out as a candle when it flickers in the socket. The hope of the greatest monarch has been crushed before our eyes. He set up the standard of victory too soon, and has seen it trailed in the mire. There is no unwaning hope beneath the changeful moonthe only imperishable hope is that which climbs above the stars, and fixes itself upon the Throne of God and the Person of Jesus Christ.

The hope which God has given to His truly quickened people is a lively hope, however, because it deals with life. Brethren, it may be Christ will come while yet we live, and then we shall not die but shall be fitted for Heaven by a change. However, it is probable that we may have to depart out of this world unto the Father by the usual course of nature. And in expecting to do so let us not look at death as a gloomy matter, as though it could at all jeopardize our welfare or ultimately injure us.

No, my Brethren, we have a living hope, a lively hope. Charles Borromeo, the famous bishop of Milan, ordered a painter who was about to draw a skeleton with a scythe over a sepulcher, to substitute for it the golden key of Paradise. Truly this is a most fitting emblem for a Believers tombfor what is death but the key of Heaven to the Christian? We notice frequently over cemetery gates, as an emblematic device, a torch turned over ready to be quenched. Ah, my Brethren, it is not so, the torch of our life burns the better, and blazes the brighter for the change of death.

The breaking of the pitcher which now surrounds the lamp and conceals the glory, will permit our inner life to reveal its lofty nature, and before long even the pitcher shall be so remodeled as to become an aid to that light! Its present breaking is but preparatory to its future refashioning. It is a blessed thought that the part of us which must most sadly feel the mortal stroke is secured beyond all fear from permanent destruction. We know that this very body, though it molders into dust, shall live again!

These weeping eyes shall have all tears wiped from them. These hands which grasp today the sword of a conflict shall wave the palm branch of triumph. My Brethren, it were not just that one body should fight and another body should be crownedthat one body should labor and another body have the reward. The same identical body shall rise from the dead at the Lords coming, marvelously changed, strangely developed as the seed develops into the full-blown flowerbut still the samein very deed the same!

This very body shall be resplendent with glory, even the same which now bears sickness and pain. This is our lively hopethat death has no dominion over any part of our manhood. There is for awhile a separation between the soul and the bodyit is but for awhile. There is for the flesh a temporary slumbering in the tomb, it is but a slumber, and the waking shall be in the likeness of Christ. As for the soul, it shall be forever with the Lord, waiting for the latter day and the coming of Christ, when the body itself shall be raised from corruption into the likeness of the Glory of Him who is the first begotten from the dead. Thus, I have brought you up from the abundant mercy to the new life, and onward, to the lively hope.

IV. We cannot tarry, but must notice, in the fourth place, another delightful possession which ought effectually to chase away from all of us the glooms of this life, and that is A RISEN SAVIOR. He has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Our best Friend is not dead! Our great Patron and Helper, our Omnipotent Savior, is not lying in the tomb today. He lives, He ever lives! No sound of greater gladness can be heard in the Christian Church than thisThe Lord is risen, the Lord is risen indeed!

Now, Brethren, observe the connection between a risen Savior and our living hope. Jesus Christ died, not in appearance, but in reality. In proof whereof, His heart was pierced by the soldiers spear. He was laid in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, truly a corpse. Not a spark of life remained. The only difference between His dead body and the dead body of any other was that still the preserving power hovered over Him, and as His body had been defiled by no sin, so His flesh could not see corruption as it would have done had it been the body of a sinful man.

Then, at the end of the appointed time, the same Savior who was laid in the tomb rose from the deadnot in secrecybut before the Roman guards who watched the sepulcher. They fled in terror. He met His disciples sometimes one by one, sometimes two at a time. On other occasions, four hundred at once saw Himcredible witnessespersons who had no reason for forging a falsehood. Persons who so believed that they saw Him that many of them died, for their belief, the most painful deaths.

He rose, not in fantasy and figure, but in reality. One of the witnesses put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into His side. And in the presence of His assembled disciples, the Risen One ate a piece of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb. He really and literally rose from the dead the selfsame Christ who was born of the Virgin Mary, who suffered under Pontius Pilateand afterwards ascended into Heaven. That fact is as well proved as any fact in human history. There never, perhaps, was any incident of human history more fully verified than the rising of Jesus of Nazareth from the tomb.

Now, note you well the comfort which arises out of this fact, since it proves that we possess a living Advocate, Mediator and High Priest who has passed into the heavens. Moreover, since all Believers, being partakers of the incorruptible life of God are one with Jesus Christ, that which happens to Him virtually happens to them. They died in His death, they live in His life, they reign in His Glory. As in Adam all die who were in Adam, so in Christ shall all be made alive who are in Christthe two Adams head up their dispensationswhatever happens to either of the Adams, happens to those represented by him.

So, then, the resurrection of Jesus is virtually my resurrection. Were He dead still, then might I fear, no, I would know, that I, dying, should die. But He, having died, arose again in due season and lives! Therefore I, dying, shall also rise and live, for as Jesus is, so must I be. If I have within me the new life, I have the same life in me that is in Christ, and the same thing happens to me as happens to Christ. If His life dies, mine, being the same, dies also. But, as He has said, Because I live, you shall live also, my life is secure.

Here, then, is the top and bottom of the Christians hopeWe are begotten again into a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. As we see Him alive, we rejoice that He lives, because He lives for us, and we live in Him.

Let me give you an illustration. When Joseph was in Egypt, he was highly exalted and placed upon the throne. Now, while his brothers did not know him they were grievously afraid to go down into Egyptthey thought him to be an Egyptian, a haughty ruler of the landand that he treated them roughly. But when once they and their father were persuaded that Joseph, their brother, was alive and on the throne, then they cheerfully joined with the old man when he said, Joseph my son is yet alive. I will go and see him before I die.

Now, into the unknown land our Elder Brother has gonewhere is He and what? Why, He is King of the country. He sits on a Throne. O Brethren, with what comfort do we now go down into that Egypt! With what consolation will we enter the unknown country, which some think to be shrouded in darkness, but which, now that Jesus reigns on its Throne, is full of light to us!

Or take another image. When the children of Israel went through the Jordan, they were told that the Jordan would divide before them, but they were still more fully assured when the priests went forward with the ark. For as soon as the feet of the priests touched the edge of the river, the waters began to divide. As they saw their priests march through the bed of the stream, and come up on the other side, all doubts about the security of the passage must have vanished at once! The priests were the representatives of the people before God, and where they passed safely all Israel might go.

See you, then, my Brethren, the Great High Priest of our profession has led the van. The ark of the Eternal Covenant has gone before, death is dried up, so that we can say, O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory? And you and I may, with perfect confidence, full of a lively hope, march onwards into the Glory land, for Jesus Christ has safely passed the flood, and even so shall we. Here, then, is reason for joy. We will not fear the present, we will not dread the future. For Christ is risen, indeed, and our lively hope is fixed on Him. Thus we have set before you four out of the seven precious things.

V. The fifth is exceedingly rich, but we can only give a word where many sermons would not exhaustAN INCORRUPTIBLE INHERITANCE an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away. God has been pleased in His abundant mercy to prepare for His people an inheritance. He has made them sons, and if children, then heirs. He has given them a new life, and if a new life, then there must be possessions and a place suitable for that new life.

A heavenly nature requires a heavenly inheritance, Heaven-born children must have a heavenly portion. Now I shall only ask you to notice that the inheritance which God has prepared for us has a fourfold description appended to it. First, as to its substanceit is incorruptible. The substance of everything earthly by degrees passes away. Even solid granite will rot and crumble. The substance of things seen, I may say in paradox, is devoid of substance.

Empires have grown great, but the inward corruption within their constitution has at length dissolved them. Dynasties have been wrecked, and thrones have tottered by internal corruption, but the inheritance of the saints of God has nothing within it that can make it perish. Forever and forever shall the blissful portion of the sanctified be theirs. Heaven, and the streets thereof, are all said to be of precious stones and pure gold, because they are imperishable.

Next, for purityit is undefiled. Earthly inheritances are often defiled in the getting. Some men have grown rich by fraud, by violence, by oppression of the poor. How many a heritage is polluted all over with the slime of the serpent! And he that inherits the goods of such a one inherits therewith a curse, for God will surely avenge injustice and wrong doing, even to the third generation.

But our inheritance is undefiled, for it was won by the obedience, the perfection, and sufferings of Jesus. No thought of wrong was used in the getting of the portion of the Well-Beloved of God. An inheritance may be defiled after it is possessed, but Heaven never shall be. Satan shall never enter there, nor sin of any kind pass through the gate of pearl. O Brethren, what a joy is this! Defilement is on everything in this fallen world. We cannot purge ourselves completelyearthly things all bring a measure of defilement with them. But up yonder our portion shall not be stained with sin, we shall be perfect, and all around us perfect, too.

And then it is added for its beauty, it fades not away. The substance of a thing might endure after its beauty was gone, but in Heaven there shall be no declining in the beauty of anything celestial. Milton sings of the amaranth, which he describes as blossoming at the foot of the tree of life in the garden of Eden. It was a flower of perpetual sweetness, whose

beauty never faded. But he says   
*Soon for mans offense   
To Heaven removed, where first it grew, there grows And flowers aloft, shading the fountain of life, And where the river of bliss through midst of Heaven Rolls over Elysian flowers her amber stream; With these, that never fade, the spirits elect Bind their resplendent locks, wreathed with beams.*

The amaranthine inheritance is yours. The garden of Paradise shall never cease to bloom, and the wreath of victory shall never wither from your brows. Oh, what joy is this for you! Your inheritance is for substance incorruptible, for purity undefiled, for beauty unfading. And then for possession, it is securereserved in Heaven for you. How I delight to dwell upon the thought that Heaven is not to be scrambled for, that the portion of each saint in Glory is given to him by lot even as was Canaan of old to Judah, to Reuben, to Manasseh, and the like.

There is a place in Heaven for me which none of you could fill. There is a harp which no fingers can strike but mine, and a crown which no brow can wear but this. And so with each of youyou shall have your own, your own appointed inheritance. He has begotten each one of you again you are as truly begotten as any other Believer. You have the same hope, and you shall as surely stand in your lot at the end of the days. O clap your hands, you righteous! Shout for joy! Scanty is your portion here and hard your lot, it may be, but the undefiled inheritance will more than make amends. Therefore, lift up your hearts this day, and let not your hands hang down.

VI. Time fails us, therefore we must mention the sixth blessing at once, it is INVIOLABLE SECURITY. The inheritance is kept for you, and you are kept for the inheritance. The word is a military one. It signifies a city garrisoned and defended. Think of a city besiegedStrasbourg, if you will that is an emblem of your condition in this world. The enemy pour in their shot, they keep up the fire day and night, and set the city on a blaze, and even thus Satan bombards us with temptations, and beleaguers us with all the hosts of Hell.

Our great enemy has determined to raze the citadel of our faith even to the ground. His great guns are drawn up around our bastions. His sappers and miners are busy with our bulwarks. Even now it may be his shells are tearing our hearts, and his shot is setting our nature in a blaze.

Herein is our confidenceour great Captain has walled us aroundHe has appointed Salvation for walls and bulwarks. We are safe, though all the devils of Hell surround us, for we are garrisoned by Omnipotence. Each Believer is kept by that same power which bears the earths huge pillars up, and sustains the arches of Heaven. Jerusalem, you are besieged, but you may laugh your enemy to scorn, he shall never break through your ramparts

*Munitions of stupendous rock   
Our dwelling place shall be,   
There shall our soul without a shock   
Our vanquished foemen see.*

Our enemies shall assemble, but when they perceive that God is known in our palaces for a refuge, they shall be troubled and hasten away. Fear shall take hold upon them, and pain, as of a woman in travail. Every Believer is kept by the power of God, but the power of God does not produce in us slothbut faith. We are commanded to watch, that is what we are to do. But we are told both to watch and pray, because our watching is not enough. We need Gods watching, also, and we are to pray for it. Faith is the under captain of the city. Gods power protects itthe King is in the midst of her. But Faith is the high constable of the tower. He it is that goes on the walls, arms the warders, strengthens the bastions, and brings help out of the sanctuary. While the sword of the Lord and of Gideon is at work, the Midianites cannot prevail.

This keeping, observe, my Brothers and Sisters, for I must leave the pointthis keeping is complete and continuousit will never end until we shall need keeping no longer. We shall be kept unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. I believe this means that we shall not only be kept till our souls reach Heaven, but we shall be kept till the advent. You say, Why is that necessary? I reply, only half of our manhood goes to Heaven at death, the other part, namely, our body, waits below till the resurrection. Yet our dust is precious in Gods sight, and therefore it is watched over until the day of Christs appearingfor that is the appointed hour for the redemption of the body

*Sweet Truth to me, I shall arise,   
And with these eyes, my Savior see.*

Wherever my dust may be scattered, though to the four winds of Heaven it is divided, though it pass through every conceivable change and combinationyet each atom of my dust shall hear the sound of the archangels trumpor if not each earthly particle of this my frame, yet each essential constituent shall hear the voice of God. And bone to bone each bone shall come, and the body shall rise intact and perfect, for it is kept by the power of God unto the salvation ready to be revealed.

O my Brethren, what a glorious thing it is to know that the salvation God has given us in Christ is a perfect salvation of our complete manhood! There shall not a hair of your head perish. You shall go into the furnace, you shall walk amid the glowing coals of death, but you shall come forth with not a smell of fire passed upon you. At the Lords appearing you shall be none the worse for the fall of Adam. You shall be none the worse for your own transgressions. You shall be none the worse for all the scars of battle. You shall be none the worse for dyingyou shall be in Heaven as bright as God Himself could have made you if you had never fallen, and never sinned!

Do I exaggerate? No, verily, for it is written, We shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is. We shall wake up in His likeness. Oh, the glory of complete victory over Satans arts, and Satans strength! He shall be defeated all along the line! He shall gain nothing by all his attacks upon our God, and upon usbut we in the image of Jesus shall laugh at the complete defeat of evil, and glorify God and the Lamb forever!

VII. The best I have reserved for the last. Out of the seven treasures of the Christian the last comprehends all, is better than all, though what I have already spoken is everythingit is A BLESSED GOD. We left this to the last, though it comes firstBlessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is joy to have Heaven, it is joy to possess a new life to fit me for Heavenbut the greatest of all is to have my God, my own

Saviors God, my Father, my own Saviors Father, to be all my own! God Himself has said, I will be their God, and they shall be My people.   
He has not given you earth and Heaven only, though that were much. He   
has given you the Heaven of HeavenHimself. Herod spoke of giving the  
half of his kingdom. But the Lord has not given you the half of His kingdom, nor even the whole of His kingdom onlybut His own Self the   
blessed God has in Covenant made over to you. Will not this make you rejoice? Methinks you may go forth with those that make merry and rejoice   
before God with a joy that knows no boundSing unto God, sing praise,   
sing, unto God, sing praises! Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say,  
Rejoice.   
Brethren, the practical point is, show your gratitude and your joy by  
blessing God. You can bless Him with your voices. Sing more than you do.  
Singing is Heavens work, practice it here. At your work, do if you can,   
quietly raise a hymn and bless the Lord. But oh, keep the fire on the altar   
of your hearts always burning! Praise Him, bless Him. His mercy endures   
forever, so let your praises endure.   
Bless Him also with your substance. He is a blessed God. Do not give   
Him mere wordsthey are but airand tongues but clay. Give Him the   
best you have. In the old superstitious times the Churches used to be   
adorned with the rarest pearls and jewels, with treasures of gold and silverfor men then gave mines of wealth to what they believed to be the   
service of God.   
Shall the true faith have less operative power upon us? Shall the lively  
hope make us do less for God than the mere dead hope of the followers of   
Rome? No, let us be generous at all times, and count it our joy to sacrifice   
unto our God. Let us give Him our efforts, our time, our talents. Bless the   
Lord this afternoon, you Sunday school teachers. Teach those dear children under a sense of your own obligations to God. You who go from house   
to house this afternoon, you who will preach in the streets and lift up your   
voices in the corners of the thoroughfarespreach as those who are begotten unto a lively hope by the abundant mercy of God.   
Preacher, live more intensely and ardently than ever you have done.  
Deacons, serve the Church more thoroughly than you have done as yet.   
Elders, give your whole souls to the care of Christs flock, which He has   
redeemed with His blood. Each one of you workers for Jesus Christ work   
not for Him after an ordinary sort, as men do for a master whose pay is no   
larger than he can be compelled to make itbut work with heart, and   
soul, and strength for Him who loved you to the death and poured out His   
soul to redeem you from going down into Hell.   
Thus prove that the Divine Nature is truly in you, and that you possess   
the lively hope implanted by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the   
dead. The Lord bless you all, for Christs sake. Amen.

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.   
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #222 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

THE CHRISTIANS HEAVINESS AND REJOICING   
NO. 222

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, NOVEMBER 7, 1858 BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations.   
1 Peter 1:6.

THIS verse to a worldly man looks amazingly like a contradiction. Even to a Christian man, when he understands it best, it will still be a paradox. You greatly rejoice, and yet you are in heaviness. Is that possible? Can there be in the same heart great rejoicing and yet a temporary heaviness? Most assuredly. This paradox has been known and felt by many of the Lords children and it is far from being the greatest paradox of the Christian life. Men who live within themselves and mark their own feelings as Christians will often stand and wonder at themselves. Of all riddles, the greatest riddle is a Christian man. As to his pedigree, what a riddle he is! He is a child of the first Adam, an heir of wrath, even as others. He is a child of the second Adamhe was born free. There is therefore now no condemnation unto him. He is a riddle in his own existence. As dying and behold we live. As chastened and not killed.

He is a riddle as to the component parts of his own spiritual frame. He finds that which makes him akin to the devildepravity, corruption binding him still to the earth and causing him to cry out, O wretched man that I am. And yet he finds that he has within himself that which exalts him not merely to the rank of an angel, but higher stilla something which raises him up together and makes him sit together with Christ Jesus in heavenly places. He finds that he has that within him which must ripen into Heaven and yet that about him which would inevitably ripen into Hell, if grace did not forbid. What wonder, then, Beloved, if the Christian man is a paradox, that his condition should be a paradox, too! Why marvel when you see a creature corrupt and yet purified, mortal and yet immortal, fallen but yet exalted far above principalities and powerswhy marvel that you should find that creature also possessed of mingled experience, greatly rejoicing and yet at the same time, in heaviness through manifold temptations?

I would have you this morning, look first of all at the Christians heavinessHe is in heaviness through manifold temptations. And then, in the next place, at the Christians great rejoicing.

I. In the first place, HIS HEAVINESS. This is one of the most unfortunate texts in the Bible. I have heard it quoted ten thousand times for my own comfort but I never understood it till a day or two ago. On referring to most of the commentaries in my possession I cannot find that they have a right idea of the meaning of this text. You will notice that your friends often say to you when you are in trouble, There is a need for this affliction. There is a need, say they, for all these trials and troubles that befall you. That is a very correct and Scriptural sentiment. But that sentiment is not in the text at all. And yet, whenever this text is quoted in my hearing, this is what I am always told, or what I conceive I am always told to be the meaningthat the great temptations, the great trials which befall us there is a need for them. But it does not say so hereit says something betternot only that there is a need for our temptations but that there is a need for our heaviness under the temptation.

Now, let me show you the difference. There is a man of God, full of faithstrong. He is about to do his Masters work and he does it. God is with him and gives him great success. The enemy begins to slander him. All manner of evil is spoken against him falsely for Christs sake. You say there is a need for that and you are quite correctbut look at the man. How gallantly he behaves himself! He lifts his head above his accusers and unmoved amidst them all he stands like a rock in the midst of a roaring tempest never moved from the firm basis on which it rests. The scene changes and instead of calamity perhaps he is called to endure absolute persecution, as in Apostolic times. We imagine the man driven out from house and home, separated from all his kindred, made to wander in the pathless snows of the mountains. And what a brave and mighty man he appears to bewhen you see him enduring all this his spirits never sink. All this can I do, says he, and I can greatly rejoice in it, for Christs names sake. For I can practice the text which says, Rejoice you in that day and leap for joy!

And you tell that man there is a need for his persecution. He says, Yes, I know it and I fear not all I have to endure. I am not cowed by it. At last imagine the man taken before the Inquisition and condemned to die. You still comfort him with the fact that there is a need that he should die that the blood of the martyrs must be the seed of the Churchthat the world can never be overcome by Christs Gospel except through the sufferings and death of His followersthat Christ stooped to conquer and the Church must do the samethat through death and blood must be the road to the Churchs victory. And what a noble sight it is to see that man going to the stake and kissing itlooking upon his iron chains with as much esteem as if they had been chains of gold! Now tell him there is a need for all this and he will thank you for the promise. And you admire the manyou wonder at him.

Ah, but there is another class of persons that get no such honor as this. There is another sort of Christians for whom this promise really was intended who do not get the comfort of it. I do admire the man I have pictured to youmay God long preserve such men in the midst of the Church. I would stimulate everyone to imitate him. Seek for great faith and great love to your Master that you may be able to endure, being steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. But remember that this text has not in it comfort for such personsthere are other texts for them. This text has been perverted for such a use as that. This is meant for another and a feebler grade of Christians who are often overlooked and sometimes despised.

I was lying upon my couch during this last week and my spirits were sunken so low that I could weep by the hour like a childand yet I knew not what I wept for. A very slight thing will move me to tears just now. A kind friend was telling me of some poor old soul living near who was suffering very great pain and yet she was full of joy and rejoicing. I was so distressed by the hearing of that story and felt so ashamed of myself that I did not know what to do. I wonder why I should be in such a state as thiswhile this poor woman who had a terrible cancer and was in the most frightful agonycould nevertheless, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. And in a moment this text flashed upon my mind with its real meaning. I am sure it is its real meaning. Read it over and over again and you will see I am not wrong. Though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness.

It does not say, Though now for a season you are suffering pain, though now for a season you are poorbut you are in heaviness. Your spirits are taken away from you. You are made to weep. You cannot bear your pain. You are brought to the very dust of death and wish that you might die. Your faith itself seems as if it would fail you. That is the thing for which there is a need. That is what my text declaresthat there is an absolute need that sometimes the Christian should not endure his sufferings with a gallant and a joyous heart. There is a need that sometimes his spirits should sink within him and that he should become even as a little child smitten beneath the hand of God.

Ah, Beloved, we sometimes talk about the rodbut it is one thing to see the rod and it is another thing to feel it. And many a time have we said within ourselves, If I did not feel so low spirited as I now do, I should not mind this affliction. And what is that but saying, If I did not feel the rod I should not mind it? It is just how you feel. That is, after all, the essence and marrow of your affliction. It is that breaking down of the spirit, that pulling down of the strong man that is the very fester of the soreness of Gods scourgingthe blueness of the wound, whereby the soul is made better. I think this one idea has been enough to be food for me many a day. And there may be some child of God here to whom it may bring some slight portion of comfort. We will yet again dwell upon it. Though now for

a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations.

And here let me for a moment or two try to explain why it is that there is an absolute need, not merely for temptations and troubles, but likewise for our being in heaviness under them.

In the first place, if we were not in heaviness during our troubles we should not be like our Covenant Head, Christ Jesus. It is a rule of the kingdom that all the members must be like the Head. They are to be like the Head in that day when He shall appear. We shall be like He is, for we shall see Him as He is. But we must be like the Head also in His humiliation, or else we cannot be like He is in His glory. Now you will observe that our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, very often passed through much of trouble without any heaviness. When He said, Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head, I observe no heaviness. I do not think He sighed over that. And when thirsty when He sat upon the well and said, Give me to drink, there was no heaviness in all His thirst. I believe that through the first years of His ministry, although He might have suffered some heaviness, He usually passed over His troubles like a ship floating over the waves of the sea.

But you will remember that at last the waves of swelling grief came into the vessel. At last the Savior Himself, though full of patience, was obliged to say, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. And one of the Evangelists tells us that the Savior, began to be very heavy. What does that mean but that His spirit began to sink? There is a more terrible meaning yet, which I cannot enter into this morning. But still I may say that the surface meaning of it is that all His spirits sank within Him. He had no longer His usual courage and though He had strength to say, Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours be donestill the weakness did prevail and He said, If it is possible let this cup pass from Me. The Savior passed through the brook, but He drank of the brook by the way. And we who pass through the brook of suffering must drink of it, too. He had to bear the burden, not with His shoulders omnipotent, but with shoulders that were bending to the earth beneath a load. And you and I must not always expect a giant faith that can remove mountains sometimes even to us the grasshopper must be a burden, that we may in all things be like unto our Head.

Yet againif the Christian did not sometimes suffer heaviness he would begin to grow too proud and think too much of himself and become too great in his own estimation. Those of us who are of elastic spirit and who in our health are full of everything that can make life happy, are too apt to forget the Most High God. Lest we should be satisfied from ourselves and forget that all our own springs must be in Him, the Lord sometimes seems to sap the springs of life, to drain the heart of all its spirits and to leave us without soul or strength. Then it is that we discover what we are made of and out of the depths we cry unto God, humbled by our adversities.

Another reason for this discipline is, I think, that in heaviness we often learn lessons that we never could attain elsewhere. Do you know that God has beauties for every part of the world? And He has beauties for every place of experience? There are views to be seen from the tops of the Alps that you can never see elsewhere. Yes, but there are beauties to be seen in the depths of the dell that you could never see on the tops of the mountains. There are glories to be seen on Pisgah, wondrous sights to be beheld when by faith we stand on Tabor. But there are also beauties to be seen in our Gethesmanes and some marvelously sweet flowers are to be culled by the edge of the dens of the leopards. Men will never become great in divinity until they become great in suffering. Ah, said Luther, affliction is the best book in my library. And let me add, the best leaf in the book of affliction is that blackest of all the leaves, the leaf called

heaviness, when the spirit sinks within us and we cannot endure as we would wish.

And yet againthis heaviness is of essential use to a Christian if he would do good to others. Ah, there are a great many Christian people that I was going to say I should like to see afflictedbut I will not say so much as that. I should like to see them heavy in spirit. If it were the Lords will that they should be bowed down greatly I would not express a word of regret. For a little more sympathy would do them good. A little more power to sympathize would be a precious gift to them and even if it were purchased by a short journey through a fiery furnace they might not rue the day afterwards in which they had been called to pass through the flame.

There are none so tender as those who have been skinned themselves. Those who have been in the chamber of affliction know how to comfort those who are there. Do not believe that any man will become a physician unless he walks the hospitals. And I am sure that no one will become a divine, or become a comforter, unless he lies in the hospital as well as walks through it and has to suffer himself. God cannot make ministers and I speak with reverence of His Holy nameHe cannot make a Barnabas except in the fire. It is there and there alone that He can make His sons of consolation. He may make His sons of thunder anywhere. But His sons of consolation He must make in the fire. Who shall speak to those whose hearts are broken? Who shall bind up their wounds but those whose hearts have been broken, also, and whose wounds have long run with the sore of grief? If need be, then, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations.

I think I have said enough about this heaviness, except that I must add it is but for a season. A little time, a few hours, a few days, a few months at most and it shall all have passed away. And then comes the eternal weight of glory, wherein you greatly rejoice.

II. And now to the second part of the text. Here we have something far more joyous and comfortable than the first. WHEREIN YOU GREATLY REJOICE. And can a Christian greatly rejoice while he is in heaviness? Yes, most assuredly he can. Mariners tell us that there are some parts of the sea where there is a strong current upon the surface going one way, but that down in the depths there is a strong current running the other way. Two seas do not meet and interfere with one another. But one stream of water on the surface is running in one direction and another below in an opposite direction. Now the Christian is like that. On the surface there is a stream of heaviness rolling with dark waves. But down in the depths there is a strong undercurrent of great rejoicing that is always flowing there. Do you ask me what is the cause of this great rejoicing? The Apostle tells us, Wherein you greatly rejoice. What does he mean? You must refer to his own writings and then you will see. He is writing to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, and so forth. The first thing that he says to them is that they are, elect according to the foreknowledge of Godwherein we greatly rejoice.

Ah, even when the Christian is most in heaviness through manifold temptations, what a mercy it is that he can know that he is still the elect of God! Any man who is assured that God has chosen him from before the foundation of the world may well say, Wherein we greatly rejoice. Let me be lying upon a bed of sickness and just revel in that one thought. Before God made the heavens and the earth and laid the pillars of the firmament in their golden sockets, He set His love upon me! Upon the breast of the great High Priest He wrote my name and in His everlasting book it stands, never to be erasedelect according to the foreknowledge of God. Why, this may make a mans soul leap within him and all the heaviness that the infirmities of the flesh may lay upon him shall be but as nothing. For this tremendous current of his overflowing joy shall sweep away his grief.

Bursting and overleaping every obstacle, it shall flood all his sorrows till they are drowned and covered up and shall not be mentioned any more. Wherein we greatly rejoice. Come, Christian, you are depressed and cast down! Think for a moment. You are chosen of God and precious. Let the bell of election ring in your earthat ancient Sabbath bell of the Covenant. And let your name be heard in its notes and say, I beseech you, Does not this make you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations?

Againyou will see another reason. The Apostle says that we are elect through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christwherein we greatly rejoice. Is the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ girt about my loins to be my beauty and my glorious raiment? And is the blood of Jesus sprinkled upon me to take away all my guilt and all my sinand shall I not in this greatly rejoice? What shall there be in all the depressions of spirits that can possibly come upon me that shall make me break my harpeven though I should for a moment hang it upon the willows? Do I not expect that yet again my songs shall mount to Heaven? And even now through the thick darkness do not the sparks of my joy appearwhen I remember that I have still upon me the blood of Jesus and still about me the glorious righteousness of the Messiah?

But the great and cheering comfort of the Apostle is that we are elect unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fades not away, reserved in Heaven. And here, Brethren, is the grand comfort of the Christian. When the child of God is sore-stricken and much depressedthe sweet hope, that living or dying, there is an inheritance incorruptible, reserved in Heaven for himmay indeed make him greatly rejoice. He is drawing near the gates of Death and his spirit is in heaviness. He has to leave behind him all his family and all that life holds dear. His sickness brings upon him naturally a depression of spirit. But you sit by his bedside and you begin to talk to him of the

*Sweet fields beyond the swelling floods   
Arrayed in living green.*

You tell him of Canaan on the other side the Jordanof the land that flows with milk and honeyof the Lamb in the midst of the Throne and of all the glories which God has prepared for them that love Him. And you see his dull leaden eye light up with seraphic brightness. He shakes off his heaviness and he begins to sing

*On Jordans stormy banks I stand,   
And cast a wishful eye,   
To Canaans fair and happy land,   
Where my possessions lie.*

This makes him greatly rejoice. And if to that you add that possibly before he has passed the gates of Death his Master may appearif you tell him that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming in the clouds of Heaven. That though we have not seen Him, yet believing in Him we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, expecting the second advent. If he has grace to believe in that sublime doctrine he will be ready to clap his hands upon his bed of weariness and cry, Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly! Come quickly!

And in drawing to a close I notice there is one more doctrine that will always cheer a Christian and I think that this perhaps is the one chiefly intended here in the text. Look at the end of the 16th verseReserved in Heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. This, perhaps, will be one of the greatest cordials to a Christian in heavinessthat he is not kept by his own powerbut by the power of God. That he is not left in his own keeping, but he is kept by the Most High. Ah, what should you and I do in the day when darkness gathers round our faith if we had to keep ourselves? I can never understand what an Arminian does when he gets into sickness, sorrow and afflictionfrom

what well he draws his comfort, I know not. But I know from where I draw mine. It is thisWhen flesh and heart fails, God is the strength of my life and my portion forever. I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.

But take away that doctrine of the Saviors keeping His people and where is my hope? What is there in the Gospel worth my preaching, or worth your receiving? I know that He has said, I give unto My sheep eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. But Lord, suppose they should grow faintthat they should begin to murmur in their affliction? Shall they not perish then? No, they shall never perish. But suppose the pain should grow so hot that their faith should failshall they not perish then? Nothey shall not perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.

But suppose their sense should seem to wander and some should try to pervert them from the faithshall they not be perverted? Nothey shall never perish. But suppose in some hour of their extremity Hell and the world and their own fears should all beset them and they should have no power to standno power whatever to resist the fierce onslaughts of the enemyshall they not perish then? Nothey are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. Ah, this is the doctrine, the cheering assurance, wherein we greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, we are in heaviness through manifold temptations.

One word before I send you away. There are some of you here to whom this precious passage has not a word to say. Our heaviness, O worldling, our heaviness is but for a season. Your heaviness is to come. And it shall be a heaviness intolerable because hopelessly everlasting. Our temptations, though they are manifold are but light afflictions and are but for a moment and they work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

But your joys that you now have are evanescent as a bubble and they are passing away and they are working out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of misery. I beseech you, look at this matter. Search and see whether all is right with your spiritswhether it is well for you to venture into an eternal state as you are. And may God give you grace that you may feel your need of a Savior, that you may seek Christ, lay hold upon Him and so may come into a gracious state wherein you shall greatly rejoice, even though for a season, if need be, you should be in heaviness through manifold temptations!

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

A PASTORAL LETTER   
NO. 222A

I AM a prisoner still. Weakness has succeeded pain and languor of mind is the distressing result of this prostration of my physical powers. It is the Lords doing. In some sense I might say with Paul, I am a prisoner of Jesus Christ. But ah, my bonds are more easy and less honorable to wear than his! Instead of a dungeon my lot is cast in an abode of comfort. I am not restrained from my accustomed ministry by a chain forged by man, but by the silken cord of Gods Providenceno rough jailer, but loving relatives and friends attend upon me in these tedious hours of my bondage. I beseech you therefore, my Beloved, let your many prayers to God on my behalf be each and all mingled with thanksgiving. Gratitude should ever be used in devotion, like salt of old was in sacrifice, without prescribing how much. And now, though unable to stand in the pulpit, I will endeavor to give you a short addressor rather, I will attempt to express the feelings of my heart in a few broken sentences. And first, to you my well-beloved and trusty Brothers and Sisters in Christ and in the family tie of Church fellowshipto you I tender my fondest regards, my sincerest thanks, my sweetest love. I feel refreshed by your sympathy and my heart is overwhelmed at the estimation in which you hold me. It brings the hot blush to my cheek and well it may. Tenderly as a husband thinks of the doting affection of his wife, as a father receives the fond homage of his children, as a brother when he is held in honor by all the family circleso tenderly and even more tenderly, I remember your care of me. The tone of your supplications during my affliction has been grateful to me beyond measure. I rejoice that you have with humble submission kissed the rod. Not impatiently asking my recovery but meekly acquiescing in the Providence of our heavenly Father, craving most of all that the Lord would sanctify the pains of your pastor and guard with his own watchful eye the flock. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord. Yet again, in the still chamber of retirement I anxiously remember some who would have been baptized on a profession of their faith and received into membership of the Church had not my health been thus impaired. Be not fretful concerning this delay: accept it as an ordained trial of your patience. If a farmer has a field of corn severed by the sickle from its native earth, but not yet housed in the garner, is he not concerned lest he suffer loss? How much more, as a minister of Christ, am I concerned for youthe converts God has given me? Oh, Beloved! Be steadfast. Commit not the great sin. Beware lest Satan take advantage of youfor we are not ignorant of his devices. Draw not back. It is written in the Law, No devoted thing that a man shall devote unto the Lord of all that he has, shall be sold or redeemed: every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord. The Israelite might not retract the beast that he dedicated from his fold for an offeringfar less the Christian, when he has resolved to yield up his heart, his life, his soul to Jesus. I speak not thus to grieve you. Think not that my jealousy bodes a suspicion, but rather that it expresses my love. We are not of them that draw back unto perdition. But of them that believe to the saving of the soul. My little children, these things I write unto you that you sin not. To those who have worshipped during the past two years in the Surrey Music Hallthe preachers greetings and his love. You have heard how the Prophet Samuel set up a stone and called the name of it EBEN-EZER, saying, Hitherto has the Lord helped us. That stone marked the place where the Lord gave the children of Israel a great victory over the Philistines. But it likewise marked the very place where, twenty years before, the Israelites were defeated, and the Ark of God was taken. Let us rejoice, O my people, with trembling. Two years ago that Hall was the scene of such discomfiture, such dire calamity and death as we hardly dare to think of. Surely that was the night of my hearts bitterest anguish. Howbeit our God turned the curse into a blessing. For ninety-nine successive Lords days was I enabled to supply the pulpit. No congregation could have been more evenly sustained. Never were sermons more widely echoed. God has owned these services to the quickening of many souls, to the establishing of many in our most holy faith and by them through His goodness has the Blessed Spirit stirred up many of my Brethren in the ministry to a righteous emulation. According to this time it shall be said, What has God worked! Ah, Sirs, if you knew in what fear we began, and with what anxiety we have continued if you knew the unrequited exertions of those beloved Brethren whose names are unknown to fame but whose good offices were essential to keep the place openif you knew, once more, how many times your minister has prostrated himself as a brokenhearted sinner before God to renew his first vows of unreserved self-dedicationif you knew these things, you would not be backward in that ascription of praise never more meet to flow forth in liquid strains with weeping eyesNot unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Your name give glory. My beloved Brethren, Be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. Yet I have other friends. They are scattered far and wide throughout this country and the sister isles. To you let me drop a word. You have received me kindly. Faster friendships were never surely made in fewer hours than I have cemented with some of you. You are of my kith and kin. I will guarantee you that my God has graciously proportioned my strength to my days while I have been among you in labors more abundant. When I have labored most for His glory, I have feasted most on the provisions of His grace. And blessed be God, when oftentimes called to visit a people unknown to me, He has given me the key of David to unlock the secret springs of your hearts. No, He holds the key in His own hand. He opens and no man can shut. Keep, Beloved, the Word of His patience and He will keep you from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth. Finally, my Brethren, I am cheered and comforted beyond measure by the joyous hope that on the coming Sabbath I shall again appear among you. This prospect is as oil to my bones and although I cannot hope to fulfill my ministry with my accustomed vigor, yet to attempt to address you will be as rich medicineas a tonic to my fluttering heart. Brethren, pray for me.   
Yours in covenant, *C.H. SPURGEON.* November 2nd, 1858.

Adapted from **The C.H. Spurgeon Collection**, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2055 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE TRIAL OF YOUR FAITH   
NO. 2055

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS DAY, DECEMBER 2, 1888, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

The trial of your faith.   
1 Peter 1:7.

IT is a great thing if any man can truthfully speak to you, my Brothers and Sisters, about your faith, for all men have not faith and wherever faith is found, it is the token of Divine favor. True faith is, in every case, the operation of the Spirit of God. Its nature is purifying, elevating, heavenly. It is, of all things that can be cultivated in the human breast, one of the most precious. It is called, like precious faith, and it is styled the faith of Gods elect. Wherever faith is found, it is the sure mark of eternal election, the sign of a blessed condition, the forecast of a heavenly destiny. It is the eye of the renewed soul, the hand of the regenerated mind, the mouth of the newborn spirit. It is the evidence of spiritual lifeit is the mainspring of holinessit is the foundation of delightit is the prophecy of gloryit is the dawn of endless knowledge.

If you have faith, you have infinitely more than he who has all the world and yet is destitute of faith. To him that believes it is said, All things are yours. Faith is the assurance of sonship, the pledge of inheritance, the grasp of boundless possession, the perception of the invisible. Within your faith there lies Glory, even as the oak sleeps within the acorn. If you have faith, you need not ask for much more, save that your faith may grow exceedingly and that all the promises which are made to it may be known and grasped by you. Time would fail me to tell of the powers, the privileges, the possessions and the prospects of faith. He that has it is blessed. For he pleases God, he is justified before the throne of holiness, he has full access to the Throne of Grace and he has the preparation for reigning with Christ forever.

So far everything is delightful. But then comes, in this word, which somewhat startles and, if we are cowardly, may also frightenThe trial of your faith. Do you see the thorn which grows with this rose? You cannot gather the fragrant flower without its rough companion. You cannot possess the faith without experiencing the trial. Nor eat the lamb without the bitter herbs. These two things are put togetherfaith and trial. And it is of that trial of your faith that I am going to speak at this time, as God shall help me.

It may be, my Brothers and Sisters, that words said at this good hour shall comfort you while you undergo the sorer trial of your faith. May the Holy Spirit, who nurtures faith and preserves and perfects it under its trial, help our thoughts at this hour!   
I. And, first, let me say of it, YOUR FAITH WILL BE SURELY TRIED.

You may rest assured of that. A man may have faith and be for the present without trial. But no man ever had faith and was all his life without trial. That could notmust not be. For faith, in the very nature of it, implies a degree of trial. I believe the promise of God. So far my faith is tried in believing the promise, in waiting for the fulfillment of the promise, in holding on to an assurance of that promise while it is delayed and in continuing to expect the promise and to act upon it until it is in all points fulfilled to me.

I do not see how that can be faith at all which is not tried by its own exercise. Take the very happiest and smoothest lives. There must, at any rate, be the trial of faith in taking the promise and pleading it before God in prayer and expecting the fulfillment of it. Be not mistaken, God never gave us faith to play with. It is a sword but it was not made for presentation on a gala day, nor to be worn on State occasions only, nor to be exhibited upon a parade ground. It is a sword that was meant to cut and wound and slay. And he that has it girt about him may expect, between here and Heaven, that he shall know what battle means.

Faith is a sound sea-going vessel and was not meant to lie in dock and perish of dry rot. To whom God has given faith, it is as though one gave a lantern to his friend because he expected it to be dark on his way home. The very gift of faith is a hint to you that you will need itthat at certain points and places you will especially require it and thatat all points and in every place, you will really need it. You cannot live without faithfor again and again we are told the just shall live by faith. Believing is our living and we, therefore, need it always.

And if God gives you great faith, my dear Brethren, you must expect great trials. For, in proportion as your faith shall grow, you will have to do more and endure more. Little boats may keep close to shore, as becomes little boats. But if God makes you a great vessel and loads you with a rich freight, He means that you should know what great billows are and should feel their fury till you see His wonders in the deep. That God, who has made nothing in vain, especially makes nothing in the spiritual kingdom in vain. And if He makes faith, it is with the design that it should be used to the utmost and exercised to the full.

Expect trial, also, because trial is the very element of faith. Faith is a salamander that lives in the fire, a star which moves in a lofty sphere, a diamond which bores its way through the rock. Faith without trial is like a diamond uncut, the brilliance of which has never been seen. Untried faith is such little faith that some have thought it no faith at all. What a fish would be without water, or a bird without air, that would be faith without trial. If you have faith, you may surely expect that your faith will be testedthe great Keeper of the treasures admits no coin to His coffers without testing.

It is so in the nature of faith and so in the order of its livingit thrives not, save in such weather as might seem to threaten its death. Indeed, it is the honor of faith to be tried. Shall any man say, I have faith, but I have never had to believe under difficulties? Who knows whether you have any faith? Shall a man say, I have great faith in God but I have never had to use it in anything more than the ordinary affairs of life, where I could probably have done without it as well as with it? Is this to the honor and praise of your faith? Do you think that such a faith as this will bring any great glory to God, or bring to you any great reward? If so, you are mightily mistaken.

He that has tested God and whom God has tested, is the man that shall have it said of him, Well done, you good and faithful servant. Had Abraham stopped in Ur of the Chaldees with his friends and rested there and enjoyed himself, where had been his faith? He had Gods command to leave his country to go to a land which he had never seen, to sojourn there with God as a stranger, dwelling in tents. And in his obedience to that call his faith began to be illustrious. Where had been the glory of his faith, if it had not been called to brave and self-denying deeds? Would he ever have risen to that supreme height, to be the Father of the faithful, if he had not grown old and his body dead and yet he had believed that God would give him seed of his aged wife Sarah, according to the promise? It was blessed faith that made him feel that nothing was impossible to God. If Isaac had been born to him in the days of his strength, where had been his faith?

And when it came to that severer test, Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love and offer him for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell you of. When he rose up early and gathered the wood and took his son and went three days journey, setting his face like a flint to obey the Command of Godwhen at last he drew the knife, in faithful obedience to the Divine Commandthen was his faith confessed, commended and crowned. Then the Lord said, Now I know. As if, even to God, the best evidence of Abrahams faith had then been displayedwhen he staggered not at the promise through unbelief, reckoning that God could restore Isaac from the dead if need bebut that it was his to obey the supreme Command and trust all consequences with God, who could not lie.

Herein his faith won great renown and he became the Father of the faithful, because he was the most tried of Believers and yet surpassed them all in childlike belief in his God. If God, then, has given to anyone of us a faith which is honorable and precious it has full surely been submitted to its own due measure of trial. And if it is to be still more precious, it has yet more trials to endure.

We remember, also, two reasons for the trial of faith. The trial of your faith is sent to prove its sincerity. If it will not stand trial, what is the good of it? That gold which dissolves in the furnace and disappears amid the flame is not the gold which shall be current with the merchant. And that faith of yours, which is no sooner tried than straightway it evaporates, are you not well rid of it? Of what use would it be to you in the hour of death and in the Day of Judgment? No. You can not be sure that your faith is true faith till it is tried faith. You can not be certain that it is worth having till it has been fitly tested and brought to the touchstone of trial.

It must also be tested to prove its strength. We sometimes fancy that we have strong faith when, indeed, our faith is very weak. And how are we to know whether it is weak or strong till it is tried? A man that should lie in bed week after week and perhaps get the idle whim into his head that he was very strong would be pretty certain to be mistaken. It is only when he sets about work requiring muscular strength that he will discover how strong or how weak he is. God would not have us form a wrong estimate of ourselves. He loves not that we should say that we are rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing when we are the reverse. And therefore He sends to us the trial of our faith that we may understand how strong or how weak it is.

And besides that, dear Friends, the trial of our faith is necessary to remove its dross. There are many accretions of sordid matter about our purest graces. We are apt, ourselves, to add to the bulk of our graces without adding to the real value of them. We mistake quantity for quality. And a great deal of what we think we have of Christian experience and Christian knowledge and Christian zeal and Christian patience is only the supposition that we have these graces and not the real possession of them.

So the fire grows fiercer and the mass grows smaller than it was before. Is there any loss therein? I think not. The gold loses nothing by the removal of its dross and our faith loses nothing by the dissipation of its apparent force. Faith may apparently lose, but it actually gains. It may seem to be diminished, but it is not truly diminished. All is there that was worth having. Why, a week ago, says one, I used to sing and think that I had the full assurance of faith. And now I can scarcely tell whether I am one of Gods people or not. Now you know how much faith you really possess.

You can now tell how much was solid and how much was sham. For had that which has failed you been real faith, it would not have been consumed by any trial through which it has passed. You have lost the froth from the top of the cup but all that was really worth having is still there. It must be sofor as faith is not born of earthly thingsneither can earthly things kill it, nor even take from it one true particle.

Understand, then, dear Friends, that for many necessary purposes there is a needs be for trial. Peter says here, If need be that there should be a trial of your faith. You will get that trial, because God, in His wisdom, will give faith what faith needs. Do not be anxious to enter into trial. Do not fret if temptation does not come just now. You will have it soon enough. Between the day of our new birth and the day of our entering into our inheritance, we shall have quite sufficient trials of our faith. We need not be uneasy if for a while we are at ease, for there are months enough left to the year to give winter its full measure of frosts and storms.

II. Now, secondly, YOUR FAITH WILL BE TRIED IN VARIOUS WAYS. The trial of our faith does not come to all persons in the same way. There are some whose faith is tried each day in their communion with God. They pray this prayerSearch me, O God and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: and see if there is any wicked way in me. And lead me in the way everlasting. That prayer is heard constantly. The visitations of the Lord are granted to them and as the Lord comes, He tries them. For, believe me, there is no surer trial of our souls than the drawing near of God to our souls.

Apart from any outward affliction, that searching thought, that inward feeling which is somewhat more than thought, that holy, secret trembling which comes upon our spirit when God draws near, is Gods constant trial of our graces. If you walk away from God and live without fellowship with Him, you may retain in your heart much falsehood and fancy that you are full of spiritual gifts and graces. But if you draw near to God and walk with Him, you will not be able to retain a false opinion of yourself. Remember what the Lord is. Our God is a consuming fire.

I have often reminded you of the way in which people try to improve upon the Scripture when they say, God out of Christ is a consuming fire. The Bible does not so speak. It says, For our God is a consuming fire. That is, God in Christ, who is our God, is a consuming fire. And when His people live in Him, the very Presence of God consumes in them their love of sin and all their pretentious graces and fictitious attainments so that the false disappears and only the true survives. The presence of perfect Holiness is killing to empty boastings and hollow pretences. You need not ask for any of those various forms of trial which God sends in the order of Providenceyou may rest quite satisfied with His Presence, as the most effectual purgation. For His fan is in His hand and He will thoroughly purge His floor.

Whenever Jesus abides with us, He shall sit as a refiner. Whoever He may leave alone in their defilement, He will purify the sons of Levi. It is the Lord Himself that will be as a refiners fire and like fullers soap. Who may abide the day of His coming? Who that loves holiness would wish to escape it? Our prayer should beRefining fire go through my soul. Yes, let the devouring flame go through me and through me yet again, till this earthly grossness shall begin to disappear. As Moses soon put his shoes off from his feet when he beheld God at the burning bush, so shall we put off the superfluities of our supposed spiritual experience and come to the real, naked foot of the Truth of God, if we are permitted to stand before God in accepted sincerity. Thus you see there is a constant trial of our faith, even in that which is its greatest joy and glory, namely its power to make us see the Lord.

But the Lord uses other methods with His servants. I believe that He frequently tries us by the blessings which He sends us. This is a fact which is too much overlooked. When a man is permitted to grow rich, what a trial of faith is hidden away in that condition! It is one of the severest of providential tests! Where I have known one man fail through poverty, I have known fifty men fail through riches. When our friends get on in the world and have a long stretch of prosperity, they should invite their

Brethren to offer special prayer for them, that they may be preservedfor the thick clay is heavy stuff to walk upon and when the feet slip into it, and it adheres to you, it makes traveling to Heaven a very difficult thing.

When we do not cling to wealth, it will not harm us. But there is a deal of stickiness in money. You that have no riches may yet find a test in your daily merciesyour domestic comfort, that loving wife, those dear childrenall these may tempt you to walk by sight instead of by faith. Yes, and continued health, the absence of all depression of spirit and the long abiding of friends and relatives may all make you self-content and keep you away from your God.

It is a great trial of faith to have much for sight to rest upon. To be in the darkaltogether in the darkis a grand thing for faith. For then you are sure that what you see is not seen of the flesh but is in very deed a vision of spiritual faith. To be under a cloud is a trial, trulybut not onehalf so much a trial as it is to have continually the light of this world. We are so apt to mistake the light of carnal comfort for the light of God, that it is well to see how we fare without it.

One form of this trial is praise. You know how Solomon puts itAs the fining-pot for silver and the furnace for gold, so is a man to his praise. A Christian minister may go on preaching very earnestly and God will help him, though everybody opposes him. But when the world comes and pats him on the back and pride whispers, You are a fine fellow. You are a great man! Then comes the test of the man. How few there are that can endure the warm atmosphere of congratulation! It is dangerously relaxing to the spirit. Yes, nobody can keep himself right under it, unless the almighty Grace of God shall sustain his faith.

When the soft winds blow they bring with them the temptation, Now preach the doctrines that tickle mens ears! Go in to be scientific and learned and clever! Get the approbation of the great ones of the world and the leaders of advanced thought in the Church. And unless you say, Get you behind me, Satan: for you savor not the things that are of God, such a trial of faith may be too much for you. Oh, says one, that will not fall to my lot. No, no. You will not be a popular preacher, perhaps. But then, you may be very acceptable in the company wherein you move and worldly people may flatter you to the verge of ruin.

You sing very nicely, do you not? Well, they may want you to sing them a song that is not one of the songs of Zion. Because of your natural attainments and the amiability of your temper, you may become a great favorite with ungodly people. And that is an intense trial to the faith of a child of God. The friendship of the world is as much enmity with God as it used to be in Apostolic times. It is a bad sign when a courtier is in great favor with the kings enemies. Stand up and stand out as the servant of God and in whatever sphere you move, make it your one and only business to serve your God, whether you offend or please. Happy shall you be if you survive the trial of your faith which this will involve!

Another trial of faith is exceedingly common and perilous nowadays and that is heretical doctrine and false teaching. There are some who are carried away with this wind of doctrine and others carried away with the otherand blessed is he who is not offended in Christ. For, naturally, the Cross of Christ is offensive to the minds of men. There are temptations that rise out of the Gospel itself, yes, out of its very depth and breadth. There is a trial of faith in reading the Scriptures. You come across a doctrine which you cannot understand and because you cannot understand it, you are tempted not to receive it. Or, when a Truth which you have received appears to be hard and speaks to you in an unlovely fashion, so that your natural feelings are aroused against itthis is a trial of your faith.

Remember how our Lord Jesus lost quite a company of disciples on a certain occasion. He had taught a doctrine about eating His flesh and drinking His blood. And from that hour many went back and walked no more with Him, till the Savior had to say, even to the twelve, Will you also go away? Truth is not always welcome to our ignoranceor to our prejudiceand herein is a trial of faith. Will we believe ourselves or our God? Do we want to believe Gods Truth, or do we wish to have the Lords message flavored to our taste? Do we expect the preacher to play our chosen tunes and speak our opinions?

Beloved, it does us good to be well rasped sometimes. To have a word come to us, not as a sweet wine but as a purging medicine that shall search us through and through and make us enquire before God, Are we true men, or are we aliens? If we run in the same line with Gods Truth, we are true. But when we run counter to the Truth of God, we are ourselves untrue. It is not the Book that is to be alteredour hearts need altering. Happy is that man whose faith can endure the trial of the Book. Is not the Word of the Lord like a fire or a hammer? This is so even to the Lords own people.

But the trial of our faith usually comes in the form of affliction. Our jealous Lover uses tests that it may be seen whether he has our heart. The trial of your faith comes thusYou say, Lord Jesus, I love you. You are my best Beloved. Well, says the heavenly Lover, if it is so, then the child that nestles in your bosom will sicken and die. What will you say then? If you are indeed true in what you have stated concerning your supreme love to Jesus, you will give up your darling at His call and say, The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.

The Lord is very jealous of our love. I do not mean that He is so towards all of youI speak of His own people. The more He loves us, the more He tests us. Whatever it may be with us poor creatures, it is always so with Jesus, that His love goes with His jealousy and His jealousy with His love. Sometimes He says, Good woman, I shall take away your husband, on whom you lean, that you may lean the more on Me. I remember Mr. Rutherford, writing to a lady who had lost five children and her husband, said to her, Oh, how Christ must love you! He would take every bit of your heart to Himself. He would not permit you to reserve any of your soul for any earthly thing. Can we stand that test? Can we let all go for His

sake? Do you answer that you can? Time will show.

My Lord sometimes comes to me in this fashion. He says, I have made you to trust Me these many years. I have supplied the wants of your work by liberal friends. I am about to remove a generous helper. I go to the grave of my friend and the suggestion dogs me, Who is to provide for the Orphanage and the College, after other dear Friends are buried? Can you trust God then? Blessed be the name of the Lord, this fiery trial has never even left the smell of fire upon me. I know whom I have believed.

Then a dear Brother, our best worker, our heartiest helper, comes to me and says, Goodbye, dear Pastor. Perhaps I may never see you again on earth. He is very ill and about to lie under the surgeons knife and the fear is that he may not rally. I go home and say to myself, What shall I do without this useful man? And then I have to say, Do? Do what I have done beforetrust in the living God. If you once get to walk the walk of faith, the Lord will often try you in this way, to see whether you come up to your own confessionwhether you really trust in the Lord and have your expectation from Him alone. Can you truly say

*Yes, should You take them all away,   
Yet would I not repine?*

If every earthly prop were knocked away, could you stand by the lone power of your foundation? God may not send you this or that trial but He will send you a sufficient amount of trials to let you see whether your faith is truth or talk, whether you have truly entered the spiritual world, or have only dreamed of doing so. Believe me, there is a great difference between a diamond and a paste gem. So, you see, the trials of faith are very varied.

III. In the third place, YOUR FAITH WILL BE TRIED INDIVIDUALLY. The text says, the trial of your faith. O dear Friend, it is an interesting subject, is it not, the trial of faith? It is not quite so pleasant to study alone the trial of your faith. It is stern work when it comes to be your trial and the trial of your faith. You have not gone much into that particular department, perhaps. Well, I say again, do not wish to do so. Do not ask for trials. Children must not ask to be whipped, nor saints pray to be tested. There is a little book which you will have to eat and it will be bitter in your mouth, but sweet in your stomachthat book is the trial of your faith.

The Lord Jesus Christ has been glorified by the trial of His peoples faith. He has to be glorified by the trial of your faith. You are very obscure, perhaps, dear Brother. You have but few talents, my dear Sister. But, nevertheless, there is a particular shape and form of trial that will have to be exercised upon you rather than upon anyone else. Oh, say you, I know it, Sir. I know it. Well, then, if you know it, do not complain of it. Because when you have your own trial and the trial of your own faith, you are only treated like the rest of the family. What son is there whom the father chastens not?

You are only treated like the Head of the family. You are only treated in the way which the great Father of the family knows is necessary for us all. God had one Son without sin but He never had a son without trial and He never will have until He has taken us all Home out of this world. Why should we expect that God should deal better with us than He does with the rest of His chosen? Indeed, it would not be better, after all, because these trials are the means of working out our lasting good. But if it were not so, who am I, and who are you, that God should pamper us?

Would we have Him put us in a glass case and shield us from the trials which are common to all the chosen seed? I ask no such portion. Let me fare as the saints fare. I only wish to have their bread and their water and love their Father and follow their Guide and find their home. We will take our meals with them, whatever God puts upon the table for them, will we not? The trial of our faith will be all our own and yet it will be in fellowship with all the family of grace.

IV. YOUR FAITH WILL BE TRIED SEARCHINGLY. It will be no childs play to come under the Divine tests. Our faith is not merely jingled on the counter like the shilling which the tradesman suspects but it is tried with fire. For so it is written, I have chosen you in the furnace of affliction. The blows of the trial of tribulation are not given in sport but in awful earnest, as some of us know who have been chastened sorely, almost unto death. The Lord tries the very life of our faith. Not its beauty and its strength alone but its very existence. The iron enters into the soul. The sharp medicine searches the inmost parts of the belly. The mans real self is made to endure the trial. It is easy to talk of being tried but it is by no means so simple a matter to endure the ordeal.

V. Let me yet further observe, that YOUR FAITH WILL BE TRIED FOR AN ABUNDANTLY USEFUL PURPOSE. The trial of your faith will increase, develop, deepen and strengthen it. Oh, you have said, I wish I had more faith. Your prayer will be heard through your having more trial.

Often in our prayers we have sought for a stronger faith to look within the veil. The way to stronger faith usually lies along the rough pathway of sorrow. Only as faith is contested, will faith be confirmed. I do not know whether my experience is that of all Gods people. But I am afraid that all the Divine Grace that I have got out of my comfortable and easy times and happy hours, might almost lie on a penny. But the good that I have received from my sorrows and pains and griefs, is altogether incalculable. What do I not owe to the hammer and the anvil, the fire and the file? What do I not owe to the crucible and the furnace, the bellows that have blown up the coals and the hand which has thrust me into the heat?

Affliction is the best bit of furniture in my house. It is the best book in a ministers library. We may wisely rejoice in tribulation because it works patience, and patience, experience, and experience, hope. And by that way we are exceedingly enriched and our faith grows strong.

The trial of our faith is useful, not only because it strengthens it but because it leads to a discovery of our faith to ourselves. I notice an old Puritan using this illustration. He says you shall go into a wood when you please but if you are very quiet, you will not know whether there is a

partridge, or a pheasant, or a rabbit in it. But when you begin to move about, or make a noise, you very soon see the living creatures. They rise or they run. So, when affliction comes into the soul and makes a disturbance and breaks our peace, up rise our graces. Faith comes out of its hiding and love leaps from its secret place.

I remember Mr. William Jay saying that birds nests are hard to find in summertime but anyone could find a birds nest in winter. When all the leaves are off the trees the nests are visible to all. Often in the days of our prosperity, we fail to find our faith. But when our adversity comes, the winter of our trial bares the boughs and we see our faith at once. We are sure that we believe now, for we feel the effect of faith upon our character. Before I was afflicted I went astray, said David, but now have I kept Your Word. He found that his faith was really there by his keeping Gods Word in the time of his affliction. It is a great mercy, then, to have your faith tried, that you may be sure beyond all manner of question that you are a true Believer.

Besides, when faith is tried it brings God glory. Oh, how it honors God when a man can say with a smiling face in prospect of death, Good-bye, dear Sir, I may never see you here again but we shall meet above! We who are in health envy the Brother who has such joy amid sharp pain. I went the other day to see a dear Brother who has since then gone above. He was swollen with dropsy and was close to the brink of the grave. But to hear the song of assurance and the utterances of his joy was most sweet and cheering. It made me feel how good God is to His servants. He never leaves nor forsakes them when they come to their most painful times.

This trial of our faith does good to our fellow Christians. They see how we are supported and they learn to bear their troubles bravely. I do not know anything that is better for making us brave than to see others believe in Christ and bear up manfully. To see that blind saint so happy makes us ashamed to be sad. To see content in an inmate of the workhouse compels us to be thankful. Sufferers are our tutors. They educate us for the skies. When men of God can sufferwhen they can bear poverty, bereavement or sickness and still rejoice in Godwe learn the way to live the higher and more Christ-like life.

When Patrick Hamilton had been burned in Scotland, one said to his persecutors, If you are going to burn any more, you had better do it in a cellar, for the smoke of Hamiltons burning has opened the eyes of hundreds. It was always so. Suffering saints are living seed. Oh, that God might help us to such faith that when we come to suffer in life, or to expire in death, we may so glorify God that others may believe in Him! May we preach sermons by our faith which shall be better than sermons in words.

My time has gone and I have much to say to you. I wanted to say to you about the trial of your faith, dear Friends, that SOME ARE TRIED VERY SPECIALLY. Some endure many more tests than others and that is because God has a great favor to them. Many men God does not love well enough to whip them. They are the devils children and the heavenly Father does not trouble them. They are none of His and so He lets them have a happy life and perhaps an easy deaththere are no bands in their death, but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men.

But they are to be pitied and not envied. Woe unto you that laugh now, for you shall weep! Woe unto you who have your portion in this life for it shall go ill with you in the world to come! Gods children are often much chastened because they are much loved. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Men take most trouble with that which is most precious. A common pebble will be let alone but a diamond must be fretted on the wheel till its brilliance is displayed.

Some persons are also much tried in their faith because they are very fit for it. God has fitted the back for a heavy burden and the burden will be sent. He has constituted them on purpose that they should be helpful in filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, for His bodys sake, which is the Church. Men build strong columns because they are meant to carry great weights. So God makes great Christians on purpose that they should bear great afflictions for His Glory.

He does this also because He would have some men do Him a special service. What an honor it is to do the Lord a special service! When some man in our army behaves himself very grandly and wins a battle, what will her Majesty do? Why, she will send for him next time a war arises. If any of you are brave in bearing affliction, you shall have the honor of enduring more affliction. Does not every soldier court the opportunity of service? He that looks over his soldiers says of a certain one, I shall not send himhe is feeble and faint-hearted. Yonder veteran is the man for me.

Do not think that you would be honored by being allowed to ride to Heaven on a feather bed. True honor lies in being permitted to bear and suffer side by side with Him of the bloody sweat and of the five open wounds. This is the reward of the saintsthat they should on earth be decorated with

*Many a sorrow, many a tear.*   
They shall walk with their Lord in white, for they are worthy.

Yes, dear Friends, the Lord often sends us greater trials than others because He means to qualify us for greater enjoyments. If you want to make a pool capable of holding more water, you dig it out, do you not? And many a man has been dug and enlarged by affliction. The enlargements of trial enable us to hold more Divine Grace and more glory. The more a gracious man suffers, the more he becomes capable of entering into fellowship with Christ in His sufferings and so into fellowship with Christ in His Glory by-and-by.

Come, let us be comforted as to the trial of our faith. There is no hurt in it. It is all for good. The trial of our faith is entirely in the hands of God. Nobody can try us without Gods permission. He will try us just as much as we ought to be tried and no more. While He tries us with one hand He will sustain us with the other. If He gives us bitters, He will give us sweets in full proportion. A dear Sister said to me this week, When I used to be

in poverty and in trouble, the Word of God was much more sweet to me than it is now that I am prospered.

I do not wonder at it. I have made a similar remark when I have been long without an illness. Some of us have cried, Take me back to my sickness again. Take me back to slander and rebuke again. A Scotch saint said that when they met in the moss, or by the hillside, and were harried by Claverhouse and his dragoons, Christ was present at the sacraments in the heather much more than He ever was afterwards when they got into their Church and sat down quietly. Our worst days are often our best days and in the dark we see stars that we never saw in the light. So we will not care a pin what it is that may befall us here, so long as God is with us and our faith in Him is genuine.

Christian people, I am not going to sympathize with you but congratulate you upon your troubles, for the Cross of Christ is precious. But you that do not love my Lord and Master, if you roll in riches, if your eyes stand out with fatness, I mourn over you. Bullocks fattened for the slaughter, your joys are but the prelude to your woes. Oh, that God would have mercy upon you and that you would have mercy upon yourselves and flee at once to Jesus and put your trust in Him! Faith in the work, offices and Person of the Lord Jesus is the way of salvation. May He help you to run in it at this hour, for His names sake! Amen.

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON.   
DEAR FRIENDSIn answer to a general desire that I should let my beloved Readers know of my condition, I will write a line or two each week. Owing to extreme weakness it has taken me the whole week to reach my sunny retreat but at each stage I have found myself a little better and I can now walk a littlea very little. Yet for this I am deeply grateful to Him who restores our life. I hope, by rest in this genial climate, to recover tone, strength and freshness of mind and then I trust all will be spent, in future days, for Gods glory.

Through the blessing of God upon the labors of Messrs. Fullerton and Smith a cheering work is going on at the Tabernacle. I beg my readers to pray that the Lord may be glorified among the people in the absence of the usual worker and that the printed sermons may speak with power when the preacher himself is silent.   
Yours, dear Friends, in Christ Jesus,   
*C. H. SPURGEON.*   
Mentone, November 24, 1888.

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SALVATION AS IT IS NOW RECEIVED   
NO. 3223

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1910.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, JUNE 23, 1872.

Whom having not seen, you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. 1 Peter 1:8, 9.

[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same text is #698, Volume 12 SEEING IS NOT BELIEVING, BUT BELIEVING IS SEEING   
Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

We usually speak of the greater benefits of salvation as being in the future. We desire that we may be found in Christ in the day of His appearing and that we may have a share in His eternal Glory. But, Beloved, salvation is not altogether a thing of the futureit is very decidedly a present matter, a blessing to be possessed now and to be enjoyed now and our text brings out that idea very clearly! Peter does not write about the elect strangers hoping to receive salvation, by-and-by, but putting it all in the present tense, he says, Whom having not seen, you love. Though nowyou rejoice... receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. The perfection of salvation is reserved for the Second Coming of the Lord, for at present the body is mortal because of sinit is subject to pain and it will die unless the Lord should first come and it will, for a while, lie in the grave. But at His appearing shall be a resurrection of the body and then body and soul reunited shall experience the fullness of salvation! In that respect, therefore, salvation still remains in part a matter for the future, yet with the true child of God, the essence of salvation is a thing of today. Even now we rejoice with unspeakable joy and full of glory, receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls!

I am going to speak upon this matter in the following way. First, we will enquire, what part of salvation do we receive here and now? Secondly, how do we now receive salvation? And then, thirdly we will make the solemn enquiry for all here, Have we received salvation, and if so, how far have we gone in the reception of it?

I. My first question is, WHAT PART OF SALVATION DO WE RECEIVE HERE AND NOW?   
My first answer to the question is that, in a certain sense, we already possess the whole of it, for all salvation is wrapped up in Christ and Christ is ours if we are truly believing in Him. He is this day our Savior and our All-in-AllHe is already made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. There is nothing of salvation that is outside of Christ and, therefore, since Christ is ours, the whole of salvation is ours. It is ours by the grip of faith and the Grace of hopethat living hope which is sure of realizationthat well-grounded hope which cannot be disappointed. Our expectation is of so vivid a character that it brings not only near to us, but into actual present possession, joys which as yet are not revealed! So again I say that, in a sense, it is true for us to say that we have received in faith and hope the salvation of our souls if we have truly believed in Jesus, for   
*The moment a sinner believes,   
And trusts in his crucified God,   
His pardon at once he receives,   
Redemption in full through Christs blood.*   
But, secondly, if we are to answer the question distinctly and in detail, we should say that if we have really trusted in Jesus, we have so far received the salvation of our souls that we have, at this moment, the assurance of the perfect pardon of all our sins. Let me repeat those wordsif we have really believed in Jesus, we have, at this moment, the assurance of the perfect pardon of all our sins! And I will venture to put it as strongly as this and to say that yonder white-robed spirits before the eternal Throne of God are not more clear of the guilt of sin before the bar of Infallible Justice than was the dying thief the very moment that he turned his eye in faith to Christ upon the Cross of Calvaryor than you are if you are now trusting to the same Savior, or than I am as now depending alone upon the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior! The pardon which God gives to Believers in Jesus is not a semipardon. It is not a putting away of some of their sins, or a putting them away for a timeit is a perfect putting away of their sins forever, a casting of them, once and for all, behind Gods back into the depths of the sea so that they shall never be found again! Yes, they shall be so completely put away that they shall cease to be, according to that Divine declaration, The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none. Oh, what a glorious Truth of God is this, that although a poor tried child of God may feel the force of his inbred sin and have to continually struggle with itand though he may, from day to day, be conscious of his many imperfections, yet before those Eyes that see everything, there is no spot to be seen upon the Believer in ChristI mean no spot in this respectthat he can never be condemned or punished for his sin! His sin is finally and forever pardoned! God has blotted it out like a cloud that has been blown away and completely dispersed. Therefore let our spirits rejoice if we are truly trusting in Jesus! And oh, that some who have never done so before, would now look believingly unto Him! If they do thus look this moment, they shall obtain perfect pardon and so shall receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls! I cannot help repeating that sweet verse of Kents which I have often repeated to you, which sounds so strange, but which is, I believe, absolutely true   
*Heres pardon for transgressions past,   
It matters not how black their cast.   
And, O my Soul, with wonder view,   
For sins to come, heres pardon, too.*   
And next, Beloved, we have received the salvation of our souls in this sense, that the alienation of our hearts from God is now effectually removed. We are saved from that alienation and that is a very great part of salvation. Once our backs were turned towards God, but now our faces are turned towards Him. At one time we did not admire His Character, nor desire to imitate Him, nor wish for His friendship nor, perhaps, even so much as think of His existence, much less did we aspire to give Him honor! But now, having believed in Jesus, we have undergone a complete change! We are not yet what we ought to bewe are still a long way off what we expect to be one dayyet we do desire to be what we should be. We admire the Character of God even though we have to prostrate ourselves in the dust when we see how far our own character is from likeness to it, and the whole set and current of our desires is towards purity and holiness. If we could have our way, our way would not be a sinful one. If our will could be gratified, our will would be that God should have His will with us and that we should be in all things conformed to the Divine Will! All true Christians are conscious that it is so with them and this is a great part of salvation. Indeed, it is destruction to be alienated from God, and it is salvation to be reconciled to Him! It is destruction to anyone to be a lover of sin. The man who loves evil is a destroyed mana man who is broken in piecesthat which should be the glory of his manhood is absent from him. But when he is brought to love God, the ruins are rebuilt! And though, as yet, every part of the renovated building may not be finished, the Divine Architect who drew the plans of it from eternity, will never leave the work till the last stroke of the sacred hammer and chisel shall have been givenand the completed structure shall have had the headstone placed upon it amid shouts of, Grace, Grace unto it! Blessed be God that we have this salvation, now, in that we are saved from our former alienation of heart from God!

In the next place, we have received the salvation of our souls in the sense that we are saved from the killing power of sin. Before we believed in Jesus, we were not capable of those sacred actions which are now our daily delight. We could not pray. We may have said our prayers, as so many do, but the living breath of true God-inspired prayer was not in us. How could it be in us while we were still dead in trespasses and sins? We could not believe. How could we do so when we had not received the gift of faith from the ever-blessed Spirit? The fact is, we were under a terrible bondage and just as a corpse is under bondage to death and cannot stir hand or foot, lip or eye, so were we under bondage to sin and Satan. But we are under that deadly bondage no longer, for we are living men, free men in Christ Jesus our Lord who has overcome that death for us! Now we can pray! Now we can praisenot always as we would like to do, but still, the aspiration is there and the power is thereand when God graciously helps us by His Holy Spirit, we rise to a high degree of vigor in both those sacred exercises! So, when the killing power of sin is gone, what a mercy it is! What a bliss it is! And in this sense, also, we receive the salvation of our souls.  
More than that, Beloved, the reigning power of sin has now gone from every Believer. Once we were slaves to sin, under sins domination. Sin said to us, Go, and we went, or sin said to us, Stay! Obey not God, and we stayed and at sins bidding disobeyed God. But now, sin no longer has dominion over us, for we are not under the Law, but under Grace. And though we even now sometimes hear sins mandate and the flesh inclines us to yield obedience to it, there is a blessed spirit of rebellion against sin within our heart so that we will not obey sins commands, but seek after that which is just and holy and right in the sight of God!   
Now I am going to take another step and possibly some of the feebler folk among us may think it is too long a step for them to take. Yet I pray God that many of us may practically prove that we have taken it. Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, it is possible and it ought to be the general rule for Christians to enjoy present salvation in the sense of being now free, to a very high degree, from sin in their daily life and conduct. No, morethey ought not to be satisfied without aspiring to be absolutely free from it! It is after this that they should seek, even though they do not attain to it. I am fully persuaded the perfection in the flesh is not attainable here, yet that Truth of God, as I believe it is, has been used by a great many persons as a sort of damper to the sad ambition of renewed spirits! I do not think it ought to be so used, nor that it would legitimately be so used. Suppose I am a sculptor? If it is not possible for me to attain to the perfection of Praxiteles or Phidias, yet I must come as close to them as I canand I shall not be a master of the sculptors art unless I seek to imitate those who have been the most proficient in it. Suppose, also, that through the infirmity of the flesh, I shall never in this life be perfect, like Christyet I must have no lower model, nor must I say to myself, I cannot imitate that perfect Model, but, crying to the Strong One for strength, I must believe that the Omnipotence of God can overcome every sin! And I must also believe that it is possible for me, by the Grace of God, to get every sin beneath my feet. And I must never say to any one sin, I shall have to spare you, for you are too strong for God to slay. It would be blasphemy to talk like that!   
I fear that some Brothers and Sisters think that a quick temper can never be overcome. But it must be overcome! The reason why so many professors so often fall into that sin is that they do not believe that it is conquerable and, therefore, they do not pray it down! Another person, perhaps, has a sluggish disposition and he thinks, I must always be so. It is my nature and the flesh is weak. It is true that the flesh is weak, but it is equally true that God is Almighty! And it is not our own strength but Divine strength that is to procure the deliverance of our soul from sluggishness! So we must cry mightily unto the Lord for Divine Grace to overcome this or any other sin to which we are peculiarly prone. God has not put us into Canaan and said to us, You may spare some of those Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Hivites and Jebusites! His command to us is, Slay them all! Let not one of them escape! There must be no sin tolerated in any Believer in Christ! And though you are not perfect, you must never say, Up to this point, I am perfect, and that is as far as God can make me perfect. Dear Friends, do you believe in an Infinitely powerful God? Do you believe that the Holy Spirit is able to work in you anything and everything that He wills to work? Then, Brothers and Sisters, stop not short of the highest point that is attainable by mortal men and seek to be holy as God is holy! Alas, some professors of religion are hardly even moral! Their pretended Christianity is a stench even in the nostrils of worldlings, for they do not conform to the common rules of ordinary decent societyand what true Christians long for is to possess real holiness, to walk with God as Enoch did, to abide in Christ, to shun every false way, to have   
*A heart from sin set free*   
and a conscience tender as the apple of the eye! Oh, that we could all come up to this standard! And we can! It is possible! This is attainable, by the Grace of God, through the effectual working of the Holy Spirit. I again say that I do not think that absolute perfection can be reached here, but I cannot tell how near we can come to it. That I would like to prove by happy personal experienceand I beseech every Brother and Sister in Christ here to join with me in seeking to know how we may, even now, receive the salvation of our souls from the power of sin!   
I am quite sure that there are many Christians who have been completely delivered from sins into which they readily fell in their early days. You know that infants suffer from a great many diseases. All through the period of babyhood, they are liable to various ailments which no longer afflict us who are grown-up men and women. So it is with some Christianswhen they have grown in Grace to the stature of men in Christ, they do not have the little complaints of babyhood. I do not say that this is true of all professors of Christianity, for alas, there are many of them who have to be wheeled about in baby carriages although they are 50 or 60 years of age! While they were little children, we had to dandle them on our knees and carry them in our arms and give them milkand they still want milk, and still want dandling now that they are getting graygraybearded babies! But we need to get them out of that state of babyhood, for there is something far better even on earth than being spiritually mere babes all our lives! May all of us who are in Christ grow to the stature of men and women in Christ! The more of such any Church shall have among her members, the better will it be for her and the more will God be glorified! Let us who are the Lords, resolve that everything that is to be had of God this side of Heaven, we will have! Let us not be content to get just inside Christs house and to sit down there and say, Thank God, we are safe. We have got over the threshold, but let us seek to press onward to the chief table of rich refreshment and inner fellowship with Christ and to know the secret of the Lord which is with them that fear Him, that so we may find that glory begun below of which Dr. Watts so truly sings   
**The men of Grace have found   
Glory begun below!   
Celestial fruits on earthly ground   
From faith and hope may grow.**   
II. And now, secondly, (and with greater brevity, not professing to dive into the depths of the text, but merely skimming its surface, as the swallow touches the brook with its wing)HOW DO WE NOW RECEIVE THE SALVATION OF OUR SOULS?   
First, it is entirely from Jesus ChristWhom having not seen, you love, in whom, though now you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Everything of salvation that a Believer receives, comes to him out of the one storehouse wherein all fullness abidesthat is in Christ Jesus! Never believe, Christian, that you will ever get any Divine Grace out of yourself! It is a dreary and useless task to send the bucket down into the dry well of our nature in the hope of drawing up a supply of Grace. Oh no, Beloved, look away from self and look alone to Jesus, for from Him, and from Him, only, do we receive the salvation of our souls!  
Then note that the channels through which we receive salvation from Christ are first, faithin whom, though now you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice. None of us have seen Christ. We sometimes foolishly wish that we had, but believing in Him is better than merely seeing Himfor many saw Him when He was upon the earthand yet perished! But no man ever truly believed in Him and then perished. Faith is that eye which savingly sees Christ on the Cross. And it is only as we continue to look to Him by faith that we receive the present salvation of our souls from sin. You can never kill any sin if you turn your eyes away from the Cross. There is no stream that can cleanse from inward lusts but the precious blood of Jesus that flowed on Calvary. Whoever has been victorious over any temptation, it may truly be said of him, he overcame through the blood of the Lamb. So that there is no way of receiving the blessings of a present salvation except through believing in Jesus!   
Our text also tells us that another channel of salvation is loveWhom having not seen, you love. The love of Christ is the great force that enables Grace to kill sin! The love of Christ and sin are like the two balances of a pair of scalesif sin goes up in our esteem, our love to Christ is going down! And whenever our love to Christ goes up, sin must go down in the same proportion. With little love to Christ, you will walk unwarily, but with great love to your Lord, you will walk carefully before Him and your practical holiness will become manifest to all around you. Though we have not seen Christ, we love Him! And through that love we receive a further assurance of the salvation of our souls from inward as well as outward sin. This is the precious golden conduit through which the power of Divine Grace flows freely into our souls. Oh, for more fervent love to Christ!

Then our text stays that we also receive this present assurance of salvation through joy in the LordIn whom...believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. This joy is a flaming sword like that which the cherubim waved at the gates of the Garden of Eden! It blazes, it cuts, it kills. Once let us really rejoice in Christ as our Savior and we become immediately guarded from sin. I believe that many sins are hatched beneath the wings of doubt and fear, but when we get away from those ugly things and live rejoicing in God, then we say, Down with sin! We cannot endure to have it in our lives. He who has sweet flowers in his hand flings away evil-smelling weeds! And he who has such a diamond of Heaven as joy unspeakable and full of glory casts away the pebbles of earth with which He was pleased before. He who rejoices with joy unspeakable is not likely to be allured by the paltry joys of earththey have lost all their former charm to him. Their siren songs have no attraction to his ears for he has heard the celestial note of the harps of Heaven! What bliss it is to be able to rejoice in Christ as our Savior, for this guarantees to us the salvation of our souls, not only now, but to all eternity!   
Why does the Apostle say that we rejoice with joy unspeakable? Is it not, first, because this joy is too great to be told? He is indeed rich who cannot count his wealth. He has so much that he does not know how much he has and he is indeed full of joy who has so much joy that he cannot tell anyone how much he has!   
I also think that Peter calls our joy, unspeakable, because if we were to try to explain or describe it to carnal men, they could not understand us. You cannot explain to a person who has never tasted honey, how sweet it is. Neither can you explain to a man who knows not the joy of the Lord, how joyous a thing it is. He could not comprehend what your words meantyou would be talking to him in an altogether unknown tongue!   
Moreover, Brothers and Sisters, you all know the old proverb, Still waters run deep. The worldling joy barely covers the stones of his daily sorrow and, therefore, it babbles like a shallow brook as it runs along in its narrow bed. But the Christians joy is broad and deep and it scarcely makes any sound as it majestically rolls on like some great river on its way to the sea! The Christians joy is unspeakable because it is unfathomable even by those who enjoy it! And wherever this joy comes, it has a purifying effect, delivering us from sin and making us thus receive the salvation of our souls.   
This joy is also said to be full of glory. Now, the joys of this world have no true glory in them. Look at the worldly man who is most joyous and gladwhat glory is there about him? Any so-called joy that comes through sin is just the opposite of glorious! The drunks joy puts him below the level of beasts. But there is an elevating power about the Christians joythe joy of salvation, the joy of adoration, the joy of gratitude, the joy of love to God, the joy of being made like Christ, the joy of expecting His comingall this is glorious joy and it is full of glory! I saw lately a picture representing the Coming Man, the Lord Jesus Christ. It represented Him as having in His hands cannons, triumphant arches, flags, kings, emperors and all the insignia of royaltyand blowing them away as chaff is driven before the wind! Come, O blessed Coming Man! You know how we need You! Well, He will come at the right timeand all the glory of this world will fly away just like that when He comes! But our joy is full of a glory which the Coming Man who is, over all God, blessed forever, will keep on increasing so that it shall be to us the more full of glory forever and ever! Such joy as this glorious joy is, makes us look down upon the worlds joys and sins joys as utterly despicable! And so, by lifting us up above them, it further enables us to receive, here and now, the salvation of our souls!   
III. There was much more that I wanted to say, but my time has almost gone. In the good old Puritan times, they had an hourglass on the pulpit and when the sands were running out, the minister was warned that it was time to stop. But he often turned it over, again, and went on for another hour! I cannot do that, so I must hasten to a close with the solemn enquiry, HAVE WE RECEIVED THE SALVATION OF OUR SOULS? AND IF SO, HOW FAR HAVE WE GONE IN THE RECEPTION OF IT?   
The first and most vital question for you, my Hearers, is thishave you received the salvation of your souls? I know that you have heard about salvation and many of you know what the Bible says about it. But that is not enough. I know what salvation means, says one, I know the way. Then take heed that you do not perish in the light! If two men have to go out in the dark, which is the one to whom the darkness is the more dense? Why, the one who has been sitting in the light! If you go out of your brilliantly illuminated room, you realize how dark it is outside where there is no light above or below. Take care, you who are sitting in the Light of God today, lest for you there should be reserved the blackness of darkness forever because you shut your eyes to the Light and will not receive the salvation of your souls.  
Ah, but, say some, we profess to be saved. I am glad to hear that and I would not even hint that your profession is not sincere, but I would urge you to hint to yourself that there is a possibility that all may not be well with you! Are there not many who think they have received the salvation of their souls, but who have not really done so? In St. Peters, at Rome, I saw monuments to James III, Charles III, and Henry IXkings of Englandbut these potentates were quite unknown to me! Certainly they never reigned in this land, so the royal names upon their monuments are only a subject for ridicule and scorn! And you profess and call yourselves Christians? If you really are so, it is well, but if you are not so, I can conceive that in the next world there may be spirits that shall say to you, You professed to be Christians, yet you are in Hell! You sat at the Lords Table and ate the bread and drank the wine in memory of His death that death in which you had no saving interestthe Atonement that never redeemed you! O no, my Hearers, may this never be true of any of us! But may God, in His Infinite Mercy, save us and so may we really and truly receive, and not merely profess to have received the salvation of our souls! If we have really cast ourselves upon Christ, though we have not seen Himif we do truly love Him and if we have, to some extent, at least, the joy unspeakable and full of glory within our heartsthen, indeed, we have received the salvation of our souls!   
Then comes the other question, how far have we received this salvation? If we had a sacred thermometer given to us in order to measure our spiritual heat, what would our temperature be? Are you, Brother, above freezing? I fear that some here are below zero! Have any of you come up to anything like blood heat yet? What a wondrous heat of love that must have been when the lifeblood of Jesus flowed from His wounds as He hung upon the Cross of Calvary! Oh, that we could always have our religion at such blood heat! Have we reached that spiritual temperature yet? There have been saintsand there are still saints willing to suffer the loss of all things for Christs sake. Nothing has been too hot, too hard, or too heavy for them to endure in His blessed service. They have counted shame and loss to be honor and gain if they might but glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Have we come anywhere near to them? We do have occasional communion with Christ, but have we abiding fellowship with Him? Do we dwell near to Christ?   
But what about these who have not yet believed in Him? I heard an evangelist say one night in this Tabernacle, He that believes on the Son has everlasting life. HASthat spells, got it. That is an odd way of spelling, but it is sound divinity! The Lord enable you all to believe in Jesus! Then you will have got it, as our friend said. Or, as Peter, writing under the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit wrote, Believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

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

Verse 1. Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ. It must have been very pleasant to his heart to write those wordsnot Peter, who denied his Master. Not, Peter, full of imperfections and infirmitiesthe impetuous and changeable one of the twelve, but, Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, as truly sent of God as any of the other Apostles and with as much of the Spirit of his Master resting upon him! Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ

1, 2. To the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. You might go for 50 years to some places of worship and never hear the word, elect, ever mentioned! Modern ministers seem to be ashamed of the grand old Doctrine of Election, but it was not so with the Apostles and the early Christians! They were accustomed to speak of one another as the elect of God. The Doctrine of Election was most precious to their hearts and, therefore, Peter writes, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father

2. Through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. We not only need Grace, but we need much Grace! And also peace. And we need a greatly increased measure of both those blessings. Do not be satisfied, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, with the Grace that you already have. Be thankful for it, but ask for the Divine multiplication of it regard the Grace which you have already received as being like the boys loaves and fishesand expect that Christ will continue to multiply it for you and for thousands of others round about you! Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

3-5. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in Heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be

revealed in the last time. [See Sermon #948, Volume 16A STRING OF PEARLS Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] What a vast

mass of meaning is packed away in these words! Mens books, even when they are good, are like gold-leafa little precious metal is very thinly hammered out so as to cover a wide surfacebut almost every Word in the Bible seems to contain a whole mine of heavenly wealth! Note, Beloved, what Peter says concerning your new birthyou are begotten by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! At your first birth, you were born in sin. But now you have been born-again, through Grace, by the almighty power of God! Notice, also, unto what you are bornunto a hope that is full of life, a lively hope, a hope of immortality, a hope whose root is in the grave of Christ, the empty grave from which He has risen and which is the assurance that because He has risen, you also shall rise. See, further, to what you have been bornto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away. See, also, how that inheritance is entailed upon you, for it is reserved in Heaven for you. And see, too, how you are kept for it, for you are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6. Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if necessary, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations: [See Sermon #222, Volume 4  
THE CHRISTIANS HEAVINESS AND REJOICINGRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge,

at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] What? Can there be rejoicing and heaviness in the same heart at the same time? Oh, yes! Our experience has taught us that we can be at the same moment in heaviness of heart and yet rejoicing in the Lord!

7-9. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it is tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, you love; in whom though now you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. You have that already if you have believed in Jesus! You have received a present, immediate salvation! There are some who do not understand or realize this. They miss the whole joy of our holy religion. They are always hoping to be saved, by-and-by, but those who are in Christ Jesus by a living personal faith, receive here and now the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls!

10-12. Of which salvation the Prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the Grace that should come unto you: searching what or what manner of the time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from Heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

[See Sermons #1524, Volume 26YOUR PERSONAL SALVATION and #2697, Volume 46ANGELIC INTEREST IN THE GOSPELRead/download both sermons, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Observe, dear Brothers and Sisters, that the Prophets did not speak without due consideration, but they enquired and searched diligently into the meaning of that salvation of which they testified beforehand. Holy Scripture must not be read by us carelessly. We ought to peer, pry and search into it to get at its hidden meaning. And the prophecies as well as the rest of the Word are to be searched into by us upon whom the ends of the earth have come. Observe, also, that this Divine Revelation is of great interest to the holy angels before the Throne of Godthey stand gazing down as if they were trying to understand the wondrous mystery of Redemption and the great and glorious Gospel of the Grace of God.

13-16. Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the Grace that is to be brought unto you at the Revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as He which has called you is holy, so be you holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, be you holy; for I Am holy. Be not only moral, upright, truthful and so forth, but, be you holy. That is a very high attainment! Be you holy and observe the reason for obedience to the commandfor I Am holy. Children should be like their fathers. There are many children who bear in their very faces, evidence of their sonship. You know who their fathers were by the image that the children bear. Oh, that it were always so with all the children of God! Be you holy; for I Am holy.

17. And if you call on the Father, who without respect of person judges according to every mans work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. You are only here for a while. You are sojourners, foreigners, pilgrims passing through a country where you have no abiding place. Be, therefore, careful and even fearful lest you should become like the people among whom you dwell! Have a holy dread of the contaminations of sin Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.

18-21. Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. What a well of joy this always was to Peter, that God had raised His Son, Jesus Christ, from the dead! And this is our joy today! This is one of the facts which are proved beyond all question, that Jesus Christ, who died upon the Cross and was buried in Josephs tomb, did actually rise again! This is the cornerstone of the Christian faithone of the great facts upon which we found our confidence as to salvation by Jesus Christ.

22, 23. Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that you love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born-again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever. Gods Word never dies! Gods Word never changes! There are some who think we ought to get a new Gospel every few years or even every few weeksbut that was not Peters notion. He wrote and he was Divinely Inspired to write concerning the Word of God, which lives and abides forever.

24, 25. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower thereof falls away: but the Word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the Word which by the Gos

pel is preached unto you. [See Sermon #999, Volume 17THE WITHERING WORK OF THE SPIRITRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #698 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

SEEING IS NOT BELIEVING, BUT BELIEVING IS SEEING

NO. 698

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JULY 1, 1866, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT CORNWALL ROAD CHAPEL, BAYSWATER.

**Whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.**

**1 Peter 1:8, 9.**

A VERY formidable difficulty frequently besets earnest but uninstructed minds who are seeking the Savior. They do not find it difficult to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that He is a Savior, that He is mighty to savetheir difficulty lies in getting at Him. They believe that the medicine will cure, but their question is, how shall they drink it? They are convinced that a touch of the hem of the Saviors garment would heal their diseases, but their question is how to touch. By what means shall they be brought into contact with Christ and a Savior become the Savior of their souls? The constant aim of the Gospel ministry should be to remove such difficulties as these out of the way of coming souls, and we shall try this morning, as God shall help us, to lift out that stone and fill up that miry place in the kings highway that some may today be enabled to come to Jesusunderstanding what that coming meansand exercising it before they leave this house.

It is very common to meet with persons who say, I wish that I had heard the Savioractually heard Him speak. If I could have listened to that matchless eloquence of which it is written, Never man spoke like this Man, I should have been convinced, melted, led to penitence and inspired with faith. I wish I could have heard Him pronounce those words, Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. I would have leaped from among the crowd, and I would have cried, Master, I come! Your invitation draws me! Here I am, a heavy-laden sinner, give me rest.

You have also wished that you had been able literally to touch Himto have put your finger into the print of the nailsand to have thrust your hand into His side. It seems to you that then you could have believed. If you might have been privileged with even the touch of the woman who did but touch the hem of His garment, much more if you might have been privileged to lean your head upon His bosom with John, you would then have believed, you think, as a matter of course, and there would have been no sort of difficulty in the way of your salvation. You have sighed, Oh that I could have heard, have touched, and have seen Him! These would have been three pearly gates through which I might have come at Him. I could have reached Him then, if I might but have exercised my senses upon His blessed Person.

Your soul has lingered over the thought of seeing Him. You have especially wondered whether it would have been possible to have seen Him upon Tabor with His garments glistening whiter than any fuller could have made them, and yet not have believed! You have thought it impossible! You have said, If I could have been among the disciples in the garden of Gethsemane to have seen the bloody sweat and marked the tokens of the drops of blood on the frosty ground. And if I could, with tearful eyes have seen Him at the scourging and the spitting. If I could have wondered and wept with Mary at the foot of the Cross and seen the blood drop from His hands and feet, I should then have been saved! It would have been easy to believe if there had been something to see.

At first sight, indeed, this is a very plausible statement and seems as if there must be truth in it. But believe me, my dear Hearer, there is none at all! And I may say of the Savior very much what Abraham said of Lazarus, You have the Gospels and the Epistles, and you have the abiding Presence of the Holy Spirit. And if you believe not, neither would you have believed if you had been among the company who saw Jesus, touched Him and listened to His voice. It is a mistake, a great mistakeas I think a moments reflection would show youto conceive that contact with Jesus through the senses would produce faith.

Mark the fact that out of the mass who did see Jesus, and who did hear Him, few, very few believed. The crowd which gathered round the Crucifixion, which might seem to be the most moving scene in the story, were not bettered by what they saw. As the multitude gazed, instead of tears they yielded laughter! Instead of penitence they exhibited blasphemy! There they gathered, thousands of them of all sorts, the highest and the lowest, the intelligent and the uneducated, and all alike they spat the venom of their hatred upon the Crucified One. They cried, If He is the Son of God, let Him come down from the Cross. Seeing was not believing, but disbelieving and hating!

They had beheld His miracles before His being nailed to the Cross. They had seen dead Lazarus come forth from the tomb and marked those that had leprosy and other incurable diseases suddenly healed. They had, moreover, feasted upon the bread which He Himself had created for them, and yet they believed not. Why, then, do you conclude that you would have done so? There is nothing better in your heart than in the hearts of other men! Doubtless you would have seen all, and have been astonished and possibly affectedbut the probabilities are that you would have remained what you are now, if not something worsean unbeliever, an unsaved one.

Besides, it should never be forgotten that those who did believe in Jesus Christ in His own day had to get out of and beyond the sphere of the senses in order to believe. Let me show you what I mean. I am not certain that what they saw helped them to believe. I think it did the reverse. I grant you that to see the holiness and the self-consecration of the Lord Jesus must have had a convincing influence upon gracious hearts. But then, let me ask you, would the sight of the deep poverty of the Man of Sorrows lead you to believe in His Godhead? Would an association with Him in His rejection and dishonor lead you to believe in His celestial Glory?

Is it likely that if you had seen Him betrayed and dragged away to an ignominious doom that the shameful scene would have been an assistance to your faith? Would not your faith have had need to triumph over all that the eye beheld, and would it not have been needful to use the souls eyes rather than the poor optics of the body in order to see the Son of God in the Son of Man? How was the Messiah-ship, the Godhead, the Glory and the power of Christ to be seen by the eye? That which was seen was to a great extent hostile to faith, contradictory to it, and faith, to be exercised, had to struggle with what it saw.

Does not the Prophet tell us that when we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should desire in Him? He is a root out of a dry ground. He is a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. That which was seen of the Christ was a difficulty in the matter of faith instead of being an assistance to it. Yet further, I say when they did believe they went beyond the mere evidence of sense. Even Thomas, in that celebrated interview with Christ, when he made the utmost use of seeing, and touching, and handling, went much farther than mere sight could conduct him. The putting of his finger into the print of the nails, and thrusting his hand into the side was convincing evidence that Christ had risen, but it does not seem to me to be evidence of what Thomas drew from itnamely, My Lord and my God.

Here faith went beyond what the finger revealed. The eye and hand showed a wounded manbut faith could see Godhead and authorityand therefore bowed and accepted the risen Man as being from now on her Lord and her God! Now a number of reflections of this kind I think would go very far to show you that instead of it being certain that had you seen and heard and touched the Savior you would have believed, it is, on the contrary, quite certain that you might not have believed. And that if you had done so it would not have been the result of your seeing, but it would have had to be accounted for on quite another ground, namely, that described by the Savior, when He said to Peter, Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this unto you.

You would not have had faith in Christ as the result of sight. The Holy Spirit must have worked faith in you if you had received it. That same Spirit who is able and willing to give you faith today though now you see not the Savior! The question returns, If I cannot come into contact with the Savior by seeing, by hearing, by touching, tell me how I may, for I do desire that virtue should come out of Him to me. I am sick. I would be healed. I am lost. I would be saved. But by what means can I attain unto that salvation which He came upon earth to bestow?

The answer is in the text and we shall bring it out by the following methodFirst, we will observe how we come into contact with Jesus. Secondly, what virtue flows from that contact. And then, thirdly, what then?What are the inferences from this Truth of God?

I. To begin, then, upon this pointHOW DO WE COME INTO CONTACT WITH JESUS? The uppermost point of contact, the most apparent and visible in the Believers life, is love. ObserveWhom having not seen you love. The Apostle Peter twice puts in the not seen, as if he felt that though he, himself, had seen or had been with Jesus in the most private of His retirements, yet these Hebrew saints, strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, had not seen Jesus.

He dwells much on the fact because he knew that they were types and specimens of all succeeding Believers, of us among the rest. Therefore, recording the fact that they had not seen Jesus, he describes them as loving Him whom they had not seen. Now then, dear Fiends, the first point of contact with Christ is love and I think I can show you that we can, no, that we do love Him whom we have not seen! Jesus Christ is Incarnate God. He who fills all things and yet is not contained by all things that are made because He is greater than them all, condescended to become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.

He was born of the virgin and laid in the manger. In His flesh we have not seen Him. We might have gazed upon that Infants face and seen Him in the flesh and yet we might not have loved Him. But now, as our believing hearts think of Him as Incarnate, our minds go back to Bethlehem and Nazareth, and our recollection pictures Him as a Man among us men. And as our soul sees Him, first as an Infant of a span long, and then suffering all our infirmities and tempted in all points like as we areand when we reflect that He need not have suffered so, but condescended to cast aside His Glory wherein He counted it not robbery to be equal with God that He might be on a level with uswhy, then, without seeing Him we love Him!

Blessed Man, blessed God, condescending to be Man for me! At the very thought of Your leaving the highest throne of Glory, I love You! Foxes have holes and the birds have nests, but You had not where to lay Your head, and yet You were Lord of All! My soul needs not to see Youshe loves You!

We believe, moreover, that as a Man there were beauties in His Character of such a sort that it must have been impossible, spiritually, to appreciate them without loving Him. Now we never saw Him when He forgave His enemies, when He answered meekly those who railed at Him. We never saw Him in all His splendid life of disinterested philanthropy, nor do we regret that we did not. But when we read the story of His life, our heart pictures Him who went about doing goodand falling adoringly by faith at His feet, we saySuch a character is lovely! Such a Person commands our hearts! And though we have not seen Him, yet the mental sight of His portrait as it is drawn by those four master artists, the Evangelists, wins our affections and holds our souls fast.

It is true, too, that we never saw the Redeemers grief. We never peered into that face, more marred than that of any man. We did not see Him in the garden in His agony, nor behold Him upon the Cross when the cry of, Lama Sabachthani! startled Heaven and earth. But we have mused upon all, and with the spirits eye have seen all. We need no great strength of imagination to think of Him until Ecce HomoBehold the Man!rings as clear from the page of Scripture as though it came from Pilate himself.

We have realized, by meditation, the scars upon His back where the plowers made deep furrows. We have thought upon the crown of thorns and marked the ruby drops. We have considered Him staggering beneath His Cross along the Via Dolorosa. We have marked Him as His hands and feet were pierced. We have counted the purple drops and said, Thus our sins were washed away. And though we have not

seen Him, we do not need sight to make us love Him, for the very thought of Himthe contemplation of His intense agony for us who were His enemiesconstrains us to love Him. We are fastened to that Cross forever, crucified with Himthe nails which fasten us being the mighty love He bore us.

Now, Beloved, though we never saw Him dead and did not handle that sorely marred but blessed Bodythat casket for awhile deprived of its inestimable jewel, His sinless soulyet when we think of Him as lying in the cold prison of the tomb, embalmed in spices, we cannot but shed tears which are only wiped away by the glorious truth of His Resurrection! So all the story through we feel that in each one of the positions the Savior commands from us as much love as if we had been present there to see Him.

No, perhaps the sight might have produced too much astonishment, if not terror, to have permitted us to indulge with freedom the holy passion of consecrated love. Possibly we might have been so amazed, astounded perhaps even alarmed when we saw the circumstances which surrounded the Masters griefthat we might have forgotten Him in His surroundings. But now we can sit alone in our little upper room, or beneath some silent shade in the calm retreat which so well agrees with prayer and praise and there, all alone and quietwe can bring the Savior before our mind and feel that we love Him.

Now, my dear Hearer, I think you will see that this, although it does not seem to be so real a contact as touching Him, is truly, if you think of it, more real. I may see things and yet not truly perceive them. You may travel through a country without understanding it. You see a thousand things in daily life which do not sufficiently catch your mind for you really to grasp them. But here is a case in which, without the exercise of sight, it is quite plainly within the range of our ability to get the very soul, and heart, and essence of the entire matter. And after all, it is not the seeing that must ever be externalit is the thinking upon the thing, the understanding, the being affected with it which is the real point of contact.

So, love to Christ becomes as real a means of union, as strong a bond to bind as ever sight and touch could be, and infinitely more so. You may touch without realizing, but you cannot love a fiction, you cannot love a myth. Love makes the Savior real to the heart. When I preach sometimes, and my love is cold, and my zeal is flagging, I talk about the Master as though He were but an historical person, someone that had lived and gone. But when my heart is warm towards Him! Then I talk of Him as though He were in the pulpit with me! As though I could see Him! As though you, too, could see Him! As though I was speaking of our own familiar Friend who was here in the midst of us! Beloved, every spiritual mind knows, and I need not remind him of it, that love realizes Christ and thus the contact which love makes between Christ and the soul is more real than any which the hands or the eyes could form.

But the text tells us of another point of contactThough now you do not see Him, yet believing. We are again reminded here that we do not see, but we are assured of the possibility of believing in Him without sight. I must take you again to the Saviors life. Beloved, we did not see Him diethat terrible misery, that fearful ignominy we never did behold. We did not sit still during the three hours of black darkness which covered all the land! We did not hear Him say, I thirst, nor mark them as they thrust the sponge full of vinegar up to His blessed lips! But we have believed on Him.

Ah, have I not, by faith, made real to myself the Savior on the Cross? Have I not, by faith, seen Him and cast myself there and said, Ah, Lord, I trust my whole eternity with You? My soul, my spirit, my body, everything that is mine trusts in You. I know, and you know who have believed Him, that you could not, if you saw Him, trust Him more really than you do now. His death is the unsupported pillar of your confidence and the sole foundation of your hope. In Christ you have believed, and you know that your sins are forgiven, that His righteousness is imputed to you, and that you stand accepted in the Beloved.

This is not to you a matter of hopeit is a matter of firm conviction. If you perish you will perish at the foot of the Cross. But you are convinced you will never perish there. You have not seen, but you have believed. As to His Resurrection, also, you did not see Him when He rose early in the morning from the tomb and the watchmen in terror fled far away. But you have believed in Him as risen. Have you not thus believed? We are persuaded that Jesus lives and we derive consolation from the fact. We believe concerning Him that death has no more dominion over Him. Immortal, He cannot die again. The lamb of the Jewish Passover was slain every year, but He, our Lamb, lives no more to die for He has accomplished the work of His death and now lives to carry on the work of His great after-life.

We trust Him! Why not? What more reason for trust could I have if I had seen Him rise than I have now, when I believe the fact? I cast myself upon the Truth of God that my Lord is risen! I believe that because He lives I shall also live! And it is possible to believe this as firmly as though we saw it! Beloved, at this moment Christ is in Heaven pleading for us! We cannot see the ephod and the breastplate. We cannot hear the tones of majestic love in which our great High Priest pleads before His Fathers Throne! But we believe that He intercedes successfully for us.

We choose Him to be our Advocate in every case of sore distress, in every case of grievous sin! We believe that because He is at the Fathers right hand He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him and we leave our suit with Him in perfect confidence. Believing in Jesus brings us into as real a contact with Him as seeing Him could possibly produce, for you cannot believe in what you think to be fiction. You cannot trust your soul and your best and most weighty interests with a mere myth. Your faith must be convinced of Christ and must have had communion with Him, or else it would not be faith at all! So you see, dear Friends, both love and faith are two clear points of contact. These are the two bonds which unite us to the Savior.

While some go about teaching that there is a connection with Jesus brought about by infant sprinkling and by confirmationby what certain gentlemen are pleased to call the blessed Sacramentswe solemnly testify in the name of Him that lives and was dead, that the true way of coming to Jesus lies in faith and love. And without these you may baptize and confirm and give sacraments ad nauseambut you have not approached the Lord! The true Christ is not there at the font, nor there with the lawn sleeve, nor there at the altar, nor with your acolytes and other performersHe is to be found where the heart longs after Him, where the soul trusts Him, where the spirit loves Him. Even the two Scriptural ordinances are but in the outer court and are nothing of themselves. The true keepers of the door of Jesus house are faith and love.

I read the other day of a certain renovated Puseyite synagogue having a path up to it called the Via Crucis. I must confess to having had but slender acquaintance with the play-things and nursery games of that sect. I have no idea of what is meant by their Via Crucis, but this I know, the true Via Crucis, or Way of the Cross, is to believe and to love. We were told not long ago by an Anglican priest that the history of the spiritual life was portrayed in the edifice in which he officiated. He began with regeneration in the font, and led his hearers by easy stages till he perfected them in the chancel or up in the steeple, I cannot remember which!

All that may sound very prettyI think it shamelessly immature! To me it looks like a return to the absurd superstitions of the Dark Ages. I have no more reverence for their genuflections, performances, and theatrics than for the incantations of an old hag who pretends to be a witch! There is nothing manly, much less Divine, in the new-fangled Romanism! Gods religion is spiritual theirs is carnal and sensuous. The day comes, and now is, when they that worship the Father must worship Him in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeks such to worship Him.

For spiritual men there is not needed incense, banners, wide-sleeved garments, or crosses, nor any external thingonly the mental action of the inward nature exercised upon the Lord Jesus in love and trust. How simple this is! There is a story told of a certain farmer in France who, in the days of bad farming, produced wonderful crops from his ground. All his neighbors believed him to be addicted to witchcraft and when they summoned him for the practice of it, he brought up before the court his two sturdy lads, his oxen, and his plows. He said, These are the implements of my witchcraft! I simply work hard.

Now I fear there are many who, if asked what is the way of their coming into union with Christ, have all sorts of mysterious, laborious inventions. But we bring before you nothing but just thesetrust and love! These are the instruments of our religion. Like the Apostles, we need no wagon to carry with us our altar, our vestments and other paraphernaliawe preach the Gospel and exhort men to faith and lovewe have no need of drapery, architecture, rubrics and ceremonies. Trust and love! These two things brining the spirit into contact with the Lord Jesus Christ! And we are prepared against all the world to hold these two things and believe that were those other things to fail, and turn out to be a delusion and a lie, these will succeed to the salvation of the soul. Whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice.

Still, the point is that carnal people will imagine that if there could be something to touch or smell they should get on, but mere believing and loving are too hard for them. Yet such thought is not reasonable and I can show you why. Occasionally one meets with an illiterate working man who will say to those whose occupation is mental, I work hard for my living, insinuating that the mind-worker does not work at all. Yet I ask any man who is engaged in a mental pursuit whether he does not know that mental work is quite as real workand some of us think more soas working with your hands. The thing is mental, but is none the less real.

An illiterate man cannot see that it is work, but he who is capable of mental labor soon feels the reality of it. Just transfer that thought. Coming into contact with Christ by touch looks to most people to be most real because their animal nature is uppermost. Coming into contact with Jesus by the spirit seems to them to be unreal only because they know nothing of spiritual things. Thoughtless persons think that mental pain is nothing. Mere animal men will often say, I can understand the headache, I can understand the pain of having a leg cut off. But the pain of injured affection, or of receiving ingratitude from a trusted friendthis is by the rough mind thought to be no pain at all. Oh, he says, I could put up with that.

But I ask you who have minds, Is there any pain more real than mental pain? Is it not the sharpest when the iron enters into the soul? Just so the mental operationfor it is a mental operationof coming into contact with Christ by loving Him and trusting Him is the most real thing in all the world! And no one will think it unreal who has once exercised it. So then, poor seeking Sinner, it comes to thisyou have not to go anywhere, or say anything, or do anythingbut, sitting where you are, if you can trust the Son of God with your soul, if you can love the altogether Lovely One, the thing is done!

There is life in a look, we often say, but this is the kind of lookthe look is loving and trustingthey go together, they are born at the same time. We love those we trust, and we trust those we love, and if you love and trust Jesus you are saved.

II. I must have your patient attention to the second part of the subject WHAT VIRTUE IS THIS WHICH FLOWS FROM HIM? When a soul has touched Him by love and faith, what virtue comes? The Apostle answers, Whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. The first result of trusting and loving Christ is joy, and joy of a most singular, remarkable kind. It is far above all common joy. It is spoken of as inexpressiblejoy inexpressible.

Now earth-born joys can be told to the full. One man can tell his joy to his fellow and his fellow understands, for he is earth-born, too. But spiritborn joys cannot be told because we have not yet received a spiritual language. I suppose that is the language reserved for Heaven where spiritual minds shall talk to spiritual minds without being confined to the poor poverty-stricken words of earth so necessary to us while yet in the body. The joy is inexpressible because you cannot possibly describe its true essence. If a man should try to tell all spiritual joys to his fellow he would feel silenced like Paul, and feel that he had heard things which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

Holy Rutherford, in his letters, has gone far to picture to us what the Christians joy is, and so has Solomon in the Book of the Song. But carnal men cannot comprehend Rutherford, and as to the Canticles, there is no book in the Bible which staggers a worldling so much as the Song. He says, Oh, it is a mere love tale. Of course it is to you, O carnal Reader, but the reason is in yourself. It was not possible for Solomon to put into language the experience of Divine Love, except by the use of metaphors. He had to describe love as we have to describe God, speaking after the manner of men, and so he must speak after a natural sort and therefore the golden Canticle looks as if it were an earthly nuptial ode, whereas it is so high that the uninstructed cannot attain to it.

The joy of Believers is unspeakable because there is no telling it. Earthly joy is often exaggerated. You can describe it in words too flatteringly expressive, but you cannot act thus with a Christians joy. His joy is one that speaks better through his eyes than his lips! It makes his countenance glow with delight. I have seen mens faces lit up with Heavens sunlight when the joy of the Lord has been shed abroad in their hearts. The very people who a day ago looked dull and heavy look as if they could dance for mirth because they have found the Savior and their soul is at peace through Him.

The Apostle adds that it is full of glory. Many sensual joys are full of shamea man with a conscience dares not tell them to his fellows. The joys of sense are oftentimes unfit to be whispered in the dark, and the joys of the world are mostly too selfish to be boasted of. The joy of making money is not full of glory, nor is the joy of killing ones fellows in battle. There is no joy like that of the Christian, for he dares to speak of it everywhere, in every company. We will tell the devils in Hell that we are not ashamed to glory in the Cross and we will tell unbelievers upon earth the same!

We will dare to say it to the teeth of the worst of men that we have a joy they know nothing about. And in Heaven we shall not be ashamed to tell to principalities and powers of those draughts of love which we have been made to drink from the well of Christ Jesusin whom, though now we see Him notyet believing, we rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory! Why is this joy of the Christian so inexpressible and full of glory? I think it is because it is so altogether Divine. It is Gods own joy! It is Christs own joy! Can you guess what the joy of God is? No, perhaps notbut every Christian has within himself a portion of the joy of God, for God joys in Christ and glorifies Himself in Jesusand so do we, also, joy and glory in Him whom having not seen, we love.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus, it is for you to prove to the world by your daily walk and conversation that it is so! For my own part, I will bear my own personal witness that I never knew the meaning of that little word joy till I knew Christ. I knew the childish glee of boyhood. I understand, alas, something of the frothy joy upon the cup of sin, but let me sayI am speaking to those of my own age especiallyif I had to die like a dog and there was no hereafter. If I had nothing for my faith but the happiness which it yields me in this life, I would be a Christian sooner than I would be any conceivable form of existence.

I would sooner be a believer in Jesus in the depth of poverty, racked with bodily suffering and oppressed with the greatest possible persecution, than I would be without faith in Christ! I would rather be a believer in Christ Jesus than have the noblest possible position with the greatest possible earthly enjoymentsfor there is nothing at all like the joy inexpressible and full of glory! Sometimes, when it is flood-tide with us, our joy is so great that we think we shall dieour joy is too strong for our frail body! And even when it is ebb-tide with us, yet we have a peace of God which passes all understandinga peace which the world cannot give, and which, thank Godit cannot, cannot take away!

Now, Brethren, many of you know this, and you know also that this joy inexpressible and full of glory is not dependent upon circumstances. You have had great successthis joy inexpressible and full of glory was not increased by that successyou rather trembled lest you should sin through being in high places. And you who have had great troublethis joy inexpressible has not been diminished by it. You have felt that God was with you and that all things would work together for your good! You have wept over your children when they have dieda mothers grief has filled the eyes with tearsbut still the joy inexpressible has cheered the heart.

You have lost property and been wrongfully despoiled of reputation, but the joy inexpressible has been unaffected by all this. You have done with your crown jewels what many of the princes on the Continent have done with theirsyou have sent them where they are safeyou have put your treasure in the better land on the other side of Jordan, in the islands of the blessed, in the land of the hereafter where Jesus is. The Apostle mentions another blessing received by loving and trusting Christ. He says, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

Every man who trusts and loves Christ is saved. The common idea is that perhaps we shall get saved when we die. I know nothing of such a salvation! True salvation saves NOW. The Apostle, when he writes to Believers, always speaks to them as persons who are saved, not who shall be, but are. When salvation is once done, it is done forever! If you are saved, you are savedyou will be never lost. Those who trust Jesus and love Him are saved. But it will be said, How is that a matter of fact?

Well, it is a matter of fact two ways. First, they are conscious that they are saved from the guilt of sin. Of this they are conscious in themselves. The guilt of sin, when it is on a mans conscience, is unmistakably there, for it weighs him down to such an extent that he cannot doubt it. Well do some of us recollect when we could not even sleep by night much less have comfort by day because sin was on our conscience. We wished sometimes, as John Bunyan says, that we had been made frogs or snakes rather than men, for sin on the conscience makes manhood odious and life itself undesirable. But when we believed and loved Jesus we knew that our guilt was taken off the conscience.

You say, How did you know? We knew just as we knew when it was on. If a man has a burden on his back, even though he has no eyes, he can feel it. And as soon as it is gone, though he has no eyes he can feel that it is removed. So was it with uswhen we believed in Jesus, our sin was all gone! Our feelings were altogether different from what they were

*Now, oh joy, my sin is pardoned,*

*Now I can and do believe.*   
We began to sing for very joy of heart! The removal of guilt is no fiction. It will be said it is a mere brain-sick enthusiasm. Have you ever tried it? If you have not, you are not fit to judge about it! But if you have experienced it you will say of it, Oh if it is enthusiasm, blessed enthusiasm! Let me never be rid of it! If this is a dream it is so Divine that it should be true! When we trusted Jesus, though we used no forms and ceremonies, we received the salvation of our souls! Here is a point more tangible stillthey who trust and love Christ are saved from the

power of sinand this is a practical point to be seen even by the eye.

For instance, a man with a horrid temperalmost insane from his angerwas led to trust Jesus and to love Him. There may be traces of that old temper in the man still, but I will defy you to find a gentler or more patient soul than he is now! That same man whose fist was so soon doubled and whose eye so rapidly flashed fire will now hear a vast amount of teasing and look on and feel, If I were what I once was I would join in this row, but now I pity and forgive. I can picture you another. There was a man who spent every night in the beer house or in worse places. His house was a Hellhis wife and family afraid to see himthe man a drunkard, a fornicator and everything that was foul. But he came to believe and trust Christ.

Now it is a matter of fact that he is a new man through believing. Ask his wife and she says, Never was there such a change! Our home is happy, our children happy! We have happy mornings and evenings for my husband prays! That is not all, Sirmy husband is such a heavenlyminded man that you could no more believe him to be the same man than you could believe that a lamb was once a lion. Ah, the man has received the salvation of his soul! How did he receive it? Did we baptize a new heart into him? Did we confirm him into morality? Did we perfume him, intone him and confess him into holiness? No! No! He trusts Jesus and loves Him, and all is done! He received the salvation of his soul by these simple means.

Now every man who has trusted and loved Jesus becomes a living witness to this. The vital power of religion is perceived by each man in himself. If you have a faith which has left you what you used to be, throw your faith to the dogs! If you have a faith in Christ which does not make you desire holiness it is a delusion that will drag you to the bottomless pit! Only the faith that works by love and purifies the soul is genuine. True trust in Jesus and love to Him always does thisit makes the man receive the salvation of his soul from the enslavement of his baser powers, delivers him from the dominion of Satan and of sin and he becomes at once a sinner saved by Divine Graceand all this by the two points of contact you cannot seetrusting and believing.

III. I must not stop longer, but finish by a few words upon the third point. WHAT FOLLOWS, THEN, FROM THE WHOLE OF THIS? It follows, in the first place, that a state of joy and salvation is the fitting, proper, and expected condition of every believer in Christ. If you are a believer in Jesus, and I see you sorrowing, what must I say? I do not mean sorrowing as the effect of mere Providential arrangementsof course we sorrow as other menand Jesus wept. I mean thisif I see you constantly without joy inexpressibleif I mark that all your joy and hope are gone, what must I say?

I begin to doubt whether you can be a Believer. And if I may not raise that question, and if it is certain that you have faith and love to Christ, I must say to you, my dear Friend, that you have suspended their action and therefore you have suspended the enjoyment of their result. Go back again to where you were! Go and stand at the foot of the Cross and trust Christ and love Himand your joy will return. I am sure it will. I have tried itI have tried it hundreds of times!   
I am unbelieving by constitution, frequently desponding, very often depressed. But I have never been in the depths of despondency without almost immediately coming up from them as soon as ever I have thought of Him, and my soul has rested upon Him and leaned on Him.

There is another inference to be drawn from my subject, and that is to the seeking soul. If you want comfort this morning, go to Christ. But I have here the old answer againI have heard it scores of timesSir, you say come to Christ. How can I come? If Jesus Christ were at New York I should know how to get at Him. I should understand what He meant by come. If there were some appointed place in London where every soul might go, I could understand it. Yes, that is to say, you could understand the mere carnal act of coming. But this coming is a spiritual thing and it is just as real as if it were carnal. You come to Christ by thinking of Him, trusting Him, and loving Him though you have not seen Him.

I say, then, come to Christ! Trust Him and love Him! And whatever your infirmities and spiritual difficulties, you shall get over them allfor if Christ undertakes to get you through them He will do it. He is mighty to save! But you say, I cannot believe, Faith is the gift of God. I know it is, but perhaps you have it already. Dead men cannot believe, but the quickened can. The Son of God bleeds for sinners! The Son of God, on the tree, offers an Atonement for human sin! Can you trust Him? You answer, I do trust Him. Then you not only have the power to do it, but you are doing it! If you are convinced that Jesus is able to save you, and are willing to

trust Him, you certainly can trust Him for inability lies in the will, and as your will is now right, all your inability is gone. The power which the Holy Spirit gives is spirituala power which removes our natural opposition to Jesusand when this is removed the power is given! If you do now trust Christ, fall before Him and say, Savior, God, deliver me! By Your life and by Your death. By Your griefs and passion. By Your resurrection and Your pleading at Your Fathers Throne, deliver me! I trust You to deliver me. I cast myself upon You!

If you do this you are savedyou are saved nowyou have no sin in Gods book. Every sin is blotted out and therefore being justified by faith, you shall have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. But you reply, My sins are very great. Yes, but however great your sin it matters not. The same hand which can receipt a little bill can receipt a great one it takes no more when the money is paid. Christ has paid all the debts of those that trust Him and He can readily forgive you. Come now and let us reason together, said the Lord. Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Yes, but, says another, it is my propensity to sin that I am afraid of. How shall I ever break the neck of my corruptions?

You will never do it, but He will! Do you not remember that when they pierced His side there flowed bloodthat was for pardon. And there flowed waterwhat was that for? That was for cleansing. He will be sins double cure. Is it some sin or some lust that you would conquer, or an angry disposition? Take it to Him! Those vipers die at the sight of Christ! There is no form of sinfulness to which you are captive which Christ cannot remove! You must give them up. Remember there is no going to Heaven and keeping your sinsyou must give them all up. But then you are not to give them up in your own strength. You shall receive a strength which shall make you more than a manyou shall be a man with God living in youfor the Holy Spirit dwells in us! We are temples of God.

When God dwells in the temple He can purge out a great deal which we cannot purge out. He can make us clean though otherwise we must have remained impure. Still, says another, I have such a need of tenderness this morning. I have not thought about these things. I have lived a careless giddy lifemust I not give some week or month or two to the consideration of these thingsand then come to Christ? Must I not go home and humble myself before God and then believe and love?

My dear Hearer, do what you will after trusting, but trusting is the immediate remedy this morning! Now is the accepted time! Now is the day of salvation! May you and I come to trust and loveand we shall soon prove to ourselves, if we cannot prove it to othersthat there is a power and vitality in faith and love not to be found in all the performances of the priests who are laboring to bring our nation back to the midnight of Romanism!

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1524 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

YOUR PERSONAL SALVATION   
NO. 1524

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 22, 1880, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**Receiving the end of your faiththe salvation of your souls. Of this salvation the Prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the Grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did indicating, when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To whom it was revealed, that not to themselves, but to us they did minister the things which are now reported to you by them that have preached the Gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent down**

**from Heavenwhich things angels desire to look into. 1 Peter 1:9-12.**

**Let Your mercies come also unto me, O Lord, even Your salvation, according to Your Word. Psalm 119:41.**

THESE two texts will be, to me, as a bow and a swordthe first for shooting the arrows of the Truth of God and the second for close quarters in dealing with individual consciences. You will see the reason for the pair of texts as we proceed. May the Holy Spirit make use of both according to His own mind. Last Sabbath I preached upon the God of salvation [#1523The Royal Prerogative]this morning our principal objective is to speak of that salvation, itself. I then tried to show that God is always the same and that the God of the Old Testament, unto whom belongs the issues, or escapes from death, is still the God of our salvation.

My first text runs upon the same line, for it teaches us that the Prophets of old, who spoke by the power of the Holy Spirit, testified concerning the same salvation which has been reported to us by the Apostles as actually accomplished. There has been no new salvation! There has been a change in the messengers, but they have all spoken of one thing and, though their tidings have been more clearly understood in these latter days, the substance of the good news is still the same. The Old Testament and the New are one, inspired by the same Spirit and filled with the same Subject, namely, the one promised Messiah.

The Prophets foretold what the Apostles reported. The Seers looked forward and the Evangelists look backwardbut their eyes meet at one placethey see eye to eye and both behold the Cross. I shall aim, this morning, at commending the salvation of God to those of you who possess it, that you may be the more grateful for your choice inheritance. But I will still more labor to commend it to those who possess it not, that having some idea of the greatness of its value, they may be stirred up to seek it for themselves. Ah, my unsaved Hearers, how great is your loss in missing the salvation of God!

How shall you escape if you neglect so great a salvation? O that you might be rescued from such folly! Perhaps God the Holy Spirit will show you the preciousness of this salvation and then you will no longer neglect, despise, or refuse it, but will offer the prayer which I have selected as a sort of second text and entreat the Lord to let His mercies come to you, even His salvation. The prayer may be helpful in enabling you to take with you words and turn to the Lord. God grant it may be so!

I. First, I shall in much simplicity, with a vehement desire for the immediate conviction and salvation of my hearers, try to COMMEND THE SALVATION OF GOD by opening up what Peter has said in the verses before us. Let me urge you to give earnest heed to the salvation of God, because it is a salvation of Grace. The 10th verse says, Of this salvation the Prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the Grace that would come to you. Salvation is altogether of GraceGrace which comes from God in His mercy to man in his helplessness! The Gospel does not come to you asking something of you, but its hands are laden with gifts more precious than gold which it freely bestows upon guilty men. It comes to us, not as a reward for the obedient and deserving, but as a merciful gift for the disobedient and undeserving.

It deals with us, not upon the ground of justice, but upon terms of pure mercy. It asks no price and exacts no purchase. It comes as a benefactor, not as a judge. In the Gospel, God gives liberally and upbraids not. We are accustomed not only to say, Grace, but, Free Grace. It has been remarked that this is a tautology. So it is, but it is a blessed one, for it makes the meaning doubly clear and leaves no room for mistakes! Since it is evidently objectionable to those who dislike the doctrine intended, it is manifestly forcible and, therefore, we will keep to it. We feel no compunction in ringing such a silver bell twice overGrace, Free Grace! Lest any should imagine that Grace can be otherwise than free, we shall continue to say, not only Grace, but Free Grace, so long as we preach!

You are lost, my dear Hearer, and God proposes your salvation, but not on any ground of your deserving to be saved, else the proposal would most assuredly fall to the ground in the case of many of youI might have said in the cases of us all, though some of you think not. The Lord proposes to save you because you are miserable and He is merciful! Because you are needy and He is bountiful. Why, I think every man who hears this good news should open both his ears and lean forward, that he may not lose a word! Yes, and he should open his heart, too, for salvation by Grace is most suitable to all men and they need it greatly.

Only give intimation that goods are to be had free and your shop will be besieged with customers! Those who want us to notice their wares are often crafty enough to put at the head of their advertisement what is not true, To be given away. But salvations grand advertisement is true salvation is everything for nothingpardon free, Christ free, Heaven free! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Our good Physician has none but gratis patients. Since the gifts which the God of All Grace grants to sinful men are beyond all price, He does not barter and dicker with them, but makes His blessings free as air! I am sure that if you feel yourselves to be guilty, the very idea of being saved by Grace will have a charm for you. To a thirsty man, the sound of a rippling stream is music and to a convicted conscience, free pardon is as rivers of water in the wilderness! Oh, that all the world would listen when we have such a message to tell!

Again, your closest attention may well be asked to the salvation of God when you are told in the text that it is by faith. Receiving the end of your faiththe salvation of your souls. Salvation is not obtained by painful and humiliating penances. Nor by despondency and despair. Nor by any effort, mental or spiritual, involving a purchase by labor and pain. It is entirely and only by faith, or trust, in the Lord Jesus! Do you askIs it really so, that salvation is by believing, simply believing? Such is the statement of the Word of God! We proclaim it upon the guarantee of Infallible Scripture! All that believe are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses. Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. He that believes in Him is not condemned. He that believes on Him has everlasting life.

These are a mere handful of proof texts gleaned from wide fields of the same kind. Repent and believe the Gospel, is our one plain and simple message. We cry again and again, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. Believe only, and, Jesus only, are our two watchwords! Now, it is singularly foolish that men should quibble at this which ought to please them! What? Shall it be that the Gospel shall be regarded as too easy a thing? Will men quarrel with Mercy for being too generous? If there is a condition, is it wisdom on our part to contend with God because that condition seems to be too slight? What would you have for a condition? Would you have it proclaimed that men must be saved by works?

Which among you would, then, be saved? Your works are imperfect and full of evil! The Law cannot justify you, it condemns you! As long as you are under the Law, has not the Holy Spirit declared that you are under the curse? Ought you not, you sons of men, bless God that salvation is of faith that it might be by Grace and that it might be possible to you and sure to all the seed? The sinner cannot keep the Law of Godhe has already broken it most terribly and he is, himself, enfeebled and depraved by the Fall. Adam did not stand when he was in his perfectionwhat shall we do who are ruined by his fall and full of evil?

By the Grace of God the sinner can believe in Jesus! This is ceasing from his own power and merit and leaving himself in his Saviors hands. Salvation by faith thus sets an open door before those whom the Law shuts out! It is in every way adapted to the case of the guilty and fallen and such characters should hasten to accept salvation thus presented to them! O my God, how is it that this message does not, at once, awaken all who hear it to an eager acceptance of Your salvation? O that the Spirit of God would make these appeals powerful with you! The Gospel of salvation ought to be regarded by you, for it has engrossed the thoughts of Prophets! The text says, Of this salvation the Prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the Grace that would come to you.

Those great men, the choice spirits of the ages which they adorned, were delighted to preach of this salvation as a blessing to be hereafter revealed! They did not, themselves, altogether understand what they were called to reveal, for the Holy Spirit often carried them beyond themselves and made them utter more than they understood. The Inspiration of the Bible is verbal Inspiration. In some cases it must have been only verbal in every case it must have been mainly so! The human mind is not able to understand and to express all the thoughts of God, they are too sublime and, therefore, God dictated to the Prophets the very language which they should deliverlanguage of which they, themselves, could not see the farreaching meaning.

They rejoiced in the testimony of the Spirit within them, but they were not free from the necessity to search and to search diligently, if they would, for themselves to derive benefit from the Divine Revelation. I know not how this is, but the fact is clearly stated in the text and must be true. Oh, my Hearers, how diligently you ought to search the Scriptures and listen to the saving Word of God! If men that had the Holy Spirit and were called, Seers, nevertheless searched into the meaning of the Word of God which they, themselves, spoke, what ought such poor things as we are to do in order to understand the Gospel?

It should be our delight to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the Doctrines of Grace. Surely it must be a crime of crimes to be living in utter neglect of a salvation which gained the attentive mind of Daniel and Isaiah and Ezekiel! O that the long list of great and holy men would have some weight with thoughtless ones! I would cause a noble line of Prophets to pass before you this morning that you may see how many of them spoke of Christ and His salvation. From Abel, whose blood cried from the ground, down to him who spoke of the Sun of Righteousness and His Resurrectionthey all spoke in Jehovahs name for your sakes! From Moses down to Malachi, all of these lived and many of them died that they might bear witness to the Grace that would come to you.

They, themselves, were, no doubt saved. But still, the full understanding and enjoyment of the Truth was reserved for us! Unto them it was revealed, that not to themselves, but to us, they ministered the things of God! They lighted lamps to shine for future ages! They told of a Christ who was actually to come in later days to work out His Redemption after they had all died in faith without a sight of His actual coming! You and I live in the light of a finished salvation! God has appeared in human flesh! Christ has borne the guilt of man! His Atonement is complete! Jesus has risen from the dead and gone into Glory pleading for Believers!

Surely that which Prophets thought worth their while to study night and day, though they knew that they would never see it, ought to be thought worthy of the devout attention of those immediately concerned in it! If Daniel set his face, by prayer and studyin fasting and in lonelinessto search out the salvation of the future, we ought at once to seek for the salvation which is now present among us! If Isaiah spoke with a golden tongue as the very Chrysostom of the old dispensation; if Jeremiah wept, like a Niobe, rivers of tears; if Ezekiel, despite the splendor of his princely intellect, was almost blinded by the splendor of his visionsif the whole goodly fellowship of the Prophets lived and died to study and to foretell the great salvationwe ought to give most earnest heed to it! If they pointed us to the Lamb of God and, according to the best of their light, foretold the coming of the Redeemer, then woe unto us if we trifle with Heavens message and cast its blessings behind our backs! By all the Prophets whom the Lord has sent, I beseech you, give His salvation a hearty welcome and rejoice that you have lived to see it!

Furthermore, when prophecy had ceased, the Holy Spirit came upon another set of men of whom our text speaks. Peter says of these things, that they are now reported to you by them that have preached the Gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent down from Heaven. The Apostles followed the Prophets in testifying to this salvation and with the Apostles there was an honorable fellowship of earnest Evangelists and preachers. I will not stay to point out to you the admirable character of these men, but I would beg you to observe that, having personally seen Christ Jesus for themselves, they were not deceived. Many of them had eaten and drank with Himall the Apostles had done sothey had been with Him in familiar conversation and they were resolute in bearing witness that they had seen Him after He had risen from the dead.

These men spoke with the accent of conviction! If they were duped, there certainly never was another instance of such persons and so many of them being so utterly deluded. They continued throughout all their lives to bear hardships and to endure reproaches for the sake of bearing witness to what they had seen and heardand all the Apostles but one died a martyrs death rather than allow the slightest suspicion to be cast upon the truth of their report! The text says that they reported these things when they preached the Gospel by the Holy Spirit sent down from Heaven. I see them going everywhere preaching the Word of God!

They were dressed in no robes but those of poverty. They had no distinctions but those of shame and suffering. They had no power but that of the Holy Spirit. I hear them fearlessly lifting up their voices among a warrior population, or gently testifying in peaceful homes. They evangelized the open country and they instructed the capital itselfCaesars household hears of them! I see them far away among the Parthians and Scythians telling the barbarians that there is salvation and that Jesus has accomplished it! With equal joy I see them telling cultured Greeks that God was in Christ a Man among men and that the Incarnate God died in mans place that believing men might be delivered from the wrath of God and from the plague of sin.

These noble bearers of glad tidings continued to report this salvation till they had finished their missions and their lives and, therefore, I feel that for us, in these times, to trifle with Gods Word and give a deaf ear to the invitations of the Gospel is an insult to their honored memories! You martyr them a second time by contemptuously neglecting what they died to hand to you! From the dead they bear witness against you and when they rise again they will sit with their Lord to judge you! Nor have we merely Prophets and Apostles looking on with wonder, but our text says, Which things angels desire to look into.

We know very little of these heavenly beings. We do know, however, that they are pure spirits and that the elect angels have not fallen into sin. These beings are not concerned in the Atonement of Christ so far as it is a ransom for sin, seeing as they have never sinnedthey may, however, derive some advantage from His death, but of that we cannot now speak particularly. They take such an interest in us, their fellow creatures, that they have an intense wish to know all the mysteries of our salvation. They were pictured, you know, upon the Ark of the Covenant as standing upon the Mercy Seat and looking down upon it with steady gaze. Perhaps Peter was thinking of this holy imagery. They stand intently gazing into the marvel of Propitiation by blood!

Can you quite see the beauty of this spectacle? If we knew that a door was opened in Heaven, would not men be anxious to look in and see Heavens wonders? But the case is here reversed, for we see a window opened towards this fallen world and heavenly beings looking down upon the earth, as if Heaven, itself, had no such Object of attraction as Christ and His salvation! Watts sang not amiss when he gave us the verse

*Archangels leave their high abode   
To learn new mysteries here and toll   
The love of our descending God,   
The glories of Immanuel.*

Paul tells us that to principalities and powers in the heavenly places shall be made known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God. For men to be lessons to angels, books for seraphs to read, is a strange fact! Perhaps the angelic enquirers ask such questions as thisHow is God just and yet the Justifier of the ungodly? At first it must have been, I think, a wonder that He who said, In the day you eat thereof you shall surely die, could have permitted man to live on and to have a hope of eternal life.

How could He who says that He will by no means clear the guilty yet bestow His favors upon guilty men? Angels wonder as they see how, through the Substitution of Jesus Christ, God can be sternly just and yet abundantly gracious! And while they learn this, they long to discover more of the Truth of God wrapped up in the one great Sacrificethey peer and pry and search and consider and, therefore, the doctrines of the Gospel are spoken of as things which the angels desire to look into.

Now thinkif these glorious spirits who need not to be redeemed intently gaze upon the Redeemer, should not we, also, desire to look into the mysteries of His death? O men and women, is it nothing to you that the Son of God should give His life as a ransom for many? If these spotless ones marvel at that sacred bath of blood by which sin is washed away, will not you, who are covered with defilement, stop awhile to see the Lord whose flowing veins afford such purging? I think if I saw an angel intently gazing upon any object, if I were a passerby, I should stop and look, too. Have you never noticed in the streets that if one person stands still and looks up, or is occupied with gazing into a shop window, others become curious and also look? I would enlist that faculty of curiosity which is within every man and prompt you to search with the angels as they pry into the underlying meaning of the fact and doctrine of Atonement!

They stand at the foot of the Cross ravished, astounded, yes, all Heaven to this day has never ceased its amazement at the dying Son of God made sin for men! And will none of you spare an hour to look this way and see your best Friend? Shall it be that time out of mind we must come into our pulpits and talk of Christ to deaf ears and speak to our fellow men about the Grace which is brought to them, only to find that they treat it as an old wives fable or a story with which they have nothing to do? Ah, my careless Hearer, I wish you were in the same plight as I was in once when I was burdened with a sense of my transgressions. If you felt as I did, you would grab that word, Grace, right eagerly and be delighted with the promise made to faith.

You would make up your mind that if Prophets searched out salvation; if Apostles reported it; if angels longed to know it, you yourself would find it or perish in searching after it! Do you forget that you must have eternal life or you are undone forever? Do not trifle with your eternal interests! Do not be careless where earth and Heaven are in earnest! Prophets, Apostles, angels all beckon you to seek the Lord! Awake, you that sleep! Arise, O sluggish soul! A thousand voices call you to bestir yourself and receive the Grace which has come to you!

We have already gone a long way with this text, rising step by step. We have stood where angels gaze. Now behold another wonderwe rise beyond them to the angels Master. Christ is the substance of this salvation! For what says the text? The Prophets spoke beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. Ah, there is the point! To save men Jesus suffered. The Manhood and the Godhead of Christ endured inconceivable anguish! All through His life our Lord was a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. His was the bravest heart that ever lived and the gentlest spirit that ever breathed, but the most crushed and downtrodden! He went from one end of our heavens to the other like a cloud of sympathy, dropping showers of blessing.

All the trials of His people He carried in His heart and all their sins pressed heavily upon His soulHis daily burden of care for all His people was such as none can sympathize with to the fullest, even though like He they have kept the flock of God. I have sometimes had intense sympathy with MosesI hope I am not egotistical in comparing small things with greatwhen he cried, Why have You afflicted Your servant? And why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You lay the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them, that You should say to me, Carry them in your bosom as a nursing father bears the sucking child, to the land which You swore unto their fathers? I am not able to bear all this people alone because it is too heavy for me.

But what was the care of the tribes in the wilderness on Moses heart compared with the myriads upon myriads that lay upon the heart of Christ, a perpetual burden to His spirit? The sufferings of His life must never be forgotten, but they were consummated by the agonies of His death. There was never such a death! Physically it was equal in pain to the sufferings of any of the martyrs. But its peculiarity of excessive grief did not lie in His bodily sufferingsHis soul-sufferings were the soul of His sufferings! Martyrs are sustained by the Presence of their God, but Jesus cried, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? That cry never came up from the stakes of Smithfield, or from the agonies of the Spanish torture chambers, for God was with His witnesses! But He was not with Christ! Here was the depth of His woe!

Now, I pray you, if you will manifest some sign of thought and softness, remember that if the Son of God became a man so that He might suffer to the death for men, it is astonishing that men should turn deaf ears to the salvation which He accomplished! I hear from His Cross His sad complaint, Is it nothing to you, all you that pass by? Behold and see if there was ever sorrow like My sorrow, which is done to Me. Oh, if you are born of woman and have a heart that has any flesh about it, think well of the salvation, the Grace, which is brought unto you, by the sufferings of the Son of God! One other step remains. It cannot be higherit is on the same level and I beseech you to stand upon it and think a while, you that have thought so little of yourselves and of your God.

It is this. The Holy Spirit is the witness to all this. It was the Holy Spirit that spoke in the Prophets. It was the Holy Spirit who was with those who reported the Gospel at the first. It is the same Holy Spirit who every day bears witness to Christ. Do you not know that we still have miracles in the Christian Church? Scoffers come to us and say, Work a miracle and we will believe you. We work miracles every day! Had you been present at a meeting held here last month you would have heard something not far short of one hundred persons, one after another, assert that by the preaching of the Gospel in this place lately, their lives have been completely changed. In the case of some of these the change is very obvious to all persons acquainted with them.

How was this great change achieved? By the Holy Spirit through the Gospel of your salvation! But I need not quote those special cases. There are many here who would tell you, if this were the time to speak, where they used to spend their Sundays and what was their delight. All things have become new with them. They now seek after holiness as earnestly as they once pursued evil! Though they are not what they want to be, they are not what they used to be. They never thought of purity or goodness, or anything of the kind, but they loved the wages of unrighteousness and now they loathe the things they once loved! I have seen moral miracles quite as marvelous in their line as the healing of a leper or the raising of the dead! This is the witness of the Holy Spirit which He continues to bear in the Church and, by that witness I entreat you to stop and think of the blessed salvation which can work the same miracle in you.

From the first day in which man fellwhen the Holy Spirit, at the gates of Eden presented the Gospel in the first promiseall down the prophetic ages and then by Christ and by His Apostles and onward by all the men whom God has sent, since, to speak with power, the Holy Spirit entreats you to consider Christ and His salvation! To this end He convinces the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment to comethat men may turn unto the salvation of God and live forever! By the Spirit of the living God I entreat you, dear Hearers, to neglect no longer the great salvation which has won the admiration of all holy beings and has the seal of the Triune God upon its forefront!

II. So far I have commended my Lords salvation and now I would desire you, with all this in your minds, to turn to the prayer in the 119th PsalmLet Your mercies come also unto me, O Lord, even Your salvation, according to Your Word. Use the prayer with this intentLord, I have been hearing what Prophets and Apostles and angels think of Your salvation. What Your Son and what Your Spirit think of it. Now let me humbly say what I think of itOh that it were mine! Oh that it would come to me! This, then, is my second head. I would RECOMMEND THE PRAYER OF THE PSALMIST.

I will say about it, first, that it is, in itself, a very gracious prayer, for it is offered on right grounds. Let Your mercies come also unto me. There is no mention of merit or desert. His entreaty is only for mercy. He pleads guilty and throws himself upon the prerogative of the King who can pardon offenders. Are you willing, my dear Hearer, you who have never sought the Saviorare you willing at this moment to stand on that ground and to ask for salvation as the result of mercy? You shall have it on such terms, but you can never be saved until you will acknowledge that you are guilty and submit to Justice.

Observe the plural, Let your mercies come unto me, as if David felt that he needed a double share of it, yes, a sevenfold measure of it! Elsewhere he cried, According unto the multitude of Your tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Our sense of sin leads us to use similar language. Lord, I need much mercy, manifold mercy, multiplied mercy! I need mercy upon mercy! I need forgiving mercy! I need regenerating mercy! I need mercy for the present as well as for the past and I shall need mercy to keep me in the future if I am to be saved at all! Friend, set your plea on that ground! Multiplied sins crave multiplied mercies. Let Your mercies come also unto me, O Lord.

It is a gracious prayer, because it asks for the right thingYour salvationnot a salvation of my own invention, but, Your salvation. Gods salvation is one in which His Divine Sovereignty is revealed and that Sovereignty must be accepted and adored. Do not dispute against Gods salvation, but accept it in its entirety, just as it is revealed. Receive the salvation which the Lord planned in eternitywhich He worked out on Calvary and which He applies to the heart by the Holy Spirit. You need salvation from sinning as well as salvation from Hell and the Lord will give you that. You need salvation from self to God and that, too, He will bestow. Ask for all that the Lord intends by His salvation and includes in it. Let Your mercies come also unto me, even Your salvation.

You see, dear Brothers and Sisters, that the prayer is put in the right form, for it is added, Even Your salvation according to Your Word. He wishes to be saved in the manner which the Lord has appointed. Dear Hearer, where are you? Are you hidden away in the foggy corners? I wish I could get a hold of your hand and speak as a Brother to you. You do not want God to go out of the way of His Word to save you, do you? You are willing to be saved in the Scriptural way, the Biblical way! People nowadays will do anything but keep to the Word of God! They will follow any book but the Bible! Now, pray the Lord to give you the salvation of the Bible in the Bibles own way.

Lord, if Your Word says I must repent, give me Your salvation and cause me to repent! If Your Word says that I must confess my sin, give me Your salvation in the confession of sin! If You say I must trust Christ, Lord, help me, now, to trust Himonly grant me Your salvation according to Your Word. Observe that the whole prayer is conceived and uttered in a humble spirit. It is, Let Your salvation come also unto me. He admits his helplessness. He cannot get at the mercy! He needs it to come to him. He is so wounded and so sick that he cannot put on the plaster nor reach the medicine and, therefore, he seeks the Lord to bring it to him.

He is like the man half dead on the road to Jericho and needs that someone should pour on the oil and wine, for he cannot help himself by reason of his spiritual lethargy and death. Let Your mercies come to me, O Lord. This implies that there is a barrier between him and the mercy. The road appears to be blocked up. The devil intervenes and his fears hedge up the way and he cries to God to clear the road. Lord, let Your mercies come! Did you not say, Let there be light and there was light? So let Your mercy come to me, a poor dying sinner and I shall have it, Lord! But it must come to me by Your power. Lo, here I lie at Hells dark door and feel within my spirit as if the sentence of condemnation were registered in Heaven against me! But let Your mercies come also unto me, O God, even Your salvation, according to Your Word. That is a very gracious prayer.

In the second place this prayer may be supported by gracious arguments. May the Spirit of God help you to plead them. I will suppose some poor heart painfully longing to use this prayer. Here are arguments for you. Pray like this. Say, Lord, let Your mercy come to me, for I need mercy. Do not go on the tack of trying to show that you are good, because mercy will then pass you by. To argue merit is to plead against yourself! Whenever you say, Lord, I am as good as other people. I try to do my best, and so on, you act as foolishly as if a beggar at your door should plead that he was not very badly off, not half so needy as others and neither scantily fed nor badly clothed. This would be a new method of begging and a very bad one!

No, no! State your case in all its terrible truthfulness. Say, O Lord, I feel that nobody in all this world needs Your mercy more than I do! Let my need plead with You! Give me Your salvation. I am no impostor, I am a sinnerlet Your mercy and Your Truth visit me in very deed. Your souls wounds are not such as sham beggars make with chemicalsthey are real soresplead them with the God of all Grace! Your poverty is not that which wears rags abroad and fine linen at homeyou are utterly bankrupt and this you may urge before the Lord as a reason for His mercy.

Next plead thisLord, You know and You have made me to know somewhat of what will become of me if Your mercy does not come to meI must perish, I must perish miserably! I have heard the Gospel and have neglected it. I have been a Sabbath-breaker, even when I thought I was a Sabbath-keeper. I have been a despiser of Christ, even when I stood up and sang His praises, for I sang them with a hypocrites lips. The hottest place in Hell will surely be mine unless Your mercy comes to me. Oh, send that mercy, now. This is good and prevalent pleadinghold on to it.

Then plead, If Your mercy shall come to me, it will be a great wonder, Lord. I have not the confidence to do more than faintly hope it may come, but, oh, if You ever do blot out my sins I will tell the world of it! I will tell the angels of it! Through eternity I will sing Your praises and claim to be, of all the saved ones, the most remarkable instance of what Your Sovereign Grace can do! Do you feel like that, dear Hearer? I used to think if the Lord saved me He would have begun on a new line altogetherthat His mercy would have sent up her song an octave higher than before! In every mans case there will be a conviction that there is a something so special about his guilt that there will be something very special about the mercy which can put that guilt away.

Plead, then, the peril of your soul and the Glory which Grace will gain by your rescue. Plead the greatness of the Grace needed, for Christ delights to do great marvels and His name is Wonderful. Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great. Lord, save me, for I am a nobody and it will be a wonder, indeed, if Your Grace shall visit me. Then you can put this to the good Savior. Tell Him if He will give you His salvation, He will not be impoverished by the gift. Lord, I am a thirsty soul, but You are such a River that if I drink from You there will be no fear of my exhausting Your boundless supply. They put up over certain little nasty, dirty ponds by the roadside, No dogs may be washed here. Pity the dogs if they were!

But no one puts up such a notice on the banks of great, glorious Old Father Thames! You may wash your dogs if you like and his flood will flow on! There is too much of it to be so readily polluted. So is it with the boundless mercy of God! God permits many a poor dog of a sinner to be washed in it and yet it is just as full and efficacious as ever! You need not be afraid of enjoying too much sunlight, for the sun loses nothing by your basking in his beams. So is it with Divine Mercyit can visit you and bless you and remain as great and glorious as ever! Out of the fullness of Christ millions may still receive salvation and He will remain the same overflowing Fountain of Grace! Plead, then, Lord, if such a poor soul as I shall be saved, I shall be made supremely happy, but none of Your attributes or glories shall be one jot the less illustrious! You will be as great and blessed a God as ever.

You may even say, Lord, now that Your Son Jesus has died, it will not dishonor You to save me. Before the atoning Sacrifice it might have stained Your Justice to pass by sin, but now that the Sacrifice is offered, You can be just and yet the Justifier. Lord, none shall say You are unjust if You save even me now that Jesus Christ has bled. Since You have made my salvation possible without infringement of Your Law, I beseech You fulfill the design of the great Sacrifice and save even me! There is another plea implied in the prayer and a very sweet argument it isLet Your mercies come also unto me, O Lord. It meansIt has come to so many before, therefore let it also come unto me. Lord, if I were the only one and You had never saved a sinner before, yet would I venture upon Your Word and promise! Especially would I come and trust the blood of Jesus! But, Lord, I am not the first by many millions. I beseech You, then, of Your great love, let Your salvation come unto me.

You notice in the parable of the prodigal that the forlorn feeder of swine was the only son that had gone astray and consequently the first that ever tried whether his father would receive him. The elder brother had not gone astray and was there at home to grumble at his younger brother. But the poor prodigal son, though he had no instance before him of his fathers willingness to forgive, was bold to try, by faith, his fathers heart! None had trod that way before, yet he made bold to explore it! He felt that he should not be cast out. But when we hear any of you say, I will arise and go to my Father, scores of us are ready to leap out of our seats and cry, Come along, Brother, for we have come and the gracious Father has received us!

I do not know whether the elder brother is here to murmur at a penitent sinner. I am happy to say I have none of his spirit. It will make my heart happy! The bells of my whole nature will ring for joy if I may only bring one of my poor, prodigal brothers back to my great Fathers house! Oh, come along with you and let this be the pleaYou have received so many, O receive me! Cry, Bless me, even me, also, O my Father! The Lord has not come to the end of His mercy. Jesus has not come to the end of His saving work. There is room for you and there will be room for thousands upon thousands until the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door. He has not risen up, nor closed the door as yet and still His mercy cries, Come to Me! Come to Me! Come to Me and he that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.

I will close by assuring you that this blessedly gracious prayer which I have helped to back up with arguments will be answered by our gracious God. Oh, be sure of this! He never sent His Prophets to preach to us a salvation which cannot be ours! He never sent His Apostles to report to us concerning a mere dream! He never set the angels wondering at an empty speculation! He never gave His Son to be a Ransom which will not redeem and He never committed His Spirit to witness to that which will, after all, mock the sinners need! No, He is able to savethere is salvationthere is salvation to be had, to be had now, even now!

We are sitting in the light in this house while a dense fog causes darkness all around, even darkness which may be felt. This is an emblem of the state of those who are in Christthey have light in their hearts, light in their habitations, light in Jesus Christ! O come to Him and find salvation now! May God bring any that have been in darkness into His marvelous light and bring them now and unto His name shall be praise forever and ever! Amen and amen.

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ANGELIC INTEREST IN THE GOSPEL   
NO. 2697

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, OCTOBER 21, 1900.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 25, 1881.

Which things the angels desire to look into.   
1 Peter 1:12.

THE Apostle Peter wrote his first Epistle to a persecuted people, many of whom were in great heaviness through manifold trials. The sufferings of the early Christians are something terrible even to think uponthe world has scarcely ever beheld more relentless cruelty than that which pursued the first servants of our Divine Lord and Master. Peter, therefore, when he wrote to these tried saints, sought to cheer and encourage them. What, then, did he write about? Why, about the Gospel! For there is nothing like the simple Doctrine of Salvation by Redemption to comfort the most distressed spirits.

The chapter from which our text is taken is just as plain as the Gospel itself. Peter here tells the elect strangers that they were begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away. And he also reminds them that they were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. In this Chapter we have all the great central Truths of the GospelElection, Redemption, Regeneration, Effectual Calling, Sanctification and Final Perseverance. Brothers and Sisters, whenever we need consolation, let us never go away from the Gospel to find it! The child of God always finds his best comfort in the things of God. If your comforts can only come to you from worldly society, it is quite clear that you belong to the worldbut if you are one of Gods true children, all that you need to cheer you under the heaviest trial is already provided for you in the Gospel of Christand will speedily be applied to you by the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, if you only seek it at His hands.

Peter here prescribes a remedy for lowness of spirits and for general depression. That remedy is to take a deeper interest in the things of God, to give ourselves more intensely to the consideration and contemplation of them. They are well worthy of all the thought that we can give to them, for if the Prophets, those men with the grandest of human minds, Divinely Inspired, yet had to search deeply to understand Gods Word as revealed to them, there must be something in it that we shall do well to search out! And if the holy angels, those mighty intelligences, do not so much see, as desire to look into, the things of God, there must be some very deep things hidden within the simplicities of the Gospel which you and I ought to search out! If we did search them out, we would be greatly cheered and comforted. Our minds would be taken off those trials which now so often vex us. We would be lifted high above them. We would not travel slowly and painfully over this rough road and have our feet cut with every sharp flintand our spirit pierced with every sore trialbut we would rise, as on eagles wings, and ride on the high places of the earth and rejoice in the Savior who has done such great things for us! We would eat the fat things, full of marrow, which God has provided for those who diligently study His Word and prize it above all earthly treasures.

I am not going to say anything at this time about the high interest which the ancient Prophets took in Gods Word, but I shall confine myself very much to the interest which angels take in it in order that I may stir you up to imitate their example. I want, first, to remind you that angels take an active interest in the Gospel of our salvation. And, secondly, to show you that angels are eager students of itwhich things the angels desire to look into.

I. First, I want to remind you that ANGELS TAKE AN ACTIVE INTEREST IN THE GOSPEL OF OUR SALVATION.   
It is true that they are not interested in it for themselves. They have never sinned and, consequently, they need no atonement and no forgiveness. Doubtless, they have some sort of indirect interest in it which I will not attempt to explain just now, but, certainly, as far as the Gospel brings salvation, healing, pardon, justification and cleansing, angels do not need it. Never having been defiled, they need not to be washed. And being perfect in their obedience, they need not to be forgiven for any shortcomings. And yet they take a deep interest in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ! What, then, shall I say of the madness of those who are defiled by sin and yet have no interest in the Fountain where they can be washed whiter than snow? What shall I say of the fatal folly of those who are guilty and yet take no thought about the method of pardon which God has provided in Christ Jesus, His Son, and our only Savior?   
The angels are not even interested in the Gospel because of its relation to any of their fellows, for fallen angels have no part nor lot in its provisions. When they fell from their first estate, God left them forever without hopeand they live in their rebellion against Him, waiting for the awful day when they shall receive the full recompense of their infamous revolt. There is no mercy for fallen spirits! I see how God exercised His Sovereignty, for when men and angels had both sinned, He passed by the greater sinners and took up the lesser ones. The fallen spirits He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of The Great Day. Yet He looked on men, the creatures of a day, with eyes of pity and compassion and sent His Son to earth, in our nature, that He might redeem us from the wrath which was justly our due! The angels have no direct interest in the death of Christ, or the blood of Christ because of any blessing which will come through Him to any of their former angelic companions. Yet they desire to look into these things. What, then, shall I think of myself, and of you, my Brothers and Sisters, if, being saved, we take little or no interest in the Gospel as the one means of saving our fellow men? Shame upon us if we have less pity for mankind than angels have, for men are our brothers, and nothing can save them but the Gospel of Jesus! Our common humanity ought to make us seek their welfare and we ought to take the deepest imaginable interest in the things which make for the peace of their immortal souls!   
Angels take a deep interest in the Gospel because they observe Gods interest in it. That for which God cares, angels care for at once. That which grieves the Holy Spirit must be grievous to holy angels, too, and that which gladdens the heart of God must also make glad the spirits that bow adoringly around His Throne. The holy ones cry, each one to his fellow, God is glorified in saving sinful men. Our blessed Lord and Leader went down to earth to accomplish the redemption of the fallen and, therefore, let us learn all we can concerning His wondrous work! And wherever there is anything that we can do to help it on, let us stand with outspread wings, eager to fly at the command of God.   
Doubtless, the angels also take an interest in the Gospel because they are full of love. Those pure spirits love as surely as they live, and not only do they love their God, and love one another, but they also love us who were made a little lower than the angels. They have a great affection for usvery much more, I imagine, than we have for them. We are their younger brothers, as it were, and we are, by reason of our flesh and blood, linked to materialism, while they are pure spirits. Yet they do not envy us the love of God, neither do they despise us on account of our faults and follies, though, I think, they must often wonder at us. They must sometimes be ready to ask questions concerning our strange behavior, just as two of them did when Christ had risen from the dead and Mary Magdalene was weeping. Those angels were full of joy because Christ had risen, so they said to her, Woman, why do you weep? What could there be to weep about when Jesus had risen from the dead?! Ah, Beloved, the angels must often be astonished at us and think we are the strangest creatures that can be! Yet they love us and, therefore, they take a great interest in that Gospel which promotes our highest good. They know what we too frequently forgetthat nothing can make us so happy as for us to be holyand that nothing can make us holy but being washed in the blood of Jesus and being renewed by the Holy Spirit. Out of their homage to God and their brotherhood to man, comes that interest which makes them desire to look into the deep things of God and His Gospel.   
The angels have always taken an interest in all that concerns men. Some of them stood at the gate of Eden, with a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep our first father out, should he attempt to force his way back when he had lost his right to all its joy, even as the most loving spirit in the world is still upon the side of justice and believes that God is righteous, even though Paradise is lost, and man is doomed to eat bread in the sweat of his face. They are on mans side, but much more on Gods, and they say, Let God, the ever Just One, be glorified, whatever becomes of the sons of men.   
After that fatal day of the Fall, the angels constantly watched over men here below, and frequently spoke with one and another of them as God sent them with messages of mercy to Abraham, or to Isaac, or to Lot, or to Jacob, or to others of the human race. But there was a great day when, in solemn pomp, the chariots of God, which are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels, came down to Mount Sinai, when the Law of God was proclaimed. The angels were there as the courtiers of the great King, to give additional solemnity to the declaration of the Law of God. That they should have been present on that august occasion shows their interest in the sons of men.   
But I like better to speak to you of their coming to announce the birth of Him of whom we sing, Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given. When that birth, which they had announced, took place, how gladly did they come and hover over Bethlehems fields and sing the grand chorale, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. It was their intense interest in us that made them glad that our Redeemer was born. Then, as we sang at the commencement of this service   
*In all His toils and dangerous paths   
They did His steps attend,   
Oft paused, and wondered how at last   
The scene of love would end.*   
At that notable time when He was tempted in the wilderness, and was with the wild beasts, when the devil had left Him, angels came and ministered to Him. They were always near Him while He was herealways invisibly attendant upon His footsteps. You remember how there appeared unto Him an angel strengthening Him when He was in His agony in the Garden of Gethsemaneit was a wondrous thing that the Son of God should have strength infused into Him by an angelic messenger! With what awestruck interest the angels must have watched our Lord upon the Cross!   
*As on the tottering tree He hung,   
And darkness veiled the sky,   
They saw, aghast, that awful sight,   
The Lord of Glory die!*   
But glad were they to descend to His empty sepulcher, and to enter it, and guard the place where, for a while, the sacred casket of His body had lain. They spoke to His disciples and comforted them by telling them that He had risen from the dead and, all along, they took such interest in everything relating to Him because they recognized in Him the Savior of sinful men   
*They brought His chariot from above, To bear Him to His Throne,   
Clapped their triumphant wings and cried, The glorious work is done!*   
Nor is this all. We know, from Scripture, that they not only watched over the Savior, but they rejoice over penitents. The Lord Jesus has told us that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents. That is to say, there is joy in Gods heart and the angels can see it. They stand in Gods Presence and they can see that God is glad! And we know that they also share that gladness. In the parable of the lost sheep, our Savior represents the shepherd calling together his friends and his neighbors, and saying to them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. So they do, I am surethey rejoice over every rescued one that is brought home upon the shoulders of the Good Shepherd!   
And, Beloved, they watch over every believing soul. This is one of their chief offices, for, are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? That promise which Satan misquoted is true to every child of GodHe shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. They shall bear you up in their hands, lest you dash your foot against a stone. From what spiritual evils they guard us, it is not for me to attempt to tell, nor to try to describe how, often, in mid-air, there are fierce fights between the demons from Hell and the good spirits from Heaven. Or how the prince of the power of the air is baffled and driven back by Michael the archangel as he comes to takes care of the living body of Christ, as once of old he guarded the dead body of Moses. Ah, we little know how much we owe these invisible agents of the ever-blessed God! They are deeply interested in all His children. The parable tells us that Lazarus died, and was carried by the angels into Abrahams bosom. What that expression means, I shall not attempt to explain, but I am quite sure that when we who love the Lord, die, angels will have something to do with our departure and with our introduction into the world of happy spiritsand into the presencechamber of the Lord our God! I like Bunyans account of the pilgrims passing through the river and the shining ones meeting them on the other side, and leading them up the steep ascent into the Celestial City where they see their Masters face with joy, and go no more out forever.

Nor will they have done with us even then, for when we shall be with God eternally shut in, and safe from all danger of falling and sinning, the angels will swell the music of our continual song, for they shall sing, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Yet we shall be able to sing what they cannot, You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and have made us unto our God, kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth.   
Further, these dear attendants of our wandering footsteps here below, these patient guardians of our nightly hours, these angel guides who shall be our companions in death when wife and child and friend can go no farther with usthese glorious beings shall learn from our lips in Heaven the manifold wisdom of God. They will cluster around us amazed and gladdened as, one by one, we stand upon the sea of glassand they will ask us to rehearse again and again the wonders of redeeming love and to tell them what Conversion meant, and what Sanctification meant, and how the power and wisdom and Grace and patience of God were seen in the experience of each one of usand we shall be their joyful teachers, world without end!   
Have I not proved to you that angels take an active interest in the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? And may I not come back to this practical pointdo you, also, take an active interest in the Gospel you in whose nature Christ appearedyou sons of menyou who must be forever lost unless the precious blood of the bleeding Lamb is sprinkled upon you?  
*Is it nothing to you, all you that pass by, Is it nothing to you that Jesus should die?* It was for such as you that He died, even for the guilty sons and daughters of men, for verily He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. He took up men, not angelsshall they, then, be interested in the Gospel, and shall not you, whom it especially concerns, also be interested in it? I have already reminded you that they have no brother angels to be converted by the Gospel. They have no sister angels to be turned to God by the story of Calvary, yet they are deeply interested in the Gospel and also in us! And will not you, my fellow Christians, take a deeper interest in the work of God and in the propagation of the Gospel, when your own flesh and blood must be converted by it, or else must eternally die? Our sisters and brothers, our sons and daughters, our wives and husbands, possibly even our parents, will perish forever unless Jesus Christ is brought to themand they are brought to Him. What are you doing, you careless professors, you who can go calmly to sleep while men and women are being damned? What are you thinking of, you who eat the fat and drink the sweet in the courts of the Lords House and yet never show to the prisoners this way to liberty, nor tell to the dying the good news that, there is life for a look at the Crucified Onenor say to the perishing that there is salvation even for them in Christ Jesus your Lord? Up, up! I charge you by every swiftwinged angel who takes an interest in the Cross of Christ, and in the salvation of men, AWAKE, sons of men! If you may, any way, be the means of saving some, be active in the service of that Savior who gave His all for you! God bless that exhortation to all whom it concerns!   
II. Now we turn to the second point, which is thisthat ANGELS ARE EAGER STUDENTS OF THE GOSPEL, and of all the Truths of God connected with itWhich things the angels desire to look into.   
It is quite certain, then, that angels do not know all that is in the Gospel, for they desire to look into it. All the Gospel is not known to them and I do not think that it is all known to any of us. I have occasionally met with certain brethren who have professed to have the whole of the Gospel condensed into five points of doctrine, so that they could put it all into their waistcoat pocket and carry it there. And they seemed to think that they had not anything more to learn. If one tried to teach them any other Truth of God beside what they already knew, they were angry, for they did not need to know anymore. They are not like the holy angels, for they desire to look into these things. Dr. John Owen was, perhaps, the most profound Divine who ever lived, yet Dr. John Owen could not know, on earth, as much about certain things as angels did! And I should say that, this very day, he still desires to look into the mystery of redeeming love and the Glory of Christ of which he wrote with such wonderful power.   
The Apostle Paul had been converted many years when he wrote the Epistle to the Philippians, yet in it he expressed the longing of his heart that he might know Christ. But did he not know Him? And if he did not, who did? No doubt he felt that there was so much of Christ that he had not known that what he did know amounted to very little. I have heard the word, perfection, used very glibly by some who seemed to me to know little of its meaning. But will any sane man claim that he has attained to perfection in knowledge? To the Corinthians, Paul wrote, If any man thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. The mystery of Redemption was hidden in Christ from eternity, and it was only made known to the Church or even to the angels gradually. They do not yet know everything. Concerning His Second Coming, our Lord said to His disciples, But of that day and hour knows no man, no, not the angels of Heaven, but My Father only.   
The devil also does not know everything. I am sure that Satan did not know that Christ came into the world to redeem men by dying for them, or else he would never have stirred them up to put Him to death. He would have been far too cunning for thathe would have tried, if possible, to keep Christ alive so that we might not have been redeemed by Him. The devil does not know as much as he thinks he knows, even now. And, often, he is outwitted by a simple-hearted child of God who knows how to believe in God, and is brave enough to do the right thing. Neither men, nor Prophets, nor angels, nor devils know all about the Gospel! They need to still go on studying, meditating and contemplating, as the holy beings before the Throne of God are doingwhich things the angels desire to look into.   
But, Brothers and Sisters, though they do not yet know all about Christ and His Gospel, they want to know all they can. They have many other subjects to study. There are all the worlds that God has made, and possibly they have liberty to range over them all, yet I do not read with reference to the marvels of astronomy, which things the angels desire to look into. Angels doubtless know much more than all our scientific men do concerning the former ages of this world. They could tell much about the various formations and strata of which geologists talk, yet I do not find it recorded that the angels have any particular desire to look into those things. When God created the world, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. They have oftentimes admired the Providential arrangements of God and praised the wise Ruler who guides all things with Infinite Wisdom. But now their chief contemplations seem to be fixed on Christ and His Gospel!   
Just notice two or three passages of Scripture. Turn first to Exodus 25:20, where we read concerning the cherubim, who belong to one order of angels, The cherubim shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the Mercy Seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another, toward the Mercy Seat shall the faces of the cherubim be toward the Mercy Seat, as if their eyes were continually fixed upon the redemption of Christ, the Propitiation worked out by His Sacrifice. In Daniels day these blessed spirits took the greatest conceivable interest in knowing all they could about our redemption. If you turn to Daniel 8:13, you can read what that man of God wrote. Then I heard one saintone holy onespeaking, and another holy one said unto that certain holy one which spoke, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation? How long?that was the question which the holy ones asked long before Christ descended to earth! Read also Daniel 12:5Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood two others, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?   
They asked again and again, How long? All their thoughts were concentrated upon the things of God and they desired to look into them. Now I want you to remember, in order that it may humble us, that angels have very keen intellects. I believe that they far excel us in their prayers of thought and yet, though they have learned so much about the Gospel, they do not pretend to have come any further than thisthey desire to look into it. You and I, perhaps, suppose that we know all about the Gospel and that we do not need to have hours of study, and thought, and prayer, and the unction of the Holy Spirit. Poor miserable fools! Angels, who are vastly superior to us in intelligence, have gone no further than to have the desire to learn and to know. I am afraid that many of you have not got as far as that. It is a grand thing to desire to look into these thingsit proves that we already know something of their worth when we desire to know more.   
Remember, also, that the intellects of angels have never been warped by prejudice. There is not a man among us who is not prejudiced to some extent. Our parents warped us in one direction and our companions have warped us another way and we have, all of us, the propensity to take a one-sided view of things, even though we may be perfectly ignorant of the bias and, sometimes, this prejudice of ours prevents us from seeing clearly. But it is not so with the angels. There is no beam, nor even a mote, in their eyes! Their knowledge is not infinite, but it is amazing knowledge as far as it goes. Yet even they see not all that there is in the Gospel, for, of it, as of the love of God, it can truly be said

*The first-born sons of light   
Desire in vain its depths to see.   
They cannot reach the mystery,   
The length, and breadth, and height!*   
Then, again, the angels have been long looking into these things. I know not what the age of the angels may be. We know nothing of any creation of angels since the creation of the world. In the long ages before man trod this earth, angels had begun to think of looking into the wonders of Gods Grace. Yet, after thousands of years, they do not fully comprehend the mysteries of redeeming love. Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, the Gospel is a boundless thing, even as your ruin was infinite and horrible beyond conception. And woe to the man who tries to make out that there is but a little Hell, and a little God, and but little wrath of God! As surely as your overthrow was inconceivably terrible, so the designs of God for your redemption and your exaltation in Christ are inconceivably magnificent! It does not yet appear what we shall be. Some of us have very large expectations of what God means to make even of His creatures who are now cooped up in flesh and blood, but our highest anticipations will probably be far exceeded by the glorious reality! Even angels do not yet fully know, after all their study, what the mighty love of God has done and will yet do for us!   
Do not forget, too, dear Friends, that angels are not subject to such infirmities as we are. I know that I have forgotten a great deal more than I know, and I suppose that most of you have done the same. And when we have learned a thing, we are often like people who take up a handful of waterit is soon all gone. What leaky sieves our memories are! Angels, however, have no such failure of mind. They have never sinned and, therefore, from much of our infirmity, they must be altogether free. Yet, though far superior to us in this respect, this is the position they have reachedthey stand over the Mercy Seat, with wings outstretched, and with their eyes continually fixed upon that token of the Propitiation, desiring to look into it! That is where you and I also standif we are truly humble, we feel that this is as far as we have come as yet.   
Now, let us enquireWhat are the things which the angels desire to look into? I can only refer very briefly to them.   
They are, first, the Incarnation, life, and death of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The way in which God could be just, and yet justify the ungodly. That sacred art by which the suffering of the Law-Giver made a sufficient recompense to the offended Law of God. The wondrous power of those sufferings God-ward and manwardhow these sufferings have broken mens hearts and separated them from their sins. How they have given them joy and peace and united them forever to their God. You and I have only seen the sparkle on the surface of the crimson sea of Redemptionwe cannot understand the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ our Lordso let us still desire to look into it, as the angels do.   
Next, they desire to know something concerning the Resurrection of Christ. How do you know that? you ask. Why, the verse before the one containing our text speaks of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. So angels love to think of Christ as risen from the dead, of Christ ascended, and of Christ yet to come in His Glory. They desire to gaze into that mystery and to learn how the glorious God can become yet more glorious by taking upon Himself our nature and so magnifying His Grace above all His name, by redeeming fallen men, and by lifting them up into communion with God.   
Angels desire to look into all the mystery of human heartshow they are fallen, how they are regenerated, how they are preserved, how they are sanctified, how they are strengthened, how they are taught, how they are perfected. There is a wonderful field for their inspection, there, in the work of the Holy Spirit upon the sons and daughters of Adam by virtue of the death of Christ!   
And angels want also to know what God is going to do with this poor world. It is an awful problem to us and so it is to them, I expect. Can you make this world out? Did you ever try to understand it? It is a dreadful nut for anyone to crackall these millions of men continually dying without God and without Christand without hope. What are to be the eternal issues of it all? How will it come out that God is glorified at the last when such multitudes perish? There are some Brothers and Sisters who think they know all about this mysterythey have a philosophy which explains it all. I have no such philosophy, nor do I wish to have. I sometimes found, when I was a child, that it was a pleasant thing for me to be with my father and to hear him talk even when I did not fully understand what he was talking about. And so I find it a blessed thing to get near to God and to see what He is doing, even when I do not know what He is doing, for I am perfectly satisfied that He cannot do anything that is wrong! Still, angels and men may join in the common desire to look into the wonderful working of Gods Providence and Grace.   
But the angels also desire to look into the glory that shall follow. What is the glory that is yet to come to those spirits of just men made perfect who, as yet, have not their glorified bodies, but are waiting for them until the resurrection trumpet shall sound? What will be the glory of that moment when, in the twinkling of an eye, the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and the living shall be changed? And what will be the glory of that dread hour when Heaven and earth shall gather before the last tribunal and, on the Great White Throne, the Judge shall sit, and all born of woman shall be gathered before Him to give an account of the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good, or whether they have been evil? And what glory it will be, before that day has closed, when over all the world of sinners the waves of Gods Infinite Wrath shall roll, and they shall sink to the bottom like a stone, never to taint the earth again! And what a glory it will be when all those on the Kings right hand, all the blood-washed, all the redeemed, shall stream up to their everlasting thrones to sit forever with their conquering Leader, and reign eternally, peers in the palace of the King, forever adoring, forever blessing His holy name! Oh, what glory will be there! I will not attempt to describe it, for even the angels, who are in Heaven, desire to look into this mystery! Even they scarcely know what will be the glory of the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven.   
You know that the Greeks had, every now and then, a great gathering of all the nation in what they called their general assembly. Everyone was represented therepoet and philosopher, tragedian and military man. All the glories of Greece were there. Well, there is to come a general assembly, an ecumenical council of the entire Church of God. And when they shall all be there on the plains of HeavenProphets, confessors, Apostles, martyrs, humble men and women from every part of the worldnot one of the redeemed will be absent! They will all be there, with their King in the midst of them, and what a shout of victory, what hallelujahs, what songs of joy, what triumphant jubilates shall welcome that glad day! By Gods Grace, I shall be there. My Hearer, will you be there? Are you sure of it? If so, let the glad anticipation of it rejoice your heart even now, though you do not know what the full realization of it will be, for even angels, who have seen the lesser gatherings of the saints, have not yet seen the one universal assemblythe gathering of all the clans, the coronation of the Prince, the marriage of the bride, the Lambs wife and all the Glory of Godand the splendor of the infinite meridian brilliance that will be displayed before the wondering eyes of Gods elect saints and Gods elect angels! They do not know what it is to be, nor do you, but we, as well as they, desire to look into it, and I hope we all desire to be there!   
Now let me close by saying that as the angels are such deep students of the things of God, let us try to be the same. I wish that I could stir up all my dear friends who are saved to try to look more closely into the things of God. I am afraid that we are going to have a greater proportion of superficial Believers than we have had in the past, for we have so many people who are always hallooing about their religion. God bless them and let them halloo as loudly as they like, but I wish that they had something more to halloo about. There are some who are always crying, Believe, believe, believe! But, for the life of them, they could not tell you what it is that you have to believe. And many shout, Hallelujah! who do not know what Hallelujah! means, or they would be far more reverent towards that blessed word, Praise to Jehovah! We want, Brothers and Sisters, that you who are saved should seek to know how and why you were saved! You who have a hope of salvation should know the reason for the hope that is in you!   
Study the Scriptures much. In the Puritan days, there used to be a number of contemplative Christians who shut themselves up to study the Word of the Lord, and so became masters of theology. Perhaps some were not so practical in winning souls as they ought to have been, but now we are getting to the opposite pole of the compass. We have many who are rushing about and professing to feed the peoplebut what do they give them? Where is your bread, Sir? Oh, I could not let these poor people wait. But why do you not go and fill your basket? You have nothing in it. Oh, I had not time to do that. I wanted to go and give them Give them what? Give them half of the nothing that you have brought? That will do them no good at all!   
There is nothing like having good seed in the basket when you go out to sow. And when you go to feed the hungry, there is nothing like having good bread to give them. And that cannot be the case,

spiritually, unless we are diligent students of the Word, unless we search the deep things of God! By all means let us advance our forces into the recesses of the enemys country, but let us secure our communications and let us have a good firm basis of Scriptural knowledge, otherwise mischief will come to our scattered powers. By all means be enthusiastic. By all means be intense, but you cannot keep a fire burning without fuel, and you cannot keep up real intensity and enthusiasm without a knowledge of Christ and an understanding of the things of God, which things the angels desire to look into.  
Now, dear Friends, those of you who have nothing to do with this matter, I would like you to go away thinking that if an angel cares about these things, and if an angel studies them, it is time that you did the same. I know that you are going to take your degree at the University, good Sir, and I am very glad that you are likely to secure a good position in life. But I hope that you are not so foolish as to think that you know more than the angels! And if they desire to look into these things, permit me to ask you to study your Bible as well as all the other classics, for, after all, this is the best classic! I know, dear Sir, that you are a masterly thinker. You can make a great many hypotheses and pull them to pieces again, but I wish, for once, that you would consider this hypothesis that, perhaps, you are not as wise as the angels. I should not wonder if that hypothesis should prove to be true!   
I have often noticed that people who rail at the Gospel do not know what it is. Many speak against the Bible, but if they were asked, Did you ever read it? they would have to answer, No. He who studies Gods Word is usually conquered by ithe falls in love with it and feels the power of it. So, as the holy angels desire to look into it, look into it, yourself, good Sir, and, on your looking there, may God give you to see Jesus, for all who look unto Him shall be saved forever! May you be one of that blessed company, for His dear names sake! Amen.

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HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK304, 290, 853. PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1909 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A SEASONABLE EXHORTATION

NO. 1909

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, JULY 11, 1886, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end for the Grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.   
1 Peter 1:13.

To read the whole chapter is most helpful to the understanding of our text. If we have studied it carefully, we must have said to ourselves, How full of their Lord were the minds of these holy writers! Peter can scarcely write a verse without an allusion to the Lord Jesus Christ. He was not only, Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, but you can see that his heart was steeped and saturated in memories of his Masterhe could hardly get through a sentence without some allusion to the death, the Resurrection, or the Second Coming of his beloved Lord. Oh that my ministry might always be of the same sort, dripping with the holy unction of the Saviors name! Brethren, may your conversations and your lives be full of the Lord Jesus Christ, that men may take knowledge of youthat you have been with Jesus and have learned of Him.

A second thought will have occurred to youHow ardently these men expected the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ! Peter was continually speaking of it and so was his beloved Brother, Paul. They hoped that Christ might come while they were yet alivethey evidently looked upon His Advent as very near. They were not mistaken in this last belief. It is very near. A long time has passed, you say? I answer, By no manner of means! Two thousand years is not a long time in the count of God, nor in reference to so grand a business! If a thousand years is with God as one day, if the Lord does not come for the next 20,000 years, we shall not be truthfully able to say that He delays His coming, for with a history of which the chief fact is the death of Christ, there may well be due pause and ample time for working out its infinite problems. We are dealing with eternal things and what are ages? Let us patiently wait. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness. Let us persevere in the same belief which filled the minds of the early Believers that Jesus will come, that He may come at any timeand that He will surely come quickly! Brothers and Sisters, before the word which now proceeds from my lips shall have reached your ear the Lord may come in His Glory! Be you as men that look for His coming at any moment.

It is equally noticeable that while Apostolic men looked for the coming of Christ, they looked for it with no idea of dread, but, on the contrary, with the utmost joy! In this chapter Peter sets forth the glorious Advent of our Lord as an event to be hoped for with eagerness. He speaks of the Grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. It was to him, therefore, not a day of terror and of thunder and overwhelming confusion, but a day of the consummation of the work of Grace, a period in which Glory should crown the Grace received through the first manifestation of the Lord! It was all joy to the early Believers to think of the Lords appearing. The falling stars, the darkened sun, the blood-red moon, the quivering earth, the skies rolled up like an outworn vestureall these things had no horror for them since Jesus was, thus, coming. Though all creation should be on a blaze and the elements should melt with fervent heat, yet Jesus was coming and that was enough for them the Bridegroom of their souls was on His way and this was rapture to their expectant spirits!

Observe also, once more, how constantly they were urging this as a motive! Peter never holds it out as a mere matter of speculation, nor exclusively as a ground of comfort, but he is constantly using the Lords glorious appearing as the grand motive for action, for holiness, for watchfulness! Our text is a case in pointTherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end for the Grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. My Brothers and Sisters, let us not set aside a Truth of God which is evidently meant for our stimulus, our strength and our sanctificationbut let us receive it into our hearts and pray that God may bless it to our practical profiting in all time to come.

I intend to handle the text with special view to the present time. It seems to me that there never was a text more appropriate for any day than this one for the time now passing. It begins, as you notice, with girding up the loins of your mind. These are days of great loosenessI see great laxity of doctrinal beliefand gross carelessness in religious practice everywhere! Christian people are doing, today, what their forefathers would have loathed! Multitudes of professors are but very little different from worldlings. Mens religion seems to hang loosely about them, as if it did not fit themthe wonder is that it does not drop off them! Men are so little braced up as to conscientious conviction and vigorous resolve that they easily go to pieces if assailed by error or temptation. The teaching necessary for today is thisGird up the loins of your mind, brace yourselves up! Pull yourselves togetherbe firm, compact, consistent, determined! Do not be like quicksilver which keeps on dissolving and running into fractionsdo not fritter away life upon trifles, but live to purpose, with undivided heart and decided resolution.

These are equally days in which it is necessary to say, be sober. We are always having some new fad or another brought out to infatuate the unstable. Very good but very weak-minded people are apt to make marvelous discoveries and to cry them up as if they had found the philosophers stone! In my short time I have heard, Lo here! and I have listened. And, Lo there! and I have listenedthe call has come from a third, fourth, fifth, sixth quarter in quick succession and, after all, there was nothing worth a thought! The whole world was going to be enlightened by some new light which Peter and Paul never sawsomething far superior to anything known by any of the saints or sages of the Church! But the grand illumination has not yet come. Be sober, keep your feet; possess your souls; do not be carried away with every wind of doctrine! Do not be little babies, to believe everything that is told you, whether it is a ghost story or a fairy tale. Be soberquit yourselves like men that have their wits about them. A very necessary word is this in times when everybody seems excited and some are so bewildered that they do not know their head from their heels! Crowds are prepared to follow any kind of foolery, whatever it may be, as long as it is advocated by clever men and is made to tickle their fancy. Do but shout loudly enough and many will answer! Do but set open the door and beckon and they will rush in, whatever the entertainment may be! Brothers and Sisters, be sober, and judge for yourselves.

Nor is the third exhortation at all unnecessary Hope to the end. Certain of us have to confess that the outlook appears to us very dark and dismal. Our surroundings seem full of fear and we are apt to grow despondent, if not almost despairing. Wisely, then, does bold Peter say to us, Hope to the end. You who love the Truth of God, do not despair of its success! You who hold to the good old ways, do not dream that everybody will desert them! Do not give way to distrust as to the issues of the conflict. Be so hopeful as to be calm mid the bewildering cry, confident of victory.

Put these three exhortations into onepull yourselves together, be steady, and be hopeful. There you have the practical run of the text. I desire earnestly that, by Gods Spirit, we may carry it into practice from this day on and always.

In asking your attention to the text, I notice, first, an argument Therefore. Secondly, an exhortationGird up the loins of your mind; be sober, and hope to the end. And thirdly, an expectationhope to the end for the Grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

I. First, then, here is AN ARGUMENT, indicated by therefore. True religion is not unreasonableit is common sense set to heavenly music. Albeit that true religion may be above reason, it is never contrary to reason, but if we had the reason of God, our reason would teach us what His Holy Spirit has revealed. Pure religion is pure truthGod help us to be sure of this! Holiness is also a direct logical inference from Revelation. I like to notice the Epistles with their, therefores and, wherefores. If you read the First Epistle of Peter, you have in this verse, therefore, and in the 18th verse, forasmuch, and in the 22nd verse, seeing then. The second chapter begins with, therefore. The sixth verse has its wherefore; the seventh its, therefore, and the rest of the chapter is studded with the argumentative word, for. Peter might seem to be too impetuous to be argumentative, but it is clear, to him, godliness was a matter of argumenthe saw a distinct connection between the Doctrines of Grace and a holy life! Here in our text he says, Therefore gird up the loins of your mind.

Will you kindly follow me while I run over his argument? I shall have to give you only an outline of it. Here it is.   
He begins by saying, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. See, Brothers and Sisters, you are elected to a very high privilege! You are chosen of God from before the foundation of the world, out of His free favor, that you should be a sanctified, obedient and cleansed people! Therefore, since God has chosen you to this, do not give way to the world, but gird up your loins to contend with it! Be not carried away with every novelty, be sober. Do not be downcast and dispirited, but bravely hope. Shall the elect of God be timorous? Shall those who are chosen of the Most High give way to despair? God forbid! There is an argument, then, in the first and second verses, forcibly supporting the precepts of the text. If we had time to elaborate it, we should see that it well behooves the elect of God to choose his service resolutely, to abide in it steadfastly and hope for its reward with supreme confidence.   
But next, Peter declares that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. O you begotten of God, see that you live as such! You are twice-born men! Live not the low life of the merely natural man. You are of the blood royal, you are descended from the King of Kingsdegrade not your descent! You are born, not to death, as you were at your first birth, but unto life! Though you pass through the grave, you shall not remain there. The morgue is no home for your bodyyou shall come up out of the grave, for you are begotten again unto a hope most full of life by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Therefore, gird up your loins! If it is so that there is this new life in you, a life eternal as the life of God, then be not cast down! Pull your belt close about you! Keep yourself free from the oppressive cares and temptations of the world and stand with holy hope, expecting the coming of your Lord from Heaven! That is a good argument, is it not? Your election and your regeneration call you to holy living!   
Further, the Apostle goes on to say that you are heirs of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fades not away, reserved in Heaven for you. For you, the harp of gold! For you, the starry crown, the endless victory, the sight of the King in His beauty! For you, the sitting upon the Throne of Jesus, even as He has overcome and has sat down with His Father upon His Throne! Courage, then, Brethren, if this is your destiny! Within a month you may be in Heaven! If within a brief period you shall be exalted to share the rest of your Redeemer, do not be cast down, nor overwhelmed with trouble, nor dismayed by the abounding of sin, nor even by your own personal temptations. Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end, for your end must be glorious! Good argument, is it not?   
Then he goes on to say that you are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. God Himself surrounds you as with a wall of fire. Until Omnipotence can be vanquished, until Immutability can be changed, until the Immortal God can die, not one of His chosen people shall be destroyed! Kept by the power of God, what power can destroy us? Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, be brave and confident. Shall such a man as I flee? Kept by the power of God, shall I tremble? If the power of God keeps me, shall I reel to and fro and stagger like a drunken man? If the power of God keeps me, shall I be hopeless? Shall I speak like one that has no hereafter to rejoice in? It cannot be so! If God keeps us, we will keep our hope even to the end. Is not that a good argument?   
Further, the Apostle goes on to say that we may be passing through necessary trial, but it is only for a little while. Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if necessary, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it is tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. See, Beloved, the Apostle declares that you must be tried even as gold must be put into the furnaceyou have faith and faith must be testedit is according to its nature and Divine purpose! The faith of Abraham was sharply tried and so must the faith of all Believers. That your religion may be really solid metal and not an imitation of it, or a mere gilded bauble, you must be tried!   
Your Master was triednot without fighting did He win His crown! Not without labor did He enter into His reward. There is a necessity for our present affliction. God has a design in itthat He may have praise and Glory and honor at the appearing of His dear Sona praise, Glory and honor in which we shall share! Come, then, Brethren, if this fire is to be passed through, let us gird up our loins to dash through it! Let us not fear, for the Lord has said, When you pass through the fire I will be with you, you shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon you. My Brethren, if for a little time we must be tried, let us set our faces like flints to bear the trial. Let us not be intoxicated with sorrow or fear. Since God has a grand design in it, let us bow ourselves to His Divine will and only ask that His holy design may be fully answered. Let us hope to be sustained in the trial and sanctified as the result of itand let no unbelieving fear cast a cloud over our sky. Is not this a good argument?   
Nor is this all. He tells us that even while we are in trial we are still full of joy. Read the eighth verse concerning, Jesus Christ, whom, having not seen, you love; in whom, though now you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Beloved, we who love the Lord have our joy even in our present adversity! We have two heavensa Heaven here and a Heaven hereafter! Jesus is with us and this is Heavenwe are soon to be with Jesus and that is another Heaven! Though sometimes cast down, we are glad at heart   
*I would not change my blessed estate   
For all that earth calls good or great.*   
Give me but the company of the sweet Lord Jesus and I ask no greater happiness! Yes, let me go back to my bed and my pain if I may have Jesus there! Better to lie in a dungeon and pine on bread and water with Christs company than to sit in a parliament of kings and be their emperor and be without the Lord! Saints find everything in Christ when they have nothing elseand they equally find everything in Him when earthly comforts are multiplied! Beloved, if it is so, then let us gird up the loins of our mind, be sober and hope to the end! He that is with us now and makes all our sorrows work for good will be with us even to the end! Come life, come death, our Lords Presence provides us with an all-sufficiency. If His Presence shall go with us and He will give us peace, we need not stipulate as to the road. Therefore let us not be dismayed, nor even think of doubting. Is not this a good argument?   
Once morethe Apostle goes on to say that the Gospel which we believe and which we teach, and for which we are ready to suffer and even to dieis a Gospel that comes to us with the sanction of the Prophets. The Holy Spirit moved upon those choice spirits so that they spoke to us concerning the sufferings of Christ and the Glory which should follow. It seems to me, Brothers and Sisters, that with such men as Moses and David, Isaiah and Jeremiah to support our faith, we need not be ashamed of our company, nor tremble at the criticisms of the moderns! We ought, rather, to gird up the loins of our mind and give our whole soul to the proclamation of a Gospel which is rendered venerable by the testimony of inspired men of all ages! Be sober and steadfast in the belief of the old faith! Never be moved by anything that modern rationalism or ancient unbelief may have to say! For not only do the Prophets assure us that we follow no cunningly-devised fable, but the angels stand gazing into it with strong desire to know more of it! The daily study of cherubim and seraphim is the Revelation of God in Christ. I tell you, Sirs, that the Gospel which, today, is hacked in pieces by the wise men of this world who tell us that they have found out something more in harmony with growing enlightenment, is still the admiration of every holy one who walks yon golden streets, or waits before the burning Throne of God! Still do angels and principalities and powers admire the mystery of the Incarnate God and the substitutionary Atonement made for men by the crucified Lord! They never cease to wonder and adore concerning the glorious Gospel of the blessed God! Standing, then, side by side with Prophets, looking with intent gaze to the same Object which fixes the attention of angels, we are not abashed by ridicule, nor disquieted by opposition! We stand fast, as upon a rock, girding up the loins of our mind and hoping to the end! There again is a right good argument. Is it not so?

II. I beg you, dear Friends, to follow me to the next head of discourse, namely, THE EXHORTATION. The exhortation is a tripletGird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end.   
The first exhortation, Gird up the loins of your mind, sounds very sweet in my ears. I do not know whether it raises echoes in your minds, as it does in mine. I fancy that Peter had a noticeable habit of pulling his garments together. I read of him that he, girt his fishers coat unto him, for he was stripped. Almost everybody has some personal peculiarity and mannerism. And it may have been the way of Peter to be often tightening his belt. Hence the Saviorand here is the music of the text to mesaid to him by the sea, after He had said, Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me?When you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would; but when you shall be old, you shall stretch forth your hands and another shall gird you and carry you where you would not. This spoke he, signifying by what death he should glorify God.   
That word, gird, while it had something to do with Peters old habit, is now sanctified by that blessed word which his Master had given him. Turning to the Lords people, whom he desires to feed, he says to them, Gird up the loins of your mind. My Master talked of my girding my loins and of my being girt. I say now to you, Gird up the loins of your mind. Do you not think he borrowed the expression from the Lord Jesus? I think he did.   
Moreover, he was writing to Hebrew strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. May he not have had ringing in his ears for these Hebrews, the words of Moses to their fathers when they were strangers in Egypt? They were to eat the Passover with their loins girded and their staves in their hands. Thus would Peter have his brother strangers live in expectation of their complete deliverance and Home-going which was drawing near. I detect an echo of Egypt and the Paschal supper in this word.   
Or did Peter wish them to be ready to rejoice in the great blessing which was soon to come to them? Were they to be ready to leap and run for joy? We read of Elijah, that when he heard the sound of an abundance of rain, he girded himself and ran before Ahabs chariotand so when we hear of the Grace that is to be revealed at the coming of our Lord, we are ready to run without weariness and walk without fainting! Oh that every servant of God would gird up his loins to run and meet his Masters chariot, for the King is on His way! He comes! He comes! Go forth to meet Him. Meeting Him, it is but fit that you should be found as servants prepared to do His bidding and run on His errands.   
The exact meaning of the metaphor, Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, is to be found in the form of Oriental dress, which requires the use of a belt and the girding of it tightly, lest the garments should entangle the feet of the traveler, or otherwise hinder his action.   
Gird up the loins of your mind. My Brethren, that certainly teaches us, in the first place, earnestness. A man going to work tucks up his sleeves and tightens his robes. He has something to do which demands all his strength and, therefore, he cannot afford to have anything hanging loosely about him to hinder him. We brace ourselves for a supreme effortand the Christian life is always such. We must always be in earnest if we would be disciples of our earnest Lord.   
Does it not also mean preparedness? When a man has girt his garments about him, he is ready for his work. A true Believer should be ready for suffering or serviceready, indeed, for anything. A servant standing with his loins girt signifies that whatever the message may be from his Master, he is ready to deliver it. Whatever the errand, he is ready to run upon it. He only needs the word and he will not hesitate, but will obey at once. This is the position which Christian people should always occupy you should be earnestly prepared for the will of the Lord, let it be what it may. The future is unknown to you, but you are in a fit condition to meet it, whatever form it may assume.   
But the figure means more than this, does it not? It means determination and hearty resolution. The man who girds himself up for a work means that he is resolved to do it at once. He has made up his mindno shilly-shallying remains with him, no hesitancy, no questioning, no holding backhe is set upon his course and is not to be moved from it. You will never get to Heaven, any of you, by playing at religion! There will be no climbing the hill of the Lord without effort; no going to Glory without the violence of faith. I believe that the ascent to Heaven is still as Bunyan described ita staircase, every step of which will have to be fought for. He heard sweet singers on the roof of the palace singing   
*Come in! Come in!   
Eternal Glory you shall win.*   
Many had a mind to enter the palace and win that eternal Glory, but then, at the doorway stood a band of warlike men, with drawn swords, to wound and kill every man that ventured to enter! Therefore many who would have liked to have walked on the top of the palace did not care for so dangerous an enterprisethey desired the end but not the way to it! At last there came one with a determined countenance and he said to the writer with the inkhorn by his side, Set down my name, Sir. And when his name was duly recorded, he drew his sword and rushed upon the armed men with all his might! It was a fierce conflict, but he meant to conquer or die, and he did conquer! He cut a lane through his enemies and, by-and-by, he, too, was heard singing with the rest   
*Come in! Come in!   
Eternal Glory you shall win.*   
By conflict throughout a whole life we come to our restthere is no other way. You cannot go round to a back door and enter into Heaven by stealth! You must fight if you would reign! Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind.   
Once more, the figure teaches us that our life must be concentrated. Gird up the loins of your mind. We have no strength to spare. We cannot afford to let part of our force leak away. We need to bring all our faculties to bear upon one point and exert them all to one end. Much can be done by concentration. The rays of the sun are warm, but if you collect them into a focus, by a magnifying glass, you produce a fire which otherwise you could not find in them. Concentrate your faculties upon faith in Jesus! Concentrate your emotions upon the love of Jesus! Concentrate your whole being upon the Glory of Jesus! You will accomplish marvels if you do this. A man who is all over the place is nowhere, but he whose life is one and indivisible, is strongand his influence will be felt in the service of his Master.   
I cannot stay long upon one point, though there is so much to be said. The second exhortation isBe sober. And does not that mean, first, moderation in all things? Do not be so excited with joy as to become childish. Do not grow intoxicated and delirious with worldly gain or honor. On the other hand, do not be too much depressed with passing troubles. There are some who are so far from sobriety that if a little goes wrong with them, they are ready to cry, Let me die. No, no!   
Be sober. Keep the middle wayhold to the golden mean. There are many persons to whom this exhortation is most necessary. Are there not men around us who blow hot today and cold tomorrow?their heat is torrid, their cold, arctic! You would think they were angels from the way they talk one day, but you might think them angels of another sort from the manner in which they act at other times. They are so high up, or so low down, that in each case they are extreme. Today they are carried away with this and the next carried away with that. I knew a Christian man right well to whom I was accustomed to use one salutation whenever I saw him. He was a good man, but changeable. I said to him, Good morning, Friend! What are you now? He was once a valiant Arminian, setting young people right as to the errors of my Calvinistic teaching. A short time after, he became exceedingly Calvinistic, himself, and wanted to screw me up several degrees! But I declined to yield. Soon he became a Baptist and agreed with me on all points, so far as I know. This was not good enough and, therefore, he became a Plymouth Brother! And after that he went to the church from which he originally set out. When I next met him, I said, Good morning, Brother, what are you now? He replied, That is too bad, Mr. Spurgeon, you asked me the same question last time. I replied, Did I? But what are you now? Will the same answer do? I knew it would not. I would earnestly say to all such Brethren, Be sober. Be sober. It cannot be wise to stagger all over the road in this fashion! Make sure of your footing when you stand. Make doubly sure of it before you shift!   
To be sober means to have a calm, clear head, to judge things after the rule of right and not according to the rule of mob. Be not influenced by those who cry loudest in the street, or by those who beat the biggest drum. Judge for yourselves as men of understanding. Judge as in the sight of God with calm deliberation.   
Be sober, that is, be clear-headed. The man who drinks and thus destroys the sobriety of his body is befogged, muddled and has lost his way. Ceasing to be sober, he makes a fool of himself. Do not commit this sin spiritually. Be especially clear-headed and calm as to the things of God. Ask that the Grace of God may so rule in your heart that you may be peaceful and serene and not troubled with idle fear on one side or with foolish hope on the other.   
Be sober, says the Apostle. You know the word translated, be sober, sometimes means, be watchful. And, indeed, there is a great kinship between the two things. Live with your eyes open. Do not go about the world half asleep. Many Christians are asleep. Whole congregations are asleep! The minister snores theology and the people in the pews nod in chorus. Much sacred work is done in a sleepy style. You can have a Sunday school and teachers and children can be asleep. You can have a tractdistributing society, with visitors going round to the doors all asleep! You can do everything in a dreamy way if so it pleases you. But says the Apostlebe watchful, be alive! Brothers and Sisters, look alive! Be so awakened by these grand arguments with which we have plied you already, that you shall brace yourselves up and throw your whole strength into the service of your Lord and Master!

Finally, let us hope to the end. Never despair; never even doubt. Hope when things look hopeless. A sick and suffering Brother rebuked me the other day for being cast down. He said to me, We ought never to show the white feather, but I think you do, sometimes. I asked him what he meant and he replied, You sometimes seem to grow desponding and low. Now I am near to die, but I have no clouds and no fears. I rejoiced to see him so joyous and I answered, That is right, my Brother, blame me as much as you please for my unbelief, I richly deserve it. Why, he said, you are the father of many of us! Did you not bring me and my friend over yonder to Christ? If you get low in spirit after so much blessing, you ought to be ashamed of yourself! I could say no other than, I am ashamed of myself and I desire to be more confident in the future.   
Brethren, we must hope and not fear. Be strong in holy confidence in Gods Word and be sure that His cause will live and prosper. Hope, says the Apostle. Hope to the end. Go right through with it. If the worst comes to the worst, still hope. Hope as much as ever a man can hope, for when your hope is in God you cannot hope too much!   
But let your hope be all in Grace. Do not hope in yourself or in your works, but hope in the Grace, for so the text may be read. Hope, moreover, in the Grace which you have not yet receivedin the Grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Bless God for the Grace that you have not yet obtained, for He has it in store for you! Yes, He has put it on the road and it is coming to you. When for the moment you seem to be slack in present Grace, say, Glory to God for all the Grace I have not tasted yet. Hope for the Grace which is to come with your coming Lord.   
III. This has brought me to my last head, in which there is much sweetness. I ask your patience while I dwell upon it. The third point is EXPECTATIONHope to the end for the Grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. What you have got to hope for, Brothers and Sisters, is more Grace! God will always give you Grace. He will never deal with you upon the ground of meritthat door is shutHe has begun with you in Grace and He will go on with you in Grace. Therefore, hope to the end for the Grace.   
Next, it is Grace that is on the way to you. The Greek should be rendered, Hope to the end for the Grace that is being brought to you, or, the Grace that is a bringing to you. Grace is coming to you with all speed. Jesus Christ is coming! He is on the way to earthlook for Him to appear soon! The Grace you are to look for is Grace linked with your Lord Jesus Christyou never received any Grace apart from Himand you never will.   
The Grace you are to hope for is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. He has been revealed once, at His First Adventtherefore the Grace you have. He is to be revealed very soon in His Second Advent, therefore the Grace that is coming to you. Think of the Grace that is coming. My ship is coming home, says the child. So, also, is mineJesus is comingand that means all things to me. The golden chariot of my Lord is coming loaded down with unutterable love, infinite joy and eternal delight! Rejoice this morning for the Grace that is coming, Grace that is linked with Jesus Christ.   
But what can this Grace be that will be received at His coming? Justification? No, we already have that by His Resurrection. Sanctification? No, we already have that, by being made partakers of His life. What is the Grace that is to be revealed at His coming? Just look at the chapter and you will read in the fifth verse, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. Perfect salvation is one part of the Grace which is to be brought in the last time when Christ comes! When He comes there will be perfection for our souls and salvation for our bodies. Perhaps we may be alive when He comes. If so, we shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye into perfection, for, this corruption must put on incorruption. Perhaps we may die before He comes. If so, it does not matterthough corruption, earth, and worms may have devoured this flesh, yet, at His coming, our body shall rise in the image of Christs glorious body! We look for perfect salvation at the coming of Christ. This is the Grace that is coming to us and is on the road now.   
And that is not all. The second Grace that Christ will bring with Him when He comes is the perfect vindication of our faiththat the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it is tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Today they sneer at our faith, but they will not do so when Jesus comes! Today we, ourselves, tremble for the Ark of the Lord, but we shall not do so when He comes! The coming of Christ in all the Glory of the Father will be a vindication of our faith! Then shall all men say that Believers were wise, prudent, philosophical. Those who believe in Jesus may be called fools, today, but men will think otherwise when they see them shine forth as the sun in the Fathers Kingdom! Wait a wee bitall will soon be cleared.  
Copernicus declared the truth that the earth and the planets revolve around the sun. His opponents replied that this could not be true, for if the planet Venus revolved around the sun, she must present the same phases as the moon. This was very true. Copernicus looked up to Venus but he could not see those phases, nor could anyone else! Nevertheless he stuck to his statement and said, I have no reply to give, but in due time God will be so good that an answer will be found. Copernicus died and his teaching had not yet been justified. But soon after, Galileo came forward with his telescope and, on looking at Venus, he saw that she did pass through exactly the same changes as the moon. Thus Wisdom is justified of her children. the Truth of God may not prevail today or tomorrow, but her ultimate victory is sure! Today they say that the Doctrines of Grace are antiquated, obsolete and even injurious. We are at no trouble to answer the charge. We can wait and we do not doubt that public thought will alter its tone.   
I hear the sneering words, You orthodox are fools, for you hold to exploded notions. Truly, Sir, we do believe that which you please to say is exploded, but we shall be found to be right when your new systems have come and gone like vapors which appear for a little time and then vanish away. He is coming who will justify all who believe in Him and award praise, glory and honor to their faith. If our Gospel is a lie, it will prove to be a lie at His coming! But it is so true that we are not troubled at the prospect of the Last Great Judgement! The mysteries which now perplex us will be solved when the mists are rolled away. Therefore, hope on for the Grace that is to be revealed.   
Once morewhen Christ comes there will be a revelation of perfect Glory. Read the 11th verseSearching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow. Now this is the Grace which is to come to us when Christ appears. Grace, you say, You mean Glory. I do. Yet what is Glory but Grace come to perfection? Grace is Glory in the bud and Glory is Grace in the full flower! You believe in Jesus Christ, but as yet you do not see the Glory that awaits you. Wait a little while. It does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is.   
I have brought you back to the Second Coming of Christ. I told you it was a practical doctrine. I want to leave that impression upon your minds that you may go back to your daily work and constant struggle with the world. Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end because there is wondrous Grace to be revealed to you, by-and-by. I should like you to act as the AmericanColonel Davenportdid, upon a certain occasion. One day, many years back, a thick darkness came over the United States. Now and then in London we have dreadfully dark days for which we can scarcely account, but this was quite a new experience for the New Englanders and caused a terrible sensation. So exceedingly black was it that the barn-door fowls went to roost in the middle of the day!   
The darkness grew worse and people trembled in their houses, declaring that the end of the world was coming. They were all excited and alarmed. One of the houses of legislature adjourned under the belief that the Day of Judgment was come. The other house was sitting and the blackness was so intense that everybody was awed. A motion was made that they should break up, as the end of the world had certainly arrived. Colonel Davenport objected, saying, The Judgment is either approaching, or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause for adjourning. And if it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. I wish, therefore, that candles may be brought.   
Brothers and Sisters, it is dark. But whatever is going to happen, or whatever is not going to happen, let us be found girded, sober and hopeful! In these dark political times, these dark religious times, I call for candles, for we mean to go on working! Amen.

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GIRDED FOR THE WORK   
NO. 2649

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1899.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JULY 18, 1882.

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind.   
1 Peter 1:13.

WE noticed, in reading the chapter from which our text is taken, that the Apostle Peter first mentioned the glorious Doctrines of Grace and the marvelous benefits bestowed by God upon Believers and he, afterwards, drew from them a practical inference. Therefore, he said, gird up the loins of your mind. A Doctrine of God may become dangerous if it is not reduced to practiceand all the Doctrines of Gods Word may readily be turned to good and practical account if we are willing to so employ them. Those who regard a Doctrine of God simply as a subject for debate or an opportunity for displaying ones argumentative powers, miss the mark altogether, for we are taught the Truths of God in order that they may lead us to holiness of life. This is the object of God in giving us more of His Lightthat, by that Light, we may become more full of the Light of God and be the means of conveying His Light to others. Therefore, when your mind is instructed concerning some grand Truth of God, after you have sucked the honey and joy out of it, always say to yourself, But what are the bearings of this Doctrine upon my life? How should it influence me? What would God have me do as the result of receiving such teaching as this? From what Peter had already said, like a true logician, he draws a wise inference and says, Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the Grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

We shall only have time to consider the first few words of the Apostles exhortation, Therefore gird up the loins of your mind. And, concerning them, we will ask three questions, First, What are we to do? Secondly, Why are we to do it? And, thirdly, How are we to do it?

I. First, let us enquire, WHAT ARE WE TO DO? Gird up the loins of your mind.   
The metaphor used by Peter is a very simple one. The garments of the Easterns, as you know, are not like ours, but are long flowing robes and, unless the raiment is well gird about the wearer, there is little or nothing that he can do in the way of active exercise. In a spiritual sense, the injunction, Gird up the loins of your mind, is a very proper one to be addressed to those of us who have various loose and flowing things which are almost as natural to us as garments are to the body. They must be gird about us very tightly or else they will become an encumbrance and a hindrance.   
We may possibly understand what is meant by our text if we, first, consider the opposite condition. Some persons are notorious for their laxitywhatever they have about them is very loosely attached to them. I am grieved to say that there are some professing Christians who are very lax even in matters of morality. It is a great shame that it should be so with any of them and we feel that there must be hypocrisy at the bottom of such a state of things as that. Others are very lax in their beliefsthey are ready to believe anything or nothing according to whatever is said by the last speaker to whom they have listened. Some are very lax in their observance of Gospel ordinances. They act as though Christ had given them commands which they might obey or disregard according to their own pleasure. Nothing connected with them seems to be really fastened to them so as to hold them and, for their part, they hold nothing firmly everything is loose and slipping away from them.   
Now, I take it that the Apostle exhorts all professing Christians of that character to get out of such a state of heart! And I would urge you, dear Friends, to do the same. Gird up the loins of your mind as to your personal conduct. Be strict about it, not lax! Never fear incurring the opprobrium of being too precise. If the name of Puritan is appended to you, accept it joyfully as a badge of honor and wish that you were more of a Puritan than your assailants suspect! Whoever else is lax, you remember that you serve a jealous God and, therefore, be very jealous of the honor of His Word, and jealous of the observance of His commands, and jealous concerning your whole life. In this sense, gird up the loins of your mind.   
Some professors are ready enough to believe, but they have no intensity in their beliefs. They are orthodox as far as they go, but they do not go far enough. They have no great concern about religionthey are merely tattooed with Christianity. It is only skin deep with them, it never gets into their hearts or affects their souls. There are many preachers, nowadays, who hold various views of the Truth of God, but they hold nothing tenaciously. I have often wished to ask some Broad Churchmen if they did not think that the martyrs were great fools in laying down their lives in defense of the Truth, for I am sure that, according to the teaching of many whom I know, they must regard those who were faithful unto death as little better than madmen! I think that some of the teachers of the modern school believe that there is no Truth of God that is worth a mans dying for. They say that something is white, but they add that white is a very, very light shade of black if you look at it from a certain standpoint. Another thing is undoubtedly black, but that is merely a somewhat darker shade of white! Here is a certain Truth which they say they believe, but there are some circumstances or conditions in which they do not believe it, so practically it is not a matter of faith to them at all. If ever you press them too closely upon any point, they always have a back way of escape openin fact, they do not really believe anything at all with their heart and soul!   
Now, when religion is held in that fashion, it is tantamount to irreligion. If I held doctrines which did not hold me, I should stammer in the declaration of them and I could not suppose that anyone else would accept them from my halfhearted advocacy. He who has not a fixed fulcrum for his lever, whatever machinery he may have, will never move the worldand nothing will be accomplished by you, my Friend, or accomplished in you, unless there are certain Truths of God which you no more question than you question your own existencecertain munitions of rocks behind which you make your souls dwelling place and find yourself at ease. The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks, and they thus prove their wisdom! And when a man, whatever his feebleness may be, has certain rocky fundamental Truths into which he tunnels so as to hide himself, then he is well protected. But all that looseness of which I have been speaking is a throwing away of strength. Laxity is the helper of unbelief and tempts to all manner of evil the souls of those who are under its malign influence.   
Therefore, dear Friends, do not be lax in your belief, but believe what you believe. Hold what you hold and know what you know. Do you ask, How can that be? Well, by being taught of God, for God teaches Infallible Truth. What a man teaches himself, or learns from his fellow men, may all have to be laid aside, for it is liable to be erroneous. But that which God the Holy Spirit burns into his heart and conscience, as with a hot iron, shall never be taken from him! You may kill him, but you will not take the Truth of God from him. You may cut him in pieces, but the man is so joined to the Truth that he cannot be separated from it. Therefore gird up the loins of your mind. Get your mental straps tightened up. Bind the blessed Truth of the Gospel more closely than ever to your soul!   
Further, this condition of mind to which Peter refers is not only the opposite of laxity and looseness, but it is also opposed to that effluence, or lack of grip, lack of unity, lack of concentration which runs away with the usefulness and force of so many professors. These men love God after a fashion and hold His Truth in a way, but, then, there are many other things which they love and hold quite as much! Their energies runno, I should say, trickle into a hundred channelsbut there is no force in them. If they could all be made to flow in one channel, they might rush onward like a torrent and bear everything before them, yet it is not so with them, but quite the opposite! They are all in pieces. They never get to be one entire man. The prayer of David has never been fulfilled in their experience, Unite my heart to fear Your name. They cannot cry with the sweet Psalmist of Israel, My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.   
And not being fixed to one point, neither are they united as one person. Their condition is exactly described by the Prophet Hosea, Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty. It is a blessed thing for a Christian to be strapped up in one bundle and not to be divided into a number of separate parcels. Set your affections on things above, is a misquotation that I have heard many times, but there is not such a text as that in the Bible. Paul wrote to the Colossians, Set your affection on things above, that is, have all your affections bound up into one supreme, all-embracing affection, and then fix it all upon Christ. When the many men within the man become all one man and he is, as we say, all there, and you know that he is all there, then he has, indeed, girded up the loins of his mind. May we all obey this Apostolic command and earnestly avoid the opposite!   
In trying further to show what our text means, I would say that I think the short way of putting it is this, Pull yourself together. We often say, in some great crisis or emergency, I must, someway or other, pull myself together. That is just the meaning of the Apostle here. Do you not sometimes find yourself very listless, languid and limp? You hope the life of God is within you, but you almost question whether it is or not, for it is not vigorous or joyous. You do not seem to take an interest in the things of God as you once did. You say, with Cowper   
*Your saints are comforted, I know,   
And love Your House of Prayer!   
I sometimes go where others go,   
But find no comfort there.*

Somehow or other you appear to have fallen to piecesthere is no cohesion about you and you are sure that you are not in a right condition. Well, then, our text is the very message you need, as it means, first, concentrate all your powers and faculties to the service of God and the worship of God. Let this be your song

*O bless the Lord, my Soul!   
Let all within me join,   
And aid my tongue to bless His name,   
Whose favors are Divine.*

Gird up the loins of your mind, that is, let the Truth of God go right around you, so that no part of you is left out of the hallowed circle. Be completely contained within the belt of pure and precious Truth. Nobody knows what he can really do when he is all there. The capacities of manhood are something terrible when they are turned into the wrong channel. Look at a man who goes insane. Insanity is, in some senses, a weakness, yet, sometimes, when a man has become insane, he has possessed the strength of five or six ordinary men! Now, if we could have just the opposite of thata sanity which nevertheless concentrated and increased all the powers of our entire beingwhat is there that we might not be able to do? This is what the Apostle means when he urges us to gird up the loins of our mind.

This expression further signifies not only concentration, but full awakening. We are not half-awake, Brothers and Sisters, as a rule. Sometimes we are, but when God the Holy Spirit gives us the new Life in all its fullness, there is then within us ecstatic joy, firmness of resolution, strength of will and a bravery of holy faith that can risk everything upon the faintest word of the unseen God. But, oftentimes, we need to cry as David did, Quicken me, O Lord, for Your names sake. In the 119

th Psalm, how very frequently that prayer occurs, Quicken You me. The Psalmist was a living man, or he could not have prayed to be made alive, but, being alive, he wanted to be made more alive. I have told you before of a strange picture which I saw at Brussels, in which the artist has represented the Resurrection in a very remarkable fashion, showing the people as partly alive. There is one man with his head restored to life, but his arms remain as skeletons. There is another alive down to his breast, but his legs and the rest of his body are still under the dominion of death. It is an extraordinary idea, yet I am afraid that there are many so-called Christians who are just like that. They have just enough life in them for the salvation of their souls, but scarcely enough to make them earnest and diligent in the cause of God. Now, Brothers and Sisters, if this is the case with you, wake yourself up, pull yourself together, gird up the loins of your mind.

If you do so, in addition to this concentration and awakening, there will be a holy resoluteness about you, an intensifying of any resolve that you have made to serve the Lord. Sometimes, you feel, This is the proper time for me to draw near to God, but I really do not feel in the spirit for it. Now, pull yourself together and determine that you will not allow any of this nonsense! We must prayand when we feel that we cannot pray, then is the time when we must pray more earnestly than ever! We are never so much in need of prayer as when we have the least inclination to the holy exercise. I delight in preaching the Gospel when I am conscious that the Lord is with me, but there are times when I have to say, I do not feel fit for this great task. Whenever that is true of any of us, we must hear Peter saying to us, Gird up the loins of your mind. Brother, it is the devil who wants to keep you from serving the Savior! He expects that God is going to be with you and to bless you, so he tries to unfit you for the service. Then say, By the Grace of God, I mean to do it, and if ever in my life I poured out my very soul, it shall be now. Instead of running away from the task, I will run to it! Into the very center of the enemy will I rush, like David when he said, By You I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall. Oh, for that firm putting down of the foot, that steadfast determination that the duty of the hour shall be performed and the privilege of the hour shall be enjoyed! We will not be drifted from it, or driven from it, or bribed from it! What have you and I to do with going to sleep? Those who are children of darkness may sleep in the night, but we are children of the day, the Sun of Righteousness has risen upon us! So, let us not sleep as do others, but let us gird up the loins of our mind and, in the name of the Most High God, let us resolve not to be found half-hearted and lukewarm, but to be wide awake and all-alive in the service of our Lord!

Still further to explain our text, let me say that it must also mean, Get rid of hindrances. The Oriental girds up his loins that he may not be tripped up by his long flowing garmentsand this is the kind of thing that acts as a hindrance to a Christians progress. Not hindrances from Satan and the world, alone, but from himselffrom things about himself that cling as much to him and seem as necessary for him as garments are for our bodies. These things will often get in the way and trip us up when we are running, or hinder us when we are walking.

When does this happen? Sometimes there creeps over the mind of the Believer the thought of security and, consequently, of there being little need of watchfulness. There is true security in Christ and that sets the mind on its watch-tower. But there is a false security in which Satan says, All is well with you. You are not like these young people who have lately joined the Churchyou are an old experienced Christianso there is no fear of your falling into temptation. You are an old fox, you cannot be caught in the traps of which they will have to beware. You may go a great deal further than those young people may, and do a great many things which would be dangerous for them, for you are all right. When you are deceived by the tempter, you sit down and say to yourself, My mountain stands firm; I shall never be moved. You fold your hands and smile with a delusive happinessunder the notion that all must go well with you!

O dear Friends, there is nothing that will lead to stumbling and falling sooner than this fancied security! This is, indeed, having loose garments! You have special need to watch and pray. Always be afraid of that experience which Satan tells you exempts you from the necessity of being on your guard, for you are in an enemys country and there is a foe lurking behind every bush! And he alone is safe who cries to God, Hold You me up and I shall be safe. But they who are carnally secure are in the very midst of danger. Let us not get into that lax and loose condition, but let us gird up the loins of our mind.

Some are all ungirt and have their garments hanging so loosely about them that they are unable to do anything effectively because they are continually perplexed with a thousand wandering thoughts. They do not think rightly about anything because they think in a loose fashion about everything. They never act as do the bees which I have often watched. These busy little creatures find the bell of a flower and plunge right in till you cannot see them. What are they doing? They are getting all the honey that is stored at the bottom of the flower! Meanwhile, what has the butterfly done? He has flitted lightly over half the flowers of the garden and he laughs at the bee for wasting so much time in one flower, yet, at night, the butterfly has nothing to do but die, while the bee has been storing her house with sweet nutriment. It is a blessed thing when we get right into the bell of the flower of the Gospel and are determined to penetrate its secret places to extract the delicious essence of the Word, that we may feed thereon and grow thereby. It is no use having a brain that is taken up with 50 different subjects and yet does not master any one of them.

There was a class of men called the Encyclopedists, who endeavored to gain universal knowledge and, certainly, some of them were prodigious scholars. But with you and with me, Beloved, it will be well to call in all these wandering thoughts and make the Lord Jesus Christ our Encyclopedia, and to determine not to know anything among men save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. When you act thus, you have secured the choicest honey in all the world, while those who attempt to learn a thousand other things may really gather nothing that is worth preserving. A man of one book is, after all, the man of power. And the man who has but one objective in lifewho lives only for Christ and lives alone upon Himis the gracious man whom God will use for blessed ends!

Another loose garment that is likely to trip us up is too much care about the things of this world. I think that a man needs, sometimes, to hesitate as to whether he should enlarge his business. He may have just enough to do to keep going what he already has in handand he will be able to steal out to the weeknight services and to take his place in the Sunday school. But it may be that if he undertakes more responsibilities, he will be unable to spare any time for his Lords service. His capital is small, though it has sufficed him up to nowbut if he tries to make it serve in his larger undertakings, he will always be worrying about how he shall be able to meet his obligationsand he will be running from pillar to post with a thousand anxieties as to how he is to get over his difficulties. Is it not amazing that people should be so anxious to get more anxieties? The path of wisdom is to try to escape them and, especially as age increases, to feel that the last part of our life ought to be Sabbaticit should be a period of rest. Surely, the last seventh of our lives, at least, should be a preparation for the everlasting Sabbath when we hope to dwell with our Lord forever! It is well for a man when he can make it so, but too much to do, too much to think of, too much care and too much trouble are very apt to trip up a Christian. Therefore gird up the loins of your mind. Strap yourselves up a bit. You know riches take to themselves wings and fly away. One of the best things you can do is to clip their wings every now and thenand send the feathers round to the College, or the Orphanage, or the Colportage Society, or some other good work! In that way you are more likely to keep what you now possess and to have a blessing with it.

Frequently, too, men who do not gird up the loins of their minds are tripped up by mental troubles. They are troubled about this and worried about that. Things are not according to their mind and, instead of doing their best, and then leaving the matter with God, they are constantly fretting and fuming. I know some good women who make their home utterly miserable by being always in a worry. Often, it is only about whether such-and-such a room has been dusted, or whether something has been washed. And there are plenty of husbands who go on in the same foolish way, for we are all of one race and we are all far too anxious to borrow trouble when we have none of our own. Yes, and some are very adept at manufacturing troubles! They have a little trouble factory at the top of the house and they like to get up there and try to make something to be disquieted about. A trouble that God sends, He will take away, but if you make it yourself, you may take it away yourself. Homemade troubles are just like homemade clothesthey do not often fit very well, but they last longer than any others. So I warn you against themthe troubles, I meanpray put them aside! Obey Peters injunction, Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, and let these fancied troubles go to the winds!

There are others whose loins are not gird up because they are fearful, despondent, discouraged in their work for the Lord. Have you not heard them moaning in this styleI do not think I shall ever take my class any more. I do not feel that I can stand up and preach at the corner of the streets again. I do not see how I can give another tract to that manhe swore so dreadfully. Come, Brother, gird up the loins of your mind. You need to pull that strap more tightly around you and to get your garments well secured. I see that they are beginning to fly about in the wind and, if you are not careful, one by one they will blow away from you. Be not discouraged! Fear not! Do not despair of success! The God whom you serve will not let His Word fall to the ground, but you shall see that though you went forth weeping, bearing precious Seed, you shall come back rejoicing, bringing your sheaves with you!

I need not go over all the many ways in which a Christian mans garments may impede his labors, but our text applies to them all. One other meaning of Peters words, Gird up the loins of your mind is, be ready, as a man who has his coat buttoned up is prepared to face the storm. Be ready for troubles. Be ready for evil tidings. Be ready for service. Be ready for suffering, be ready to live, be ready to die. Take for your motto the sailors cry, Ready, yes, ready, and say, Whatever my Lords will may be, I, His servant, with my loins gird and my staff in my hand, am ready for it. As old Master Trapp says, Be handy with your loins gird about. Have your robes all well fastened so that you will not be tripped up by them. Being handy, in this sense, is also to be handsomeno man looks better than when his garments are well gird about him. When they became loose, they spoil the appearance of his figure, but when he keeps himself well prepared for his service, then is he beautiful in the sight of his Master who loves to see His servant ready for fighting, ready for journeying, ready for whatever may happen to him, or be required of him. Therefore, pull yourselves together and so gird up the loins of your mind.

II. Now, secondly, WHY ARE WE TO DO THIS?   
First, the fourfold character of the Christian life requires it. A Christian ought to be at least four things, as well as many others which I have not time to mention now. First, he is a pilgrim. He is on a journeyhe is passing through this world to a better one. How can a man travel swiftly and safely unless his garments are properly prepared for the journey? And the pilgrims to Zion must gird up the loins of their mind if they are to reach their destination.   
A Christian is, next, a racer. He is running in a race and he needs to win the crown. He has started for the goal and the prize of his high calling is glittering before his eyes. He is the man who must heed the command, Therefore gird up the loins of your mind. How can you run with endurance the race set before you if you do not lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset you? If entanglements are to be avoided, the garments of the racer must be tightly gird about him.   
Moreover, the Christian is a warrior. How can he overcome his foe if he has not put on his armor and is not well clad for the struggle! How shall he fight while his movements are impeded by loose garments? You know what the old soldier said to the Duke of Wellington when he was asked whether he had been at Waterloo. He said that he had and then the Duke enquired of him, Suppose that battle had to be fought again, how would you like to be dressed? The man answered, If I had to take part in that fight again, I should like to be in my shirtsleeves. There was great commonsense in that reply and it may teach us a useful lesson. A Christian man does not fight well for his Master unless he gets, as it were, into his shirtsleeves and takes off all his dignity and everything which hinders him from rendering effective service and doing the most he can do for Christ.   
Beside being a pilgrim, a runner and a warrior, a Christian is a laborerhe is called to work in his Masters vineyard. Now, if a man does not gird up the loins of his mind, he will be a very poor laborer and will show a very bad days work when the sun goes down. So again I say to you, dear Friends, pull yourselves together! With such holy work to do, endeavor to do it at your very best.   
Remember, also, the greatness of your task. That should make you gird up the loins of your mind. The Christian life is no childs play. To bear testimony for Christ is no trifle and if you wish to win souls, as I hope you do, Brothers and Sisters, you cannot do it unless your spirit is braced up to the very highest point by the Grace of God. Your work is such as might have filled an angels heart! And it did fill your Saviors hands, so see to it that it is done in the best possible style.   
The next reason why you should gird up the loins of your mind is because of the slenderness of your strength. You have so little power that you cannot afford to waste an ounce of it! If you are ever to thresh the mountains, there must be no wasting or throwing away, even inadvertently, of any of the little force which you have. If you would be mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds, you must look well to your spiritual strength and never waste an atom of it.   
Besides that, remember the readiness of your foes. If they can trip you up by laying hold upon a garment which is trailing behind you, they will do so. If it is possible for you to be vanquished, you will be vanquished, for you have enemies who watch you with eyes full of venom and malice because you belong to Christ. Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind and see that you put not any advantage in their way, or they will be quick to avail themselves of it!   
Remember, also, the misery you endure when you are not in a right condition. If your minds are not girded up and you feel as I do, you must be very wretched. Whenever I feel that I cannot pray as I wish, I am very unhappy. When I come here and cannot join heartily in the songwell, I have to groan in the chorus someway or otherbut I am not satisfied with doing that. When I feel at all wandering from God and my heart is getting astray from Him, I am not happy, I cannot be! Oh, no, blessed be God, when He made us the second time, He made us so that we could not rest anywhere but in Himself. Even our first creation necessitated our coming to God if we would be blessed, but our second creation makes it even more so! If the Lord is with us, we are merry all the day long and can praise and bless His holy name. There is no fasting for us while the Bridegroom is with us! But if He is once withdrawn, then shall the children, even of the bride chamber, fast. You know that it is so. Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, do not be content to be in this sad, loose, lax condition, but, gird up the loins of your mind. May the Lord, in His mercy, enable you to do so!   
III. So I finish with just a few words upon the last question, which is, HOW ARE WE TO DO THIS?   
One way is, when you are out of sorts, and out of order, go and confess it. Go and tell the Lord all about it. Search and see how you got into such a condition. Confess the sins that brought you into such a plight, then hate them with a perfect hatred. Feel that you cannot continue to live in such a state. Cry unto God, O Lord, do not let me find any kind of happiness until I have it from Your own right hand and, until I am right with You, give me misery, brokenness of spirit and true godly sorrow for sin! That confession will naturally melt into prayer for quickening. While you are mourning your misery, God will help you to pray yourself out of it! Never listen to the voice of the tempter who says, Do not pray because you cannot pray, but say within yourself, Now I must pray more than ever. Now I will pray and, however poor and broken my prayer may be, such as it is, it shall be presented to God.   
Then, next, while you are on your knees, resolve with energy that the evil shall not continue. To make your resolution effective, cry to Him who first took you out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clayand set your feet upon a rock and established your goingsand ask Him to do that over again in another sense. He will as readily lift you up again as He did at the first. If you are willing to be half-dead, you may be wholly dead before long. If you are willing to be idle and sleepy, the spirit of slumber will steal over you just as if all the drugs that poison men had been poured into your soul! If it has been so with you to any degree, resolve, with hearty shamefacedness, that it shall not be so any longer.   
And then, to help you carry out this resolution, sit down and meditate much upon the love of God to youthe eternal love, the boundless love, the love that chose you, the love that bought you, the love that sought you, the love that fought for you, the love that has worked in you all the good things there are in you! And, as you meditate upon that wondrous love of God, His Holy Spirit will work upon you. You will feel your heart beginning to thaw and the streams commencing to flow as the brooks do in the springtime when the icy grasp of winter has been relaxed. Therefore, give your heart up to such meditations as are likely to stir your spirit and to change its sad condition.   
Then, also try to let your understanding be convinced concerning your position and condition. Think much about what the Lords requirements really are. I like to see some passion in religion, but I am much more fond of principle. A man may be moved to great zeal and earnestness at certain revival meetingsand it is well if he has made the great decisionbut I am glad if another man has sat down by himself and has calmly considered the whole question and, acting upon principle, has yielded himself to the Savior. He knows what is true. He knows what he is and where he is. He knows what God has done for him and what God expects from him and, without any passion or excitement, he steadily plods on and continues firmly confident in the Lord.

One translation of our text is, Gird up the loins of your understanding. Get your understanding tightly strapped up, for, in proportion as you know the Truth of God, the Truth shall make you free. When you can give to everyone who asks you for it, a reason for the hope that is in you, it is better than when you simply say, I believe that I am saved because I am so happy, for, perhaps tomorrow you may not be happyand then you may fancy that you are not saved! That is simply going by your feelings and is a most unsatisfactory method. Rather say, I understand, from the Scriptures, that the sinner is bid to believe in Jesus. And when he does so, God, Himself, assures him that he is saved. Let your religious convictions be founded on good sound arguments! Get some wherefores and therefores, so that you may have something solid to stand upon. This is the meaning of the words, gird up the loins of your understanding.   
I wish that all who profess to be converted knew what they were converted from and what they were converted toand what being converted really means. I am afraid that a great many jump into what they call religion and then jump out of it again. If they only act according to the energy of the flesh, they will jump out of it before long. He who is converted only by eloquence will be unconverted when that eloquence is over. He who is converted merely by excitement is likely to be unconverted when that excitement has died away. But he who is taught of God and knows the solid Doctrines of God upon which we are grounded and settled, will steadfastly abide in the Truth of God.   
I know that I have spoken all of this for nothing, so far as some of you are concerned, because you have nothing for which to gird up your mind and nothing with which to gird it. For you, as you now are, there is no inheritance. For you there is no place of joy, no hope of peace. O poor Soul, first remember that you must be born again, for it is no use to gird up the natural man that is unsaved! It is the new man that is to be gird about. Your first business is with God and with His Christ, and with the eternal Spirit. The first necessity for you is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to accept that Gospel which says, He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. That being done, then you have something to gird up! God grant it to every one of you, for Jesus Christs sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK660, 632, 659. EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**1 PETER 1:13-20.**

Verse 13. Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the Grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. This is Peters practical application of the great Truths of which he had been writing. Look ahead and expect great things. Live in the future. Project your thoughts beyond the centuries that are passing away into the ages which will never die.

14, 15. As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as He who has called you is holy, so be you holy in all manner of conversation. Remember that you can never be really whole till you are holy, for holiness is spiritual sanityit is the caring of the mind and heart from the disease which sin brought upon them.

16. Because it is written, Be you holy; for I am holy. Children of God, be like your Father! Prove that you are His true children by manifesting His Character. Let His lineaments be seen in your countenanceBe you holy; for I am holy. The Revised Version is, You shall be holy; for I am holy.

17. And if you call on the Father, who without respect of persons judges according to every mans work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. Be not presumptuous. Always remember that as there is a God who is to judge every man, you are to be judged and oh, that you might, through His Grace, be in such a condition of heart that you shall stand the last test and be found to be full weight when you are put into the balances of the sanctuary which God shall hold with steadfast hands!

18, 19. Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. You have seen the Character of your Father who is in Heaven. This should urge and help you to be like Heholy. Now you see the Character of your Redeemer, a lamb without blemish and without spot. Let this influence you to be holy, also.

20, 21. Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead and gave Him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God. It is no use to place them anywhere else! All other vessels are too frail to bear such a heavy burden, but, if your faith and hope are in God, then you have a security which none can destroy.

22-25. Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that you love one another fervently with a pure heart: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower thereof falls away: but the Word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you. Blessed be God for an everlasting Gospel, founded on the Everlasting Covenant, which brings with it everlasting life to all those who believe in Christ Jesus the Lord!

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THE SAVIORS PRECIOUS BLOOD   
NO. 3395

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1914. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.   
The precious blood of Christ.   
1 Peter 1:19.

We have come in our theological conversation to use that word, blood, somewhat lightly. I think it should scarcely ever be pronounced without a shudder. The blood is the life thereof. When shed, it indicates sufferingsuffering more intense than that of chastisement or bruising. Wounds are inflicted which make the lifeblood to flow out. In the case of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the term, blood, brings before us all His griefs and anguish and where the crown of thorns pierced Him. Behold the Man! Think of Gethsemane, where He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground! Think of Gabbatha, the pavement, where they scourged Him with rods, and with the scourge of the Roman lictors where the crown of thorns pierced Him. Behold the Man! Think, lastly, of Golgotha! There they pierced His hands and His feet and, at last, pierced by the spear, out of His side there came blood and water. Pass not lightly, therefore, over such a word as thisbloodthe blood of Jesus Christ, Gods dear Son! And when you read of its being precious, remember that the word never had such a wealth of meaning in it, before, in any of its applications. Precious metalsgold and silver. Precious stonessardonyx, agate and diamondthese are but gaudy toys compared with Christs precious blood! Precious, for He is God as well as Man. Precious, for He is Jehovahs Darling, the Lamb of God, without spot or blemish! Precious, when you think of Gods design. Precious, when you see the effects which it produces. Precious, certainly, to the heart of every pardoned sinner and precious in the song of every glorified spirit before the Throne of God!

It is not, however, my objective, this evening, to pursue the sacred history, so much as to set forth the saving Doctrine, while I remind you of some of the uses of this precious blood. For, after all, the standard of preciousness, when we come to the very essence of it, is not scarcity, but usefulness, for there are things in this world exceedingly scarce and, therefore, precious among the sons of men, which will be left out and treated with contempt when we get into the land where the true standards of value are in use. That is the most precious which is the most serviceable. So in truth, the precious blood of Christ is beyond all estimation! I want to conduct you, step by step, through the application of this blood and its effects upon the heart and conscience. And I shall pause at each step to ask you, dear Hearer, and to ask myself this questionDo you know the blood, the precious blood, in this respect? Have you felt it in this peculiar form of its efficacy? Beginning thus at the first

I. THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST IS THE BLOOD OF THE ATONEMENT.  
We read of the blood of the Atonement under the old Law. Christ, now under the Gospel, is the Propitiation for our sins. It is through the blood that God, infinitely just, without the violation of His Character, can pass by the transgression of the guilty. It is not possible that any one attribute of God should ever shadow another. He is perfect. He is infinitely merciful, but He will not be merciful at the expense of justice! Justice shall never triumph against mercy! Mercy, on the other hand, shall never cut off the skirts of the flowing robe of justice. It is in the Person of Jesus and especially in the blood of Jesus, that the great riddle of the ages is solved! God can be just and yet the Justifier of him that believes in Jesus. We have sinned. God must punish sin. According to the inexorable laws which God has stamped upon the universe, the sinner cannot go unpunished. His sin is, in fact, its own punishment and becomes the mother of unnumbered griefs. The Mediator steps inthe Son of God and the Son of Man, eternal, and yet as Man, born of Mary and slumbering in Bethlehems mangerHe comes as the Substitute for the guilty. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. And now in Christ Jesus, we who some time were afar off, are made near by the blood of Christ. God can be gracious without the violation of the severity of His judgment. His moral government remains untarnished in all the majesty of its purity, and yet He puts out the right hand of reconciliation and love to all who approach Him making mention of the blood of the Atonement of His dear Son!

Are you, then, thus reconciled to God by the death of His Son, or are you still an enemy? Have you ever seen the distance between you and God bridged by the Cross? Have you seen at once how God, the infinitely Just, can commune with you without consuming you, because He poured His wrath upon Christ, instead of you? And then, accepted in Him and for His merits, you live because Jesus lives! Ah, dear Hearer, if you have not seen this, may the Lord open those blind eyes of yours and by His eternal Spirit bring you, with your burden of sin upon your back, to the foot of the Masters Cross, where you may look up and sing *Oh, how sweet to view the flowing,   
Of His sin-atoning blood!   
With Divine assurance knowing,   
That it made my peace with God.*   
The blood of Jesus Christ has another effect upon us, namely  
II. IT CLEANSES FROM SIN.  
Surely we can never fail to remember that choicest of all Scriptural texts, The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. There is such music in it that when the spirits before the Throne of God desire to have a song of which they might never grow weary, they select that sentiment, and they sing before the Throne that they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Their purity before God is due to the fountain filled with blood wherein their stained garments, all soiled with sin, have been made clean! When the soul comes to Jesus Christ by faith and relies upon Him, then the sentence of the perfect pardon goes forth from God and the soul is purged from all the stains of accumulated years! In a single moment those who were black as Hell become white as Heaven through the application of the blood of sprinklingfor all sin disappears as soon as the blood falls on the conscience! That which the blood of bulls and of goats could not do, the blood of Jesus effectually accomplishescleansing from all sin!   
Now, dear Hearer, have you ever been thus cleansed? Say not you had never need of cleansing, else you know not your natural condition and your actual transgressions. Man, you can never have seen yourself in the mirror of the Word of God, or you would perceive yourself to be totally defiled and altogether as an unclean thing! You would have bowed yourself before the Lord and joined in the confession, We have erred and strayed from Your ways like lost sheep. We have done those things which we ought not to have done, and we have left undone those things which we ought to have done. And there is no health in us. Well, if you have ever thus felt your guilt, have you ever realized your pardon? If not, give yourself no sleep till you have! Can you bear to live unpardoned, or in doubt whether or not God has absolved you? Can you ever take any kind of rest, much less indulge your soul with mirth, until the word, Absolvo, has come from God, Himself, the eternal Spirit bearing witness with your spirit that you are born of God? Happy are they who have been washed! They have need to come each night (even as Peter the Apostle had need) to wash their feet, but they need not except to wash their feet, for they are clean every whit. Jesus has made them clean through His blood! The third step is that   
III. THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST IS THE GREAT PRICE OF OUR REDEMPTION.  
Redemption sometimes in Scripture is spoken of as being the same thing as pardon, and I shall not at all dogmatically attempt tonight to draw any nice distinction between the two. We have redemption through His bloodto wit, the forgiveness of sinaccording to the riches of His Grace. But redemption seems rather to be in some sense the effect produced by a pardon than the actual pardon, itself. Man is a slave. As long as guilt is written in Gods book against us, we are in bondage. We feel for the present that we are slaves to sin and that for the future, the punishment of sin will inevitably come upon us to our eternal destruction. But the moment we are purged from the guilt of sin, we are set free from the slavery of it! Jesus Christ takes us from being slaves and makes us to be children! He gives us no longer the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father! He was slain and He has redeemed us unto God by His blood! And in the liberty wherewith Christ makes us free, we rejoice to see that it was the blood which was the price, thereof, and because He suffered, therefore our chains have dropped off from us. We are freethe Lords freemenfree henceforth to serve Him with renewed love and renewed hearts because of the abundance of the Grace which He has manifested towards us!  
Now, Beloved, have you ever been redeemed by the blood of Jesus? I am not talking to you now about a redemption effected upon the Cross, but have you ever felt redemption in your own spirit from the curse of the Law, from the thralldom of a guilty conscience and from the power of sin? Let me ask you, are you the Lords freeman tonight? Oh, happy are you, then, for you can say, Lord, You have loosed my bonds and, therefore, I am Your servant. We are not our own because we are bought with a price. And inasmuch as we are no more slaves to the Law from henceforth, for the love we bear His name who has redeemed us with such a price, we reckon ourselves to be His servants and we bear in our body the marks of the Lord Jesus! Ah, Friends, if you were never redeemed by the precious blood, then you are still slavesslaves to sin and Satanslaves under the vengeance of God and slaves to the Law of God. But may you never be content in slavery! May you pine after freedom, and may Jesus give it to yougive it to you tonight if it is His blessed will! In the fourth place, the blood of Jesus is spoken of in Scripture as   
IV. INTERCEDING.   
The blood of sprinkling speaks better things than that of Abel. It is said to be sprinkled within the veil, so that where the high priest could only go once a year, we may now go at all times, for the blood is there, interceding for us perpetually! Well, in fact, says one of our poets *The wounds of Christ for us,   
Incessantly do plead.*   
Even after His death, remember, His heart for us poured out its flood. After death that heart was pierced and blood and water came. So, after His voice was silent and He could no longer say, Father, forgive them, the wounds were still eloquentand even when the suffering passed, they still continued to plead with God.  
Now, Soul, have you ever come to God through the intercession of the blood? You have said prayers, you have repeated forms of devotion, you have gone to Church or to Meeting Houses. This is all well enough, but have you gone farther? For if not, all outward forms of devotion are but frivolous endeavors that may allure, but will deceive you! Did you ever come to God by the blood and did you ever, by faith, fix your eye upon the High Priest who ever lives to make intercession for us, who with our names upon His bosom, still offering the blood, stands at this moment before the Father, God, pleading for us who love Him and trust Him? Happy they who look to the interceding Savior and who feel that His blood speaks not revenge, but cries at every vein, Mercy, mercy for the chief of sinners! This leads me to remark that the blood of Jesus   
V. BECOMES THE MODE AND WAY OF ACCESS TO GOD.   
We have boldness to enter into the holiest through the blood of Christ. After first cleansing the man and making him fit to come as a priest and a king unto God, then the blood, as it were, takes away the veil and opens up the pathway to God, Himself, for the forgiven and redeemed soul! Never let us attempt to come to God by anything but the blood! All other ways to God, except through the blood of Jesus, are presumptuous. All other fire that we may put upon the altar, except this, is strange fire, and the Lords anger will go forth against us. May I never plead when on my knees before God anything but the precious merits and the dear wounds of the Man of Sorrows who is now exalted at the right hand of God. How close to God we should come if we did but always bring Christ with us! But what are our prayers when we leave Him behind? What are our devotions when we are met together, or when we are in secret, and we go to the Mercy Seat, but forget the blood that was sprinkled on it, oblivious of the new and living way through the rent body of Immanuel? Come, Brothers and Sisters, let us chide ourselves for sometimes having forgotten our Lord! And henceforth, be it ours never to think of drawing near to God except by this way of accessthe crimson road which the blood has paved for us! To advance farther, the blood of Jesus Christ, according to the Word, is   
VI. SANCTIFYING.   
Jesus sanctified His people by His own blood and, therefore, suffered outside the gate. By sanctification is usually meant in Scripture the setting apart of anything for the service of God and so making it holy. Now, the blood separates the saints from all others. It was the blood that was the distinguishing mark of Israel in Egypt. Every Egyptian house was without the blood, but every house of the seed of Abraham had the blood mark upon the lintel and the two side posts, and when God saw the blood He passed over them and spared them in the night of His furious anger. The blood, then, Beloved, if you have ever had it on your soul, is to be the distinguishing mark between you and the ungodly in the Day of Wrath and it should distinguish you now. You should, by your life and your conversation, make yourself to appear to be as the blood has made youto really be a separated one! We are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world. We have heard the mandateCome you out from among them; be you separate; touch not the unclean thing. We have left the worlds sin and we have left the worlds religion, too! We have separated ourselves at once from the worlds goodness, as well as from the worlds vileness, to walk in the path of nonconformity to the world, that we may tread in the footsteps of our crucified Redeemer! And the more the blood is applied, the more the obedience of Jesus is trusted inand the sprinkling of the blood is relied uponthe more shall we become sanctified in spirit, soul and body by the power of the Holy Spirit. Let us never forget the purifying power of Jesus in the heart. Wherever He is trusted to take away the

guilt of sin, we must next seek the water which flowed with the blood to take away the power of sin! And we must ask to see Him sit as a refiner to purify, yes, it must be our prayer that He would take His fan in His hand and purge our hearts as He does His floor! Refining Fire, go through my soul! Oh, sweet love of Jesus, burn up the love of the world! Oh, death of Jesus, be the death of sin! Oh, life of Christ, be the life of everything that is gracious, God-like, heavenly, eternal! So shall it be in proportion as we partake of the power and the efficacy of that blood! The blood, furthermore, is   
VII. CONFIRMATORY.   
We must not forget this one effect of it. It is called the Blood of the Covenantthe Blood of the Testamentthe Blood of the New Testament. The Covenant was not in force in the olden times until there had been a sacrifice to confirm it. And a will stands not until the death of the testator has been proved to make it valid. The hearts blood of Jesus is, as it were, the establishment of His last will and testament. Jesus, the great Testator, has died, has made an end of sin and His blood is the great seal of His testament and makes it valid to us. If He had never died! Oh, dreadful, if, only equaled in horror by that other, ifif He had never risen again from the dead! But now is Christ risen from the dead! Now has Christ slept and awoke as the first fruits of them that slept! Never doubt the promise of God, for the blood confirms it! Never doubt the love of God, for He spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all! How shall He not, with Him, also freely give us all things? If you need evidence as to the eternal goodness of God, His willingness to pardon, His power to save and to blesslook to the Cross of Calvary and see the bleeding Saviorand never doubt again!   
Dear Hearer, did the blood so come to you as to confirm your hope, or is your hope a fancy, a delusion? Do you think it needs no confirmation? Have you ever in your moments of questioning and anxiety gone over, again, to the altar where is the Great Victim? Have you said once more *Just as I am, without one plea,   
But that Your blood was shed for me!   
And that You bid me come to Thee,   
Oh, Lamb of God, I come!*   
Have you, then, got your consolation back? Have you received the witness of God? Have you heard the voice which bears witness both in Heaven and earth, the voice of the Spirit, and the water and the blood? And have you been satisfied because you needed no better confirmation than the witness of the blood of Jesus applied with power to your soul? The blood of Jesus has another effect of which we ought to think more than we dothat of   
VIII. NOURISHING, CHEERING AND SUSTAINING THE BELIEVER.   
To this end the ordinance of communion with Christ in the breaking of bread and partaking of the cup of blessing has been instituted. When we come to the Lords Table, we have set before us in the broken bread, of which we eat, and in the wine of which we drink, this present factthat the sufferings of our Master are now at this moment for our nourishment, sustenance, consolation and exhilaration. We have been washed in the bloodwe are now to receive, after a spiritual sort, the precious blood of Jesus to nourish our faith, to comfort our hope, to excite in us the liveliest joy and to make us sing and be merry with holy confidence in Him who has redeemed us from all iniquity and made us unto God priests and kings, to reign with Christ forever and ever! There is no cordial for the heart like the blood of Jesus. To think of the atoning Sacrifice is the readiest way to consolation. Our sorrows are not worth a thought when once compared with His! Sit down under the shadow of the Cross and you will find a cooler shade than that of a great rock in a weary land. There is no pasturage for the sheep of Christ like that which grows on Calvary! There is nowhere to be found such wine that makes glad the heart of God and man, as that which comes from the sacred cup of His heart, of which Believers drink by faith when they have fellowship with Him and come into near and dear communion with Him! Although we do sometimes enjoy this without any emblemswithout the bread and without the winethese are still great assistants, blessed exponents, and they graciously help our forgetfulness! We are yet in the body and we need something that shall aid this lagging flesh to see something of the Lord.  
Oh, feed then on Christ and do not be content unless day by day He is your daily bread! He who has given you life must sustain that life. He who has taught you how to rejoice must still supply you with power to continue in your daily rejoicing! The blood without cleanses. The blood within cheers, yes, sacredly inebriates the soul till the sinner drinks and forgets his sorrow and remembers his misery no more! And in the fullness of his delight he becomes sweetly oblivious, whether in the body or out of the body, as he rises into almost celestial communion with his unseen, but ever-present Lord! Once again, the blood of Jesus Christ has the effect of   
IX. UNITING CHRISTIANS TOGETHER.  
Paul, speaking of Jew and Gentile, says that He has made both one, through the blood of Christ, and surely there is nothing that unites different denominations of Christians together like the precious blood of Jesus! Brothers and Sisters, we may disputeI think we do well to dispute over important ordinances and doctrines, for wherein men err we are not to wink at their errorsand neither ask them to wink at ours. I have sometimes heard it said, Spare such a Brother. Yes, as a Brotherbut who am I that I should be spared if I err, or who is he that he should be spared? What are we, or what are our feelings compared with the Truth of God? No, let questions be fought out as kindly, as lovingly, as valorously, as honorably as they possibly can! Truth fears not the shock of arms. Let the controversies go on. I believe that, after all, there is ten times more Truth in this world, now, with all the apparent divisions of Christians, than there would have been if we had been united in a nominal union into some one great church which might, perhaps, have rotted as thoroughly as the old Church of Rome did before the days of Luther! But when we come to the foot of the Cross, what union there is! If the saints in prayer appear as one. If in the praise of the Infinite Jehovah they are onemuch more and much more tenderly are they one when they behold Jesus bleeding and dying for them! My heart melts and breaks when I hear Christ preached. He who lifted up Christ would have offended me had he preached some other part of his creed. Had he talked over some Doctrine which I hold to be erroneous, he and I had differed, but when it comes to this, HE loved me and gave Himself for meHe is the chief among ten thousand, the altogether lovelyHis blood is preciousI feel inclined to cry, Brother, keep to that! Praise Him louder! Give Him all the honor!   
*Bring forth the royal diadem,   
And crown Him Lord of all!*   
While we keep to that, we are none of us heretics over that! There shall be no schisms and divisions over the matter. Son of God and Son of Man, Redeemer of our souls from death and misery, all Your mothers children praise You! Every sheaf bows before Your sheaf! Sun and moon, and every star do obeisance unto You, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, Head over all things unto your Church, which is Your dwelling place, the fullness of Him that fills all in all! Since here we are one, when we get together as Believers, I wish we more often struck that keythe precious blood of Christand in our walks and talks with those Christians who differ from us in many points, let us sometimes try to turn those points aside and say, We do agree to speak well of that dear name which is above every name, that name which charms all our fears and bids all our sorrows cease! That name which is the joy of the Believer on earth and the bliss of the saints in Heaven! I close now when I have noticed that the blood of Jesus Christ may be looked upon by us every day as  
X. THE GREAT INSTRUCTOR AND THE CARDINAL WITNESS OF DIVINE TRUTH.  
God is to be seen in Nature and seen vividly there, but not as He is to be seen in Christ Jesus. Instruction as to the eternal power of the Godhead, some find in the skies above, in the fields around and in the sea beneath. But in the Cross there is more of God than in all the world besides! I have often felt, when I have been rambling in the Alps, that Nature was too small to set forth God. The mirror is not large enough to reflect the face of the Eternal. You stand in the Alps and hear the avalanche, like claps and peals of thunder resounding in the air. You gaze afar off and there it is, and it looks to you like the falling of a few flakes of snow. It is so inconsiderable that the grandeur seems to be destroyed. Though every one of those flakes may be a block of ice weighing a hundred tons, at such a distance the thing grows small. The water leaps down hundreds of feet from the crags, but up in the mountains it appears to be a little trickling creek scarcely worth notice. The very Alpine summits seem to dwindle down to small heaps of stones when one grows used to the scenery. God is too great for this earth to bear Him. The axles of this worlds chariot would snap beneath the weight of Deity. We talk of going from Nature up to Natures God, but the top of the highest Alps is far below His footstool! We do not get any conceptions of God out of Nature worthy of His august Majesty. But in contemplating the Cross, in discerning, there, how God can forgive, how willing He is to save the guilty, how His justice is magnified at the same time as His Grace, I am persuaded that those who have tried both forms of contemplation will tell you that this last is the better by far! You see God through the wounds of Christ as through windows of agate and gates of carbuncleand you cry, My Lord, and my God!  
In winding up this poor discourse of mine, let me say to you, Beloved, be more in meditation upon Jesus. I say to myselfPreacher, preach your Master more! Preach Him more after His own sort and endeavor to be yourself more like He! Dear Hearer, live nearer to the Cross. With all your study of Doctrineand you do well to study it thoroughly make Jesus Christ the first. Believe in Him. Let Him be your creed. Speak of a body of divinitythere never was in this world but one body of divinity and that is Jesus Christ! And he that understands Jesus Christ has got the only system of theology that is worth knowing! Get right into Him. Some of the early Fathers used to study every wound. They would write a treatise on almost every different spot where He was scourged! They had some tears to let fall and some sweet songs to sing for every step along the

Via Dolorosa. Let us not treat lightly what those nearer to the Light of God treated so solemnly, but regarding the Master and thinking much of even the littles that concern Him (for the leaves of this Tree of Life are for the healing of the nations), let us study to understand Him and ask to be conformed to Himeven in His sufferings to be like Heand when we suffer, to see Him in our pangs! Let every grief be a glass through which to look into His life and love, and understand His Grace.  
I wish you all knew this, and more than this. Oh, that I could hope that all this assembled company did trust in my Master! Poor Sinner, why not trust Him? You will never be saved unless you do! There is no other door of mercy for you than Jesus! Come, come, come, even though you think He will cast you away. If Christ had a drawn sword in His hand, yet I would bid you come! It were better to fall on the point of His sword than to live without Him! Come and rest upon Him. He never rejected a sinner yet, and He never can! The vilest of the vile can find mercy in Him! And all He asksand that He givesis that you rely on Him with all your heart and you shall be saved! God grant that you may! He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. Obey the second precept as you have attained to the first. When you have believed in Christ crucified, dead and buried for you, then be dead and buried with Him in Baptism! Take the outward symbol of His death, burial and resurrection, and ask to have the inward spiritual Grace that you, being dead to the world, and dead with Christ, and buried with Him, may rise again to newness of life through His quickening Spirit.   
The Lord thus bless you, for Jesus sake!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **1 PETER 1:1-16; MATTHEW 10:37-40.**

Verses 1, 2. Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied. The first Christians were not so afraid of the Doctrine of Election as some are now-a-days. Peter was not ashamed to address the saints as the elect of God, for so, indeed, they are, if they are saints at all. It is He that chose them, not because they were sanctified, but that they might be sanctifiedchose them to eternal life through sanctification. Oh, happy are they who, by Divine Grace have made their calling and election sure, and now ascribe all the glory of their salvation to the Sovereign choice of God! Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.

3-5. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in Heaven for you. Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed at the last time. How full of Grace every sentence is! He blesses God because God has so freely blessed us! And he abounds in thanksgiving because he sees that abundant mercy by which Believers have been begotten againborn-againmade, therefore, children after a new sort and so made heirs of an inheritance very different from that upon which we enter by naturean inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fades not away. Brothers and Sisters, if you have, indeed, been born by Divine Grace, to what estates are you bornto what high dignities and sacred privileges! Rejoice and bless the Lord! But, perhaps the dark fear crossed your mind that, perhaps, after all, you may perish and miss the inheritance. Now notice the double consolation of a double keeping. The inheritance is kept. It is reserved in Heaven for you and you are kept, too. It is kept for you and you are kept for it, For you, who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.

6. Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations. This is your life. This is like a rainbow made up of the drops of earths sorrow in the beams of Heavens lovea happy combination, after all.

7. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Gilt looks very much like gold but it will not stand the fire. It curls and disappears. Oh, to be solid gold through and through! If so, you need not mind the trials of today, since they will only prepare you for the eternal glories at the appearing of Jesus Christ!

8-10 Whom having not seen, you love in whom, though now you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the Prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the Grace that should come unto you. Prophets knew about you. They did not taste of the Grace you know, but through the vista of the future they foresaw it and they almost envied you in this Gospel dispensation that you should live in so clear a light and should be fed upon such rare mercies. Oh, what Prophets and kings longed for, do not let us despise! And we shall despise these mercies if we do not make the most of them by entering into the fullness of the joy which they are meant to bring to us. These Prophets searched diligently.

11-12. Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ who was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you, with the Holy Spirit sent down from Heaven; which things the angels desire to look into. See you not your privilege, then? You have what Prophets had not! You enjoy what angels desire to see! They cannot enjoy what you do. Rightly does our hymn put it

*Never did angels taste above,   
Redeeming Grace and dying love.*

And you have, this very day!   
13. Therefore gird up the loins of your mind. Be ready to depart to your   
inheritance. Do not let your garments flow carelessly and loosely, as   
though you had no journey before you, but, gird up the loins of your  
mind.   
13. Be sober, and hope to the end for the Grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. That is a very blessed subject.  
There is a Grace that was brought to you when Christ first came. There   
is another Grace and a higher Grace that is to be brought to you when   
Christ shall come the second time! Until that Second Coming of Christ,  
the Church on earth and in Heaven cannot be perfected. The bodies of  
the saints wait in the grave till He comes to give them resurrection *O long expected day, begin!   
Dawn on these realms of woe and sin.*   
For we wait for Your appearing, O Christ!   
14-16. As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the   
former lusts in your ignorance, but as He which has called you is holy, so  
be you holy in all manner of conversation: Because it its written. Be you holy, for I am holy. See your Model. See the Copy to which you are to write. You are far short of it. Try again. May the power of Jesus rest upon you and may He who has worked us to the same thing to which we have attained continue to work in us till we are like our Lord Himself!

**MATTHEW 10:37-40.   
Verse** 37. He that loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. What a wonderful sight, then, the Church is, as it passes through this world. The Head of it is Christ, the Cross bearer, and following in the train are all His faithful disciples, all carrying crosses stillthe very picture of a Church. You know how Simon carried the Cross after Christ he is the type of all His disciples

*Did Simon bear the Cross alone,   
And all the rest go free?   
No, theres a cross for everyone,   
And theres a cross for me.*

38, 39. And he that takes not his cross and follows after Me, is not worthy of Me. He that finds his life shall lose it: and he that loses his life for My sake shall find it. You gain life by dying for Christ, but if you saved life by denying the faith you would in the worst sense lose all that makes existence to be life! There is an existence which is nothing but eternal deathand this is the doom of those who depart from Christ. But blessed are they who can give up this temporary mortal life for the sake of an eternal one! I have heard of one who used to often boast of what he would do if it came to his being burntbut just before the day on which he was to be burnt alive for the faith, he recanted. He was allowed to go home. In a few months it happened that he was burnt alive in his house. Unhappy man that could not burn for Christ, but had to burn after all! He that finds his life shall lose it: and he that loses his life for My sake shall find it.

40. He that receives you receives Me, and he that receives Me receives Him who sent Me. Think of that, you that have received Christ! You have received God, Himself, and He has come to dwell and reign with your soul!

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #621 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST

NO. 621

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 26, 1865, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

The precious blood of Christ.   
1 Peter 1:19.

IT is frequently my fear I should fall into the habit of preaching about the Gospel rather than directly preaching the Gospel. And then I labor to return to the first principle of our faith and often take a text upon which it would not be possible to say anything new, but which will compel me to recapitulate in your hearing those things which are vital, essential and fundamental to the life of our souls. With such a text as this before me, if I do not preach the Gospel I shall do violence both to the sacred Word and to my own conscience. Surely I may hope that while endeavoring to unfold my text and to proclaim the saving Word, the Holy Spirit will be present to take of the things of Christ and to show them unto us and make them saving to our souls.

Blood has from the beginning been regarded by God as a most precious thing. He has hedged about this fountain of vitality with the most solemn sanctions. The Lord thus commanded Noah and his descendants, Flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall you not eat. Man had every moving thing that lives given him for meat, but they were by no means to eat the blood with the flesh. Things strangled were to be considered unfit for food, since God would not have man became too familiar with blood by eating or drinking it in any shape or form. Even the blood of bulls and goats thus had a sacredness put upon it by Gods decrees.

As for the blood of man, you remember how Gods threats ran, And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it and at the hand of man; at the hand of every mans brother will I require the life of man. Whoever sheds mans blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man. It is true that the first murderer had not his blood shed by man, but then the crime was new and the penalty had not then been settled and proclaimed. And therefore the case was clearly exceptional and one by itself. And, moreover, Cains doom was probably far more terrible than if he had been slain upon the spothe was permitted to fill up his measure of wickedness, to be a wanderer and a vagabond upon the face of the earthand then to enter into the dreadful heritage of wrath, which his life of sin had doubtless greatly increased.

Under the theocratic dispensation, in which God was the King and governed Israel, murder was always punished in the most exemplary manner and there was never any toleration or excuse for it. Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, life for life was the stern inexorable law. It is expressly written,

You shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer which is guilty of death: but he shall surely be put to death. Even in cases where life was taken in chance medley or misadventure, the matter was not overlooked. The slayer fled at once to a City of Refuge, where, after having his case properly tried, he was allowed to reside. But there was no safety for him elsewhere until the death of the high priest.

The general law in all cases was, So you shall not pollute the land wherein you are: for blood defiles the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed there, but by the blood of him that shed it. Defile not, therefore, the land which you shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I, the Lord, dwell among the children of Israel. Strange is it that that very thing which defiles should turn out to be that which alone can cleanse! It is clear, then, that blood was ever precious in Gods sight and He would have it so in ours.

He first forbids the blood of beasts as food of man, then avenges the blood of man shed in anger. And, furthermore, takes care that even accidents shall not pour it out unheeded. Nor is this all. We hear within us the echo of that law. We feel that God has truly made blood a sacred thing. Though some can, through use and habit, read the story of war with patience, if not with pleasurethough the sound of the trumpet and the drum and the tramp of soldiery will stir our heart and make us, for the moment, sympathize with the martial spirityet, if we could see war as it really is, if we could only walk but halfway across a battlefield or see but one wounded man, a cold shiver would shoot through the very marrow of our bones and we should have experimental proof that blood is, indeed, a sacred thing.

The other night, when I listened to one who professed to have come from battlefields of the American war, I felt a faintness and clammy sweat steal over me as he shocked and horrified us with the details of mutilated bodies and spoke of standing up to the tops of his boots in pools of human gore. The shudder which ran through us all was a sure confirmation of the sanctity with which God has forever guarded the symbol and nutriment of life. We cannot even contemplate the probability of the shedding of blood without fear and trembling.

And comforts which entail high risks in their production or procuring will lose all sweetness to men of humane dispositions. Who does not sympathize with David in his action with regard to the water procured by his three mighties! The three heroes broke through the hosts of the Philistines to bring David water from the well of Bethlehem. But as soon as he received that water, though very thirsty and much longing for it, yet he felt he could not touch it because these men had run such dreadful risks in breaking thrice through the Philistine hosts to bring it to him! He, therefore, took the water and poured it out before the Lord, as if it was not meet that men should run risk of life for any but God who gave life!

His words were very touching, My God forbid it me, that I should do this thing! Shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy? For with the jeopardy or their lives they brought it. I wonder at the cruelty of the great crowds who delight to see men and women running such fearful risks of life in rope-dancing. How is it that they can feed their morbid curiosity on such dreadful food and greet the man who is foolish enough to run such hazards with acclamations because of his foolhardiness? How much more Christ-like the regret of David that he should have led any man to risk his life for his comfort! How much more laudable was his belief that nothing short of the highest benevolence to man, or the highest devotion to God can justify such jeopardy of life!

Further permit me to observe that the seal of the sanctity of blood is usually set upon the conscience even of the most depraved of mennot merely upon gentle souls and sanctified spiritsbut even upon the most hardened. You will notice that men, bad as they are, shrink from the disgrace of taking blood money. Even those high priests who could sit down and gloat their eyes with the sufferings of the Savior would not receive the price of blood into the treasury. And even Judas, that son of perdition, who could contemplate without horror the treachery by which he betrayed his Masteryet when he had the thirty pieces of silver in his palm, found the money too hot to hold! He threw it down in the temple, for he could not bear or abide the sight of the price of blood. This is another proof that even when virtue has become extinct and vice reigns, yet God has put the broad arrow of His own Sovereignty so manifestly upon the very thought of blood that even these worst of spirits are compelled to shrink from tampering with it.

Now, if in ordinary cases the shedding of life is thus precious, can you guess how fully God utters His hearts meaning when He says, Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints? If the death of a rebel is precious, what must be the death of a child? If He will not contemplate the shedding of the blood of His own enemies and of them that curse Him without proclaiming vengeance, what do you think He feels concerning His own elect, of whom He says, Precious shall their blood be in His sight? Will He not avenge them, though He bears long with them?

Shall the cup which the Harlot of Rome filled with the blood of the saints long remain unavenged? Shall not the martyrs from Piedmont and the Alps and from our Smithfield and from the hills of covenanting Scotland yet obtain from God the vengeance due for all that they suffered and all the blood which they poured forth in the defense of His cause? I have taken you up, you see, from the beast to manfrom man to Gods chosen menthe martyrs. I have another step to indicate to youit is a far larger oneit is to the blood OF JESUS CHRIST.

Here powers of speech would fail to convey to you an idea of the preciousness! Behold here, a Person innocentwithout taint within, or flaw without! A Person meritorious who magnified the Law and made it honorablea Person who served both God and man even unto death. No, here you have a Divine Personso Divine that in the Acts of the Apostles Paul calls His blood the blood of God. Place innocence and merit and dignity and position and Godhead itself in the scale and then conceive what

must be the inestimable value of the blood which Jesus Christ poured forth!

Angels must have seen that matchless blood-shedding with wonder and amazement, and even God Himself saw what never before was seen in creation or in ProvidenceHe saw Himself more gloriously displayed than the whole universe beside. Let us come nearer to the text and try to show forth the preciousness of the blood of Christ. We shall confine ourselves to an enumeration of some of the many properties possessed by this precious blood.

I felt, as I was studying, that I should have so many divisions this morning that some of you would compare my sermon to the bones in Ezekiels visionthey were very many and they were very drybut I am in hopes that Gods Holy Spirit may so descend upon the bones in my sermonwhich would be but dry of themselvesthat they being quickened and full of life you may admire the exceeding great army of Gods thoughts of loving-kindness towards His people in the sacrifice of His own dear Son.

The precious blood of Christ is useful to Gods people in a thousand wayswe intend to speak of twelve of them. After all, the real preciousness of a thing in the time of pinch and trial must depend upon its usefulness. A bag of pearls would be to us, this morning, far more precious than a bag of bread. But you have all heard the story of the man in the desert who stumbled, when near to death, upon a bag. He opened it, hoping that it might be the wallet of some passer-by, and he found in it nothing but pearls! If they had been crusts of bread, how much more precious would they have been! I say, in the hour of necessity and peril, the use of a thing really constitutes the preciousness of it. This may not be according to political economy, but it is according to common sense.

1. The precious blood of Christ has a REDEEMING POWER. It redeems from the Law. We were all under the Law which says, Do this and live. We were slaves to itChrist has paid the ransom price and the Law is no longer our tyrant master. We are entirely free from it. The Law had a dreadful curseit threatened that whoever should violate one of its precepts should dieChrist has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us.

By the fear of this curse the Law inflicted a continual dread on those who were under it. They knew they had disobeyed it and they were all their lifetime subject to bondage, fearful lest death and destruction should come upon them at any moment. But we are not under the Law, but under Grace, and consequently, We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but we have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father. We are not afraid of the Law nowits worst thunders cannot affect us for they are not hurled at us!

Its most tremendous lightning cannot touch us for we are sheltered beneath the Cross of Christ, where the thunder loses its terror and the lightning its fury. We read the Law of God with pleasure now! We look upon it as in the ark covered with the Mercy Seat and not thundering in tempests from Sinais fiery brow. Happy is that man who knows his full redemption from the Law, its curse, its penalty, its present dread!

My Brethren, the life of a Jew, happy as it was compared with that of a heathen, was perfect drudgery compared to yours and mine! He was hedged in with a thousand commands and prohibitions. His forms and ceremonies were abundant and their details minutely arranged. He was always in danger of making himself unclean. If he sat upon a bed or upon a stool he might be defiled. If he drank out of an earthen pitcher, or even touched the wall of a housea leprous man might have put his hand there before him and he would thus become defiled. A thousand sins of ignorance were like so many hidden pits in his way. He must be perpetually in fear lest he should be cut off from the people of God.

When he had done his best any one day, he knew he had not finished no Jew could ever talk of a finished work. The bullock was offered, but he must bring another. The lamb was offered this morning, but another must be offered this evening, another tomorrow and another the next day. The Passover is celebrated with holy ritesit must be kept in the same manner next year. The high priest has gone within the veil once, but be must go there again. The thing is never finishedit is always beginning. He never comes any nearer to the end. The Law could not make the comer thereunto perfect.

But see our positionwe are redeemed from this! Our Law is fulfilled, for Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness! Our Passover is slain, for Jesus died! Our righteousness is finished, for we are complete in Him! Our victim is slain, our Priest has gone within the veil, the blood is sprinkled! We are clean and clean beyond any fear of defilement, For He has perfected forever those that were set apart. Value this precious blood, my Beloved, because thus it has redeemed you from the thralldom and bondage which the Law imposed upon its votaries.

2. The value of the blood lies much in its ATONING EFFICACY. We are told in Leviticus, that, it is the blood which makes an atonement for the soul. God never forgave sin apart from blood under the Law. This stood as a constant textWithout shedding of blood there is no remission. Meal and honey, sweet spices and incense would not avail without shedding of blood. There was no remission promised to future diligence or deep repentancewithout shedding of blood pardon never came. The blood, and the blood alone, put away sin and permitted a man to come to Gods courts to worshipbecause it made him one with God.

The blood is the great at-one-ment. There is no hope of pardon for the sin of any man except through its punishment being fully endured. God must punish sin. It is not an arbitrary arrangement that sin shall be punished, but it is a part of the very constitution of moral government that sin must be punished. Never did God swerve from that and never will He. He will by no means clear the guilty.

Christ, therefore, came and was punished in the place of all His people. Ten thousands times ten thousands are the souls for whom Jesus shed His blood. He, for the sins of all the elect, has made a complete Atonement. For every man born of Adam who has believed or shall believe on

Him, or who is taken to Glory before being capable of believing, Christ has made a complete Atonement. And there is none other plan by which sinners can be made at one with God, except by Jesus precious blood.

I may make sacrifices. I may mortify my body. I may be baptized. I may receive sacraments. I may pray until my knees grow hard with kneeling. I may read devout words until I know them by heart. I may celebrate masses. I may worship in one language or in fifty languagesbut I can never be at one with God except by bloodand that blood, the precious blood of Christ.

My dear Friends, many of you have felt the power of Christs redeeming blood! You are not under the Law now, but under Graceyou have also felt the power of the atoning bloodyou know that you are reconciled unto God by the death of His Son. You feel that He is no angry God to you, that He loves you with a love unchangeable. But this is not the case with you all. O that it were! I do pray that you may know, this very day, the atoning power of the blood of Jesus! Creature, would you not be at one with your Creator? Puny man, would you not have Almighty God to be your Friend? You can not be at one with God except through the at-onement. God has set forth Christ to be a Propitiation for our sins. Oh, take the Propitiation through faith in His blood and be at one with God!

3. Thirdly, the precious blood of Jesus Christ has A CLEANSING POWER. John tells us in his first Epistle, first chapter, seventh verse, The blood of Jesus Christ His Son, cleanses us from all sin. Sin has a directly defiling effect upon the sinner, from which comes the need of cleansing. Suppose that God, the Holy One, were perfectly willing to be at one with an unholy sinner which is supposing a case that cannot be. Yet even should the pure eyes of the Most High wink at sin, still, as long as we are unclean we never could feel in our own hearts anything like joy and rest and peace.

Sin is a plague to the man who has it, as well as a hateful thing to the God who abhors it. I must be made clean. I must have my iniquities washed away or I never can be happy. The first mercy that is sung of in the one hundred and third Psalm is, Who forgives all your iniquities. Now we know it is by the precious blood that sin is cleansed. Murder, adultery, theftwhatever the sin may bethere is power in the veins of Christ to take it away at once and forever! No matter how many, nor how deeply-seated our offenses may be, the blood cries, Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

It is the song of HeavenWe have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. This is the experience of earth, for none was ever cleansed except in this fountain opened for the house of David for sin and for uncleanness. You have heard this so often that perhaps if an angel told it to you, you would not take much interest in itunless you have known experimentally the horror of uncleanness and the blessedness of being made clean. Beloved, it is a thought which ought to make our hearts leap within us, that through Jesus blood there is not a spot left upon any Believer, not a wrinkle nor any such thing

*Though in myself defiled I am,   
And black as Kedars tent, appear,   
Yet when I put Your garment on,   
Fair as the courts of Solomon.*

You have no spiritual beauty, Beloved, apart from Christ. But, having Christ, He Himself says, You are all fair, My Love, there is no spot in you. Oh, precious blood which makes the Blackamoor white as snow and takes out the leopards spots! Oh, precious blood removing the Hell-stains of abundant iniquity and permitting me to stand accepted in the Beloved, notwithstanding all the many ways in which I have rebelled against my God!

4. A fourth property of the blood of Christ is ITS PRESERVING POWER. You will rightly comprehend this when you remember that dreadful night of Egypt, when the destroying angel was abroad to slay Gods enemies. A bitter cry went up from house to house as the first-born of all Egyptfrom Pharaoh on the throne to the first-born of the woman behind the mill and the slave in the dungeonall fell dead in a moment! The angel sped with noiseless wings through every street of Egypts many cities.

But there were some houses which he could not enterhe sheathed his sword and breathed no malediction there. What was it which preserved the houses? The inhabitants were not better than others. Their habitations were not more elegantly builtthere was nothing except the bloodstain on the lintel and on the two side postsand it is written, When I see the blood I will pass over you. There was nothing whatever which gained the Passover for Israel but the sprinkling of blood!

The father of the house had taken a lamb and killed ithad caught the blood in a basin. And while the lamb was roasted that it might be eaten by every inhabitant of the house, he took a bunch of hyssop, stirred the basin of blood and went outside with his children and began to strike the posts and to strike the door. And as soon as this was done they were all safe, all safeno angel could touch themthe fiends of Hell themselves could not venture there.

Beloved, see, we are preserved in Christ Jesus! Did not God see the blood before you and I saw it and was not that the reason why He spared our forfeited lives when, like barren fig trees, we brought forth no fruit for Him? When we saw the blood, let us remember it was not

our seeing it which really saved usone sight of it gave us peace, but it was Gods seeing it that saved us. When I see the blood I will pass over you.

And today, if my eye of faith is dim and I see the precious blood so as to rejoice that I am washed but I can scarcely see it, yet God can see the blood and as long as the undimmed eyes of Jehovah look upon the atoning Sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, He cannot smite one soul that is covered with its scarlet mantle. Oh, how precious is this blood-red shield! My Soul, cower yourself down under it when the darts of Hell are flying! This is the chariot, the covering of purplelet the storm come and the deluge rise, let even the fiery hail descend beneath that crimson pavilionmy soul must rest secure, for what can touch me when I am covered with His

precious blood?

The preserving power of that blood should make us feel how precious it is. Beloved, let me beg you to try and realize these points. You know I told you before I cannot say anything new upon the subject, neither can I embody these old thoughts in new words. I should only spoil them and be making a fool of myself by trying to make a display of myself and my own powers, instead of the precious blood. Let me ask you to get here, right under the shelter of the Cross. Sit down, now, beneath the shadow of the Cross and feel, I am safe, I am safe, O you devils of Hell, or you angels of GodI could challenge you all and say, Who shall separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus, or who shall lay anything to my charge, seeing that Christ has died for me?

When Heaven is on a blaze. When earth begins to shake. When the mountains rock. When God divides the righteous from the wicked, happy will they be who can find a shelter beneath the blood! But where will you be who have never trusted in its cleansing power? You will call to the rocks to hide you and to the mountains to cover you, but all in vain. God help you now, or even the blood will not help you then!

5. Fifthly, the blood of Christ is precious because of its PLEADING PREVALENCE. Paul says in the twelfth chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, at the twenty-fourth verse, It speaks better things than that of Abel. Abels blood pleaded and prevailed. Its cry was, Vengeance! and Cain was punished. Jesus blood pleads and prevails. Its cry is Father, forgive them! and sinners are forgiven through it.

When I cannot pray as I would, how sweet to remember that the blood prays! There is no voice in my tongue, but there is always a voice in the blood. If I cannot, when I bow before my God, get farther than to say, God be merciful to me, a sinner, yet my Advocate before the Throne is not dumb because I am and His plea has not lost its power because my faith in it may happen to be diminished. The blood is always alike prevalent with God. The wounds of Jesus are so many mouths to plead with God for sinnerswhat if I say they are so many chains with which love is lead captive and sovereign mercy bound to bless every favored child?

What if I say that the wounds of Jesus have become doors of Divine Grace through which Divine love comes forth to the vilest of the vile and doors through which our wants go up to God and plead with Him that He would be pleased to supply them? Next time you cannot pray. Next time you are crying and striving and groaning up in that upper room, praise the value of the precious blood which makes intercession before the eternal Throne of God!

6. Sixthly, the blood is precious where perhaps we little expect it to operate. It is precious, because of its MELTING INFLUENCE on the human heart. They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced and they shall mourn for Him, as one that mourns for his only son and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. There is a great complaint among sinners, when they are a little awakened, that they feel their hearts so hard. The blood is a mighty melter. Alchemists of old sought after a universal solventthe blood of Jesus is that. There is no nature so stubborn that a sight of the love of God in Christ Jesus cannot melt it, if Grace shall open the blind eye to see Christ. The stone in the human heart shall melt away when it is plunged into a bath of Divine blood. Cannot you say, dear Friends, that Toplady was right in his hymn

*Law and terrors do but harden   
All the while they work alone.   
But a sense of blood-bought pardon,   
Soon dissolves a heart of stone?*

Sinner, if God shall lead you to believe this morning in Christ to save youif, then, you will trust your soul in His hands to have it savedthat hard heart of yours will melt at once! You would think differently of sin, my Friends, if you knew that Christ smarted for it. Oh, if you knew that out of those dear listless eyes there looked the loving heart of Jesus upon you, I know you would say, I hate the sin that made Him mourn and fastened Him to the accursed tree. I do not think that preaching the Law generally softens mens hearts.

Hitting men with a hard hammer may often drive the particles of a hard heart more closely together and make the iron yet more hard. But oh, to preach Christs loveHis great love with which He loved us even when we were dead in sins and to tell to sinners that there is life in a look at the Crucified Onesurely this will prove that Christ was exalted on high to give repentance and remission of sins! Come for repentance, if you cannot come repenting! Come for a broken heart, if you cannot come with a broken heart! Come to be melted, if you are not melted. Come to be wounded, if you are not wounded.

7. But then comes in a seventh property of the precious blood. The same blood that melts has A GRACIOUS POWER TO PACIFY. John Bunyan speaks of the Law as coming to sweep a chamber like a maid with a broom. And when she began to sweep there was a great dust which almost choked people and got into their eyes. But then came the Gospel with its drops of water and laid the dust and then the broom might be used far better.

Now it sometimes happens that the Law of God makes such a dust in the sinners soul that nothing but the precious blood of Jesus Christ can make that dust lie still. The sinner is so disquieted that nothing can ever give him any relief except to know that Jesus died for him. When I felt the burden of my sin, I do confess all the preaching I ever heard never gave me one single atom of comfort. I was told to do this and to do that and when I had done it all, I had not advanced one inch farther.

I thought I must feel something, or pray a certain quantity. And when I had done that, the burden was quite as heavy. But the moment I saw that there was nothing whatever for me to do, that Jesus did it long, long ago that all my sins were put on His back and that He suffered all I ought to have sufferedwhy then my heart had peace with God. Real peace by

believing peace through the precious blood!

Two soldiers were on duty in the citadel of Gibraltar. One of them had obtained peace through the precious blood of Christ, the other was in very great distress of mind. It happened to be their turn to stand sentinel, both of them, the same night. And there are many long passages in the rock, which passages are adapted to convey sounds a very great distance. The soldier in distress of mind was ready to beat his breast for griefhe felt he had rebelled against God and could not find how he could be reconciled when suddenly there came through the air what seemed to him to be a mysterious voice from Heaven saying these words, The precious blood of Christ.

In a moment he saw it allit was that which reconciled us to Godand he rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory! Now did those words come directly from God? No. They did as far as the effect was concerned they did come from the Holy Spirit. Who was it that had spoken those words? Curiously enough, the other sentinel at the far end of the passage was standing still and meditating when an officer came by and it was his duty, of course, to give the word for the night and with soldier-like promptness he did give itbut not accurately, for instead of giving the proper word, he was so taken up by his meditations that he said to the officer, The precious blood of Christ.

He corrected himself in a moment. But he had said it and it had passed along the passage and reached the ear for which God meant itand the man found peace and spent his life in the fear of God, being in after years the means of completing one of our excellent translations of the Word of God into the Hindu language. Who can tell, dear Friends, how much peace you may give by only telling the story of our Savior! If I only had about a dozen words to speak and knew I must die, I would say, This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. The doctrine of Substitution is the pith and marrow of the Gospel, and if you can hold that forth, you will prove the value of the precious blood by its peace-giving power.

8. We can only spare a minute now upon ITS SANCTIFYING INFLUENCE. The Apostle tells us in the ninth chapter and the fourteenth verse that Christ sanctified the people by His own blood. Certain it is that the same blood which justifies by taking away sin does, in its after-action, act upon the new nature and lead it onward to subdue sin and to follow out the commands of God. There is no motive for holiness so great as that which streams from the veins of Jesus. If you want to know why you should be obedient to Gods will, my Brethren, go and look upon Him who sweat, as it were, great drops of blood and the love of Christ will constrain you, because you will thus judge, That if one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all that we which live might not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto Him that died for us and rose again.

9. In the ninth place, another blessed property of the blood of Jesus is

ITS POWER TO GIVE ENTRANCE. We are told that the high priest never went within the veil without blood. And surely we can never get into Gods heart, nor into the secret of the Lord which is with them that fear Him, nor into any familiar communion with our great Father and Friend, except by the sprinkling of the precious blood of Jesus.

We have access with boldness into this grace wherein we stand, but we never dare go a step towards God except as we are sprinkled with this precious blood. I am persuaded some of us do not come near to God because we forget the blood. If you try to have fellowship with God in your graces, your experiences, your believingyou will fail. But if you try to come near to God as you stand in Christ Jesusyou will have courage to come. And on the other hand, God will run to meet you when He sees you in the face of His Anointed. Oh, for power to get near to God! But there is no getting near to God except as we got near to the Cross. Praise the blood, then, for its power of giving you nearness to God.

10. Tenthlya hint only. The blood is very precious, in the tenth place, for ITS CONFIRMING POWER. No covenant, we are told, was ever valid unless victims were slain and blood sprinkled. And it is the blood of Jesus which has ratified the New Covenant and made its promises sure to all the seed. Therefore it is called the blood of the Everlasting Covenant. The Apostle changes the figure and he says that a testament is not of force except the testator is dead. The blood is a proof that the Testator died and now the Law holds good to every inheritor because Jesus Christ has signed it with His own gore.

Beloved, let us rejoice that the promises are yes, and amen, for no other reason than thisbecause Christ Jesus died and rose again. Had there been no bowing of the head upon the tree, no slumbering in the sepulcher, no rising from the tomb, then the promises had been uncertain, fickle thingsnot immutable things wherein it is impossible for God to lieand consequently they could never have afforded strong consolation to those who have fled for refuge to Christ Jesus. See, then, the confirming nature of the blood of Jesus and count it very precious.

11. I am almost done. But there remains another. It is the eleventh one, and that is THE INVIGORATING POWER of the precious blood. If you want to know that, you must see it set forth as we often do when we cover the table with the white cloth and put the bread and wine on it. What do we mean by this ordinance? We mean by it that Christ suffered for us and that we, being already washed in His precious blood and so made clean, do come to the table to drink wine as an emblem of the way in which we live and feed upon His body and upon His blood.

He tells us, Except a man shall eat My flesh and drink My blood, there is no life in him. We do therefore, after a spiritual sort, drink His blood and He says, My blood is drink, indeed. Superior drink! Transcendent drink! Strengthening drinksuch drink as angels never taste though they drink before the eternal Throne. Oh Beloved, whenever your spirit faints, this wine shall comfort you! When your griefs are many, drink and forget your misery and remember your sufferings no more!

When you are very weak and faint, take not a little of this for your souls sake, but drink a full draught of the wine on the lees, well refined, which was set abroad by the soldiers spike and flowed from Christs own heart! Drink to the full. Yes, drink abundantly O Beloved, says Christ to the spouse. And do not linger when He invites. You see the blood has power without to cleanse and then it has power within to strengthen. O precious Blood, how many are Your uses! May I prove them all!

12. Lastly and twelfthtwelve is the number of perfection. We have brought out a perfect number of its usesthe blood has AN OVERCOMING POWER. It is written in the Revelation, They overcame through the blood of the Lamb. How could they do otherwise? He that fights with the precious blood of Jesus fights with a weapon that will cut through soul and spirit, joints and marrowa weapon that makes Hell tremble and makes Heaven subservient and earth obedient to the will of the men who can wield it!

The blood of Jesus! Sin dies at its presence, death ceases to be death Hell itself would be dried up if that blood could operate there. The blood of Jesus! Heavens gates are opened! Bars of iron are pushed back. The blood of Jesus! My doubts and fears flee, my troubles and disasters disappear! The blood of Jesus! Shall I not go on conquering and to conquer so long as I can plead that? In Heaven this shall be the choice jewel which shall glitter upon the head of Jesusthat He gives to His people Victory, victory, through the blood of the Lamb.

And now, is this blood to be had? Can it be got at? Yes, it is FREE, as well as full of virtuefree to every soul that believes. Whoever cares to come and trust in Jesus shall find the virtue of this blood in his case this very morning. Away from your own works! Turn those eyes of yours to the full Atonement made, to the utmost ransom paid! And if God enables you, poor Soul, this morning to say, I take that precious blood to be my only hope, you are saved and you may sing with the rest of us

*Now, freed from sin, I walk at large;   
The Saviors bloods my full discharge.   
At His dear feet my soul Ill lay,   
A sinner saved and homage pay.*   
God grant it may be so, for His names sake. Amen.

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THE NEW NATURE   
NO. 398

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 30, 1861, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever. For all flesh is as grass and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower thereof falls away: but the Word of the Lord endures   
forever. And this is the Word which   
by the Gospel is preached unto you.   
1 Peter 1:23-25.

PETER had earnestly exhorted the scattered saints to love each other with a pure heart fervently and he wisely fetches his argument, not from the Law, nor from nature, nor from philosophy but from that high and divine nature which God has implanted in His people. Love each other with a pure heart fervently for you have been born againnot with corruptible seedbut with incorruptible.

I might compare Peter to some judicious tutor of the princes of the blood who labors to beget and foster a kingly spirit in the kings sons. From their position and descent he brings argument for a dignified behaviorDo not act foolishlyit would be unseemly in a king. Speak not so ribald language would be unbecoming to a prince. Indulge not in these vanitiessuch would be degrading to the illustrious of the earth.

So looking upon Gods people as being heirs of glory, princes of the blood royal, descendants of the King of kings, earths true and only real aristocracyPeter says to them, See that you love one another, because of your noble birth, being born of incorruptible seed. Because of your pedigree, being descended from God, the Creator of all things. And because of your immortal destiny, for you shall never pass away, though the glory of flesh shall fade and even its very existence shall cease.

I think it would be well, my Brethren, if in a spirit of humility you and I recognized the free dignity of our regenerated nature and lived up to it. Oh, what is a Christian? If you compare him with a king he adds priestly sanctity to royal dignity. The kings royalty often lies only in his crown but with a Christian it is infused into his very nature! Compare him with a senator, with a mighty warrior, or a master of wisdom and he far excels them all. He is of another race than those who are only born of woman. He is as much above his fellows through his new birth as man is above the beast that perishes.

As humanity towers in dignity high above the groveling brute, so does the regenerate man overtop the best of human once-born mortals. Surely he ought to bear himself and act as one who is not of the multitudeone

who has been chosen out of the world, distinguished by sovereign grace, written among the peculiar peopleand who therefore cannot grovel as others grovel, nor think as others think. Let the dignity of your nature and the brightness of your prospects, O B

In the text there are three points which I think will repay our very serious attention. The Apostle evidently speaks of two livesthe one, the life which is natural, born, matured and perfected only by the flesh. The other, the life which is spiritualborn of the Spirit, in antagonism with the flesh, surviving it and triumphantly rising to celestial glory.

Now, in speaking of these two lives the Apostle brings out, first of all, a comparison and a contrast between the two birthsfor each life has its own birth. Then he brings out a contrast between the manifest existence of the two lives. And then lastly, between the glory of the two livesfor each life has its glorybut the glory of the spiritual life far excels the glory of the natural.

I. First then, the Apostle Peter draws A COMPARISON AND CONTRAST BETWEEN THE TWO BIRTHS WHICH ARE THE DOORWAYS OF THE TWO LIVES.

First, we have said that every life is prefaced by birth. It is so naturallywe are born. It is so spirituallywe are born again. Except a man be born he cannot enter into the kingdom of nature. Except a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven. Birth is the lowly gateway by which we enter into life and the lofty portal by which we are admitted into the kingdom of Heaven.

Now there is a comparison between the two births. In both there is a solemn mystery. I have read, I have even heard sermons in which the minister seemed to me rather to play the part of a physician than of a divine, exposing and explaining the mysteries of our natural birth across which both God in nature and the good man in delicacy must ever throw a veil. It is a hallowed thing to be born as surely as it is a solemnity to die. Birthdays and death days are days of awe. Birth is very frequently used in Scripture as one of the most graphic pictures of solemn mystery. Into this, no man may idly pry and Science herself, when she has dared to look within the veil, has turned back awestricken, from those lower parts of the earth in which David declares us to be curiously wrought.

Greater still is the mystery of the new birth. That we are born again we know, but how, we cannot tell. How the Spirit of God opens the mind. How it is that He renews the faculties and imparts fresh desires by which those faculties shout be guided. How it is that He enlightens the understanding, subdues the will, purifies the intellect, reverses the desire, lifts up the hope and puts the fear in its right channel we cannot tell. We must leave this among the secret things which belong unto God.

The Holy Spirit works, but the manner of His operation is not to be comprehended. The wind blows where it wills and you hear the sound thereof, but you cannot tell from where it comes nor where it goes, so is everyone that is born of the Spirit. Oh, my Hearers, have you felt this mystery? Explain it you cannot, nor can I, nor ought we to attempt an explanationfor where God is silent it is perhaps profanity and certainly impertinencefor us to speak. The two births, then, are alike in their solemn mystery.

But then, we know this much of our natural birth, that in birth there is a life created. Yonder infant is beginning his beinganother creature has lifted up its feeble cry to Heavenanother mortal has come to tread this theater of action, to breathe, to live, to die. And so in the new birth there is an absolute creationwe are made new creatures in Christ Jesus there is another spirit born to pray, to believe in Christ, to love Him here and to rejoice in Him hereafter. As no one doubts but that birth is the manifestation of a creation so let no one doubt but that regeneration is the manifestation of a creation of God, as divine, as much beyond the power of man as the creation of the human mind itself.

But we know also that in birth there is not only a life created, but a life communicated. Each child has its parent. The very flowers trace themselves back to a parental seed. We spring not from our own loins. We are not self-createdthere is a life communicated. We have links between the son and the father and back till we come to father Adam. So in regeneration there is a life, not merely created, but communicated, even the very life of God, who has begotten us again unto a lively hope. As truly as the father lives in the child, so truly does the very life and nature of God live in every child born heir of Heaven. We are as certainly partakers of the divine nature by the new birth as we were partakers of the human nature by the old birthso far the comparison holds good.

Equally certain is it that in the natural and in the spiritual birth there is life entailed. There are certain propensities which we inherit from which this side of the grave we shall not be free. Our temperament brave or frivolous. Our passions slow or hasty. Our propensities sensual or aspiring. Our faculties contracted or expansiveare to a great measure an entailed inheritance as much linked to our future portion as are wings to an eagle or a shell to a snail. If I may so speak, there are those qualities that composition and disposition of nature which will naturally, if circumstances assist, work out in full development certain results.

So is it with us when we are born againa heavenly nature is entailed upon us. We cannot but be holy. The new nature cannot but serve Godit mustit will pant to be nearer to Christ and more like Him. It has aspirations which time cannot satisfydesires which earth cannot surfeit longings which Heaven alone can gratify. There is a life entailed upon us in the moment when we pass from death unto life in the solemn mystery of regeneration.

In the old birth and in the new birth also, a life is also brought forth which is complete in all its parts and only needs to be developed. Yon infant in the oracle shall never have another limb, or another eye. Its limb

hardens, it grows, it gathers strength, its brain also enlarges its sphere, but the faculties are there alreadythey are not implanted afterward. Verily, so is it in the new-born child of God. Faith, love, hope and every grace are there the moment he believes in Christ. They grow, tis true, but they were all there in the instant of regeneration. The babe in grace who is just now born to God has every part of the spiritual manit only needs to grow till he becomes a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

Thus, you perceive, that the two births have a very close resemblance to one another. I pray, now that I have introduced the subject, do not turn from it till you have thought of the reality of the new birth, as you must of the reality of the first. You were not here if you had not been bornyou shall never be in Heaven unless you are born again. You had not been able today to hear, or think, or see if you had not been born. You are not today able to pray or to believe in Christ unless you are born again. The enjoyments of this world you could never have known if it had not been for birth. The saved delight of God you do not know today and you never shall know unless you be born again.

Do not look upon regeneration as though it were a fancy or a fiction. I do assure you, my Hearers, it is as real as is the natural birth. For spiritual is not the same as fanciful, but the spiritual is as real as even nature itself. To be born again is as much a matter of fact to be realized, to be discerned and to be discovered, as to be born for the first time into this vale of tears.

But now comes the contrastbeing born not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible. Herein lies the contrast between the two. That child which has just experienced the first birth has been made partaker of corruptible seed. The depravity of his parent lies sleeping within him. Could he speak, he might say so. David didBehold, I was born in sin and shaped in iniquity. He receives the evil virus which was first infused into us by the Fall. Not so, however, is it when we are born again. No sin is then sown within us. This sin of the old flesh remains but there is no sin in the newborn natureit cannot sin because it is born of God Himself.

It is as impossible for that new nature to sin as for the Deity itself to be defiled. It is a part of the divine naturea spark struck off from the rental orb of light and life and dead or dark it cannot bebecause it would be contrary to its nature to be either the one or the other. Oh, what a difference! In the first birthborn to sin! In the nextborn to holiness! In the firstpartakers of corruption, in the nextheirs of incorruption. In the firstdepravity. In the secondperfection. What broader contrast could there be! What should make us more thoroughly long for this new birth than the glorious fact that we are by its means consciously lifted up from the ruins of the Fall and made perfect in Christ Jesus?

In the birth of the flesh too, what dread uncertainties attend it! What shall become of yonder child? It may live to curse the day in which it was born as did the poor troubled Patriarch of old. What sorrow may drive its plowshares along its yet unwrinkled brow? Ah, child, you shall be grayheaded one day but ere that comes you shall have felt a thousand storms beating about your heart and head. Little do you know your destiny, but assuredly you shall be of few days and full of trouble.

Not so in the Regenerationwe shall never rue the day in which we are born againNEVER! We shall never look back upon that day with sorrow, but always with ecstasy and delight, for we are ushered thennot into the hovel of humanitybut into the palace of Deity. We are not then born into a valley of tears, but into an inheritance in the Canaan of God.

That child, too, so fondly the object of its mothers love may one day vex or break its parents heart. Are not children doubtful mercies? Bring they not with them sad forebodings of what they yet may be? Alas for the pretty prattlers who have grown up to be convicted criminals! But blessed be God, they who are sons of God shall never break their Fathers heart. Their new nature shall be worthy of Him that gave it existence. They shall live to honor Him, they shall die to be perfectly like Him and shall rise to glorify Him forever.

We have sometimes said that God has a very naughty familybut surely the naughtiness is in the old Adam natureand not in Jehovahs gracious work. There is no naughtiness in the new creature. In that new creature there is no taint of sin. Gods child as descended from His loins, can never sin. The new nature which God has put into it does never wanderdeath never transgress. It were not the new nature if it did. It were not Gods offspring, if it sinfor that which comes of God is like He is holy, pure and undefiled, separate from sin. In this indeed lies a strange difference. We know not to what that first nature tendswho can tell what bitterness it shall bring forth? But we know where the new nature tendsfor it ripens towards the perfect image of Him that created us in Christ Jesus.

Perhaps without my endeavoring to enlarge further you could yourselves muse upon this theme. It remains but for me upon this first head to return with earnestness to that point upon which I fear the greatest difficulty liesthe realization of this birthfor we repeat it, we are speaking of a factand not a dream, a reality and not a metaphor. Some tell you that the child is regenerated when the drops fall from priestly fingers. My Brethren, a more fond and foul delusion was never perpetrated upon earth. Rome itself did never discourse upon a wilder error than this. Dream not of it. O think not that it is so.

Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. The Lord Himself addresses this sentence not to an infant but to a full-grown man. Nicodemusone who was circumcised according to the Jewish Law, but who yet, though he had received the seal of that Covenant, needed as a man to be born again. We all without exception must know this change. Your life may have been moral, but it will not suffice. The most moralized human nature can never attain to the Divine nature. You may cleanse

and purge the fruit of the first birth but still the inevitable decree demands the second birth for all.

If from your youth up you have been so trained that you have scarcely known the vices of the peopleso tended, hedged inand kept from contamination with sin that you have not known temptationyet you must be born again! And this birth, I repeat it, must be as much a fact, must be as true, as real and as sure as was that first birth in which you were ushered into this world. What do you know of this, my Hearer? What do you know of this? It is a thing you cannot perform for yourself. You cannot regenerate yourself any more than you could cause yourself to be born.

It is a matter out of the range of human powerit is supernatural, it is Divine. Have you partaken of it? Do not merely look back to some hour in which you felt mysterious feelings. No, but judge by the fruits. Have your fears and hopes changed places? Do you love the things you once hated and hate the things you once loved? Are old things passed away? Have all things become new? Christian Brethren, I put the query to you as well as to the rest. It is so easy to be deceived here. We shall find it no trifle to be born again. It is a solemn, it is a momentous matter. Let us not take it for granted because we have given up drunkenness that we are therefore converted.

Let us not presume because we do not swear, because now we attend a place of worship that we are born again. There is more wanted than this. Do not think you are saved because you have some good feelings, some good thoughts. There is more required than thisyou must be born again. And oh, Christian parents, train up your children in the fear of God but do not be content with your trainingthey must be born again. And Christian husbands and Christian wivesbe not satisfied with merely praying that your partners characters may become moral and honest ask that something may be done for them which they cannot do for themselves.

And you philanthropists who think that building new cottages, using fresh plans for drainage, teaching the poor economy, will be the means of saving the world. I pray you go further than such schemes as these. You must change the heart. It is but little use to alter the outward till you have renewed the inward. It is not the bark of the tree that is wrong so much as the sap. It is not the skinit is the bloodno, deeper than the bloodthe very essence of the nature must be altered. The man must be as much made anew as if he never had an existence. No, a greater miracle than thisthese most be two miracles combinedthe old things must pass away and new things must be created by the Holy Spirit.

I tremble while I speak upon this theme, lest I, your minister, should know in theory but not in experience a mystery so sublime as this. What shall we do but together offer a prayer like thisO God, if we are not regenerate let us know the worst of our state. And if we are, let us never cease to plead and pray for others till they, too, shall be renewed by the Holy Spirit. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. Its best endeavors go no higher than flesh and the flesh cannot inherit the kingdom of God. That which is born of the Spirit alone is Spirit and only the Spirit can enter into spiritual things and inherit the spiritual portion which God has provided for His people.

I have thus passed through the somewhat delicate and extremely difficult task of bringing out the Apostles meaningthe comparison between the two birthswhich are the doorsteps of the two lives.

II. I now come to the second pointTHE MANIFEST DIFFERENCE OF THE TWO LIVES RESULTING FROM THE TWO BIRTHS.   
Brethren, look around you. To what shall we compare this immense assembly? As I look upon the many colors and the varied faces, even if it were not in the text, I am certain that a meadow thickly besprinkled with flowers would rise up before my imagination. Look at the mass of people gathered together and does it not remind you of the field in its full summer glory when the king-cups, daisies, cloves and grass blooms, are sunning themselves in countless varieties of beauty? Yes, but not only in the poets eye is there a resemblancebut in the mind of Godand in the experience of man.   
All flesh is grass. All that is born of the first birth, if we compare it to grass in poetry may be compared to it also in factfrom the frailty and shortness of its existence. We passed the meadows but a month ago and they were moved in verdant billows by the breeze like waves of ocean when they are softly stirred with the evening gale. We looked upon the whole scene and it was exceedingly fair. We passed it yesterday and the mowers scythe had cut asunder beauty from its roots and there it lay in heaps ready to be gathered when fully dry.   
The grass is cut down so soonbut if it stood, it would wither and handfuls of dust would take the place of the green and colored leavesfor does not the grass wither and the flowers thereof fall avidly? Such is mortal life. We are not living, Brethrenwe are dying. We begin to breathe and we make the number of our breaths less. Our pulse is beating funeral marches to the tomb. The sand runs down from the upper bulb of the glass and it is emptying fast. Death is written upon every brow. Man, know that you are mortal, for you all are born of woman. Your first birth gave you life and death together.   
You do only breathe awhile to keep you from the jaws of the grave when that breath is spentinto the dust of death you fall there and then. Everything, especially during the last few weeks, has taught us the frailty of human life. The senator who guided the affairs of nations and beheld the rise of a free kingdom lived not to see it fully organized, but expired with many weighty secrets unspoken. The judge who has sentenced many, receives his own sentence at the last. From this earth, since last we met together, master-minds have been taken away and even the monarch on his throne has owned the monarchy of Death.   
How many of the masses, too, have fallen and have been carried to their long home! There have been funerals, some of them funerals of honored men who perished doing their Masters will in saving human life and alas, there have been unhonored burials of others who did the will of Satan and have inherited the flame. There have been deaths abundant on the right hand and on the left and well have Peters words been proved All flesh is grass and all the glory thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withers and the flower thereof falls away.   
Now, Brethren, let us look at the other side of the question. The second birth gave us a nature, tooWill that also die? Is it like grass and its glory like the flower of the field? No, most certainly not. The first nature dies because the seed was corruptible. But the second nature was not created by corruptible seedbut with incorruptiblethe Word of God into which God has infused His own lifeso that it quickens us by the Spirit. That incorruptible Word produces an incorruptible life. The child of God in his new nature never dies. He can never see death. Christ, who is in him, is the immortality and the life. He that lives and believes in Christ shall never die.   
And yet againThough he were dead yet shall he live. When we are born again we receive a nature which is indestructible by accident, which is not to be consumed by fire, drowned by river, weakened by old age, or smitten down by blast of pestilence. A nature invulnerable to poisona nature which shall not be destroyed by the sword. A nature which can never die till the God that gave it should Himself expire and Deity die out. Think of this, my Brethren and surely you will find reason to rejoice. But perhaps, you ask me, why it is the new nature can never die? I am sure the text teaches it never can. But not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, even of the Word of God which lives and abides forever.   
If that does not teach that the spiritual nature which is given us by the new birth never dies, it does not teach anything at all. And if it does teach that, where goes Arminian doctrine of falling from grace? Where goes your Arminian fears of perishing after all? But let me show you why it is that this nature never dies. First, from the fact of its nature. It is in itself incorruptible. Every like produces in like. Man, dying man, produces dying man. God, eternal God, produces everlasting nature when He begets again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy. The earthy dies, we who are earthy die, too.   
As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. The heavenly never dies and if we are born as the heavenly, the heavenly nature dies neither. The first Adam was made a living soul. We are made living souls, too, but that soul at last is separated from the body. The second Adam is made a quickening spirit, and that spirit is not only alive but quickening. Do you not perceive it?the first was a quickened soul quickened, receiving life full a season. The second is a quickening spirit, giving out life, rather than receiving it.   
Like that angel whom some poet pictures who perpetually shot forth sparklers of fire, having within himself an undying flame, the fountain of perpetual floods of light and heat. So is it with the new nature within us it is not merely a quickened thing which may diebut a quickening thing which cannot die, being Spirit like unto Christ the quickening Spirit. But then, more than this, the new nature cannot die because the Holy Spirit perpetually supplies it with life. He gives more gracegrace upon grace. You know the Apostle puts it thusIf when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by His life.   
Is not the Holy Spirit the divine Agent by whom the life of Christ is infused into us? Now, the life-floods which the Holy Spirit sends into us cowork with the immortality of the new-born spirit and so doubly preserve the eternity of our bliss. But then, again,

we are in vital union with Christ and to suppose that the new nature could die out were to imagine that a member of Christ would die, that a finger, a hand, an arm, could rot from the Person of Jesusthat He could be maimed and divided. Does not the Apostle say, Is Christ divided? And was it not written, Not a bone of Him shall be broken?   
And how is this true if we were broken from Him, or rolled from His body? My Brethren, we receive the divine sap through Christ the Stem. That divine sap keeps us alive but morethe very fact that we are joined to Christ preserves our life, Because I live you shall live also. The new life cannot die, because God is pledged to keep it alive. I give unto My sheep eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand. My Father which gave them Me is greater than all and none shall pluck them out of My Fathers hand. And yet againThe water which I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life.   
And yet againHe that believes in Me shall never hunger and never thirst. And so might we repeat multitudes of passages where the divine promise engages omnipotence and divine wisdom to preserve the new life. So then, let us gather these all up in one. As a man born of the flesh, I shall dieas a new man born of the Spirit, I shall never die. You, O flesh, the offspring of fleshyou shall see corruption. You, O spirit, new-created spirit, offspring of the Lordyou shall never see corruption. With our glorious Covenant Head we may exclaim, You will not leave My soul in Hell, nor will You suffer Your Holy One to see corruption.   
I shall die, yet never die. My life shall flee, yet never flee. I shall pass away and yet abide. I shall be carried to the tomb and yet, soaring upward, the tomb can never contain the quickened Spirit. Oh, Children of God, I know not any subject that ought more thoroughly to lift you out of yourselves than this. Now let the divine nature live in you. Come, put down the animal for a moment, put down the mere mental faculty. Let the living spark blaze up. Come, let the divine element, the newborn nature that God has given to youlet that now speakand let its voice be praise. Let it look up and let it breathe its own atmosphere, the Heaven of God, in which it shall shortly rejoice.   
O God, our Father, help us to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, seeing that we have by Your own self been quickened to an immortal life.  
III. I now come to the last and perhaps the most interesting point of all. THE GLORY OF THE TWO NATURES IS CONTRASTED.   
Every nature has its glory. Brethren, look at the field again. There is not only the grass but there is the flower which is the glory of the field. Sometimes many colored hues begem the pastures with beauty. Now the painted flower is the glory of the verdant field. It comes up later than the grass and it dies sooner, for the grass is up a long while before the flower blooms and when the flower is dead, the stalk of the grass still retains vitality. It is precisely so with us. Our nature has its glory, but that glory does not arrive for years.   
The babe has not yet the glory of full manhood and when that glory does come, it dies before our nature dies, for they that look out of the windows are darkened, the grinders cease because they are few. The man loses his glory and becomes a tottering imbecile before life becomes extinct. The flower comes up last and dies firstour glory comes last and dies first, too. O flesh! O flesh! What contempt is passed upon you! Your very existence is frail and feeble but your glory more frail and feeble still. It grows but late and then it diesalas how soon! Give me your attention for a moment while I tell you briefly. In some, the glory of the flesh is BEAUTY. Their face is fair to look upon and as the handiwork of the Great Worker, it should be admired. When a person becomes vain of it, beauty becomes shame. But to have well-proportioned features is, doubtless, no mean endowment. There is a glory in the beauty of the flesh but how late it is developedand how soon it fades! How soon do the cheeks become hollow! How frequently does the complexion grow sallow and the bright eyes are dimmed and the comely visage is marred!   
A part, too, of the glory of the flesh is physical strength. To be a strong man, to have the bones well set and the muscles well bracedto have good muscular vigor is no small thing. Many men take delight in the legs of a man and in the strength of his arm. Well, as God made him, he is a wonderful creature and it were wrong for us not to admire the masterpiece of God. But how late does muscular strength arrive! There are the days of infancy and there are the days of youth when as yet the strong man is but feeble.   
And then, when he has had his little hey-day of strength, how does the stalwart frame begin to rock and reel! And the rotting teeth and the whitened hair show that death has begun to claim the clay and will soon take possession of it for himself. The glory thereof falls away. To others, the glory of the flesh lies rather in the mind. They have eloquence. They can so speak as to enchant the ears of the multitude. The bees of eloquence have made their hives between the lips of the orator and honey distils with every word. Yes, but how late is this a coming! How many years before the child speaks articulately and before the young man is able to deliver himself with courage!   
And then, how soon it goes!till, mumbling from between his toothless jaws, the poor man would speak the words of wisdom, but the lips of age deny him utterance. Or, let the glory be wisdom. There is a man whose glory is his masterly power over others. He can foresee and look further than other men, he can match craft by crafthe is so wise that his fellows put confidence in him. This is the glory of the flesh. How late is it in coming!from the puking child, what a distance up to the wise man! And then how soon it is gone! How often, while yet the man himself in his flesh is in vigor has the mind strewn symptoms of decay! Well, take what you will to be the glory of the flesh, I will still pronounce over it Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. If the flesh is frail, the glory of the flesh is frailer still. If the grass withers, certainly the flower of the grass withers before it.   
But is this true of the new nature? Brethren, is this true of that which was implanted at the second birth? I have just shown you, I think, that the existence of the new nature is eternalbecause it was not born of corruptible seedbut of incorruptible. I have tried to show that it can never perish and can never die. But your unbelief suggests, Perhaps its glory may. No, its glory never can. And what is the glory of the new-born nature? Why, its glory first of all is beauty. But what is its beauty? It is to be like the Lord Jesus. We are, when we shall see Him as He is, to be like Him.   
And that beauty shall never fade. Eternity itself shall not hollow the cheeks of this seraphic comeliness, nor dim the brilliant eye of this celestial radiance. We shall be like Christ, but the likeness shall never be marred by time, nor consumed by decay. I said just now that the glory of the flesh consisted sometimes in its strengthso does the glory of the Spirit consist in its vigorbut then it is a force that never shall be expended. The strength of the new-born nature is the Holy Spirit Himself and while Deity remains omnipotent, our new nature shall go on increasing in vigor till we come first to the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus and next come to be glorified men standing before His Throne.   
The flower of the new nature you cannot see much of yetyou see through a glass darkly. That flower of glory consists perhaps, too, in eloquence. Eloquence, you say, how can that be? I said the glory of the old nature might be eloquence, so with the newbut this is the eloquenceAbba Father. This is an eloquence you can use now. It is one which when you cannot speak a word which might move an audience, shall still remain upon your tongue to move the courts of Heaven. You shall be able to say, Abba Father, in the very pangs of death and waking from your beds of dust and silent clay, more eloquent still you shall cry, Hallelujah!  
You shall join the eternal chorus, swell the divine symphony of cherubim and seraphim and through eternity your glory shall never part awry. And then, if wisdom is glory, your wisdomthe wisdom which you inherit in the new nature, which is none other than Christs who is made of God unto usyour wisdom shall never fade. In fact it shall grow, for there you shall know even as you are known. While here you see through a glass darkly, there you shall see face to face. You sip the brook today, you shall bathe in the ocean tomorrow. You see afar off now, you shall lie in the arms of wisdom by-and-by. For the glory of the Spirit never dies, but throughout eternity expanding, enlarging, blazing, glorifying itself through God, it shall go on never, never to fail.   
Brethren, whatever it may be which you are expecting as the glory of your new nature, you have not yet an idea of what it will be. Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him. But though He has revealed them unto us by His Spirit, yet, I fear we have not fully learned them. However, we will say of this glory, whatever it may be, it is incorruptible, undefiled and it fades not away. The only question we have to ask and with that we wish, isare we born again? Brethren, it is impossible for you to possess the existence of the new life without the new birth and the glory of the new birth you cannot know without the new heart.   
I sayare you born again? Do not stand up and say, I am a Churchman, I was baptized and confirmed. That you may be and yet not be born again. Do not say, I am a Baptist, I have professed my faith and was immersed. That you may be and not be born again. Do not say, I am of Christian parents. That you may be and yet be an heir of wrath, even as others. Are you born again? May God the Holy Spirit reveal Christ to you and when you come to see Christ with the tearful eyes of a penitential faiththen you will know, by Gods grace, that you are born again and that you have passed from death unto life.

He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, he that believes not shall be damned. God help you to believe!

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THE WITHERING WORK OF THE SPIRIT   
NO. 999

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, JULY 9, 1871, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withers, the flower fades: because   
the Spirit of the Lord blows upon it surely the people is grass. The grass withers, the flower fades: but the Word of**

**our God shall stand forever.   
Isaiah 40:6-8.**

**Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives   
and abides forever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower thereof falls away: but the Word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the Word**

**which by the Gospel is preached unto you.   
1 Peter 1:23-25.**

THE passage in Isaiah which I have just read in your hearing may be used as a very eloquent description of our mortality, and if a sermon should be preached from it upon the frailty of human nature, the brevity of life, and the certainty of death, no one could dispute the appropriateness of the text. Yet I venture to question whether such a discourse would strike the central teaching of the Prophet. Something more than the decay of our material flesh is intended here. The carnal mind, the flesh in another sense, was intended by the Holy Spirit when He bade His messenger proclaim those words.

It does not seem to me that a mere expression of the mortality of our race was needed in this place by the context. It would hardly keep pace with the sublime Revelations which surround it, and would in some measure be a digression from the subject in hand. The notion that we are here simply reminded of our mortality does not square with the New Testament exposition of it in Peter, which I have also placed before you as a text.

There is another and more spiritual meaning here besides and beyond that which would be contained in the great and very obvious Truth of God that all of us must die. Look at the chapter in Isaiah with care. What is the subject of it? It is the Divine consolation of Zion. Zion had been tossed to and fro with conflictsshe had been smarting under the result of sin. The Lord, to remove her sorrow, bids His Prophet announce the coming of the long-expected Deliverer, the end and accomplishment of all her warfare and the pardon of all her iniquity.

There is no doubt that this is the theme of the prophecy. And further, there is no sort of question about the next pointthat the Prophet goes on to foretell the coming of John the Baptist as the harbinger of the Messiah. We have no difficulty in the explanation of the passage, Prepare you the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. For the New Testament again and again refers this to the Baptist and his

ministry. The object of the coming of the Baptist and the mission of the Messiah, whom he heralded, was the manifestation of Divine Glory.

Observe the fifth verseThe Glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it. Well, what next? Was it necessary to mention mans mortality in this connection? We think not. But there is much more appropriateness in the succeeding verses if we see their deeper meaning. Do they not mean this: In order to make room for the display of the Divine Glory in Christ Jesus and His salvation, there would come a withering of all the glory wherein man boasts himselfthe flesh should be seen in its true nature as corrupt and dying, and the Grace of God alone should be exalted.

This would be seen under the ministry of John the Baptist first, and should be the preparatory work of the Holy Spirit in mens hearts, in all time, in order that the Glory of the Lord should be revealed and human pride be forever confounded. The Spirit blows upon the flesh, and that which seemed vigorous becomes weak, that which was fair to look upon is smitten with decay. The true nature of the flesh is thus discovered, its deceit is laid bare, its power is destroyed, and there is space for the dispensation of the ever-abiding Word, and for the rule of the Great Shepherd, whose words are Spirit and Life.

There is a withering worked by the Spirit which is the preparation for the sowing and implanting by which salvation is worked. The withering before the sowing was very marvelously fulfilled in the preaching of John the Baptist. Most appropriately he carried on his ministry in the desert, for a spiritual desert was all around him. He was the voice of one crying in the wilderness. It was not his work to plant, but to hew down. The fleshly religion of the Jews was then in its prime. Phariseeism stalked through the streets in all its pompmen complacently rested in outward ceremonies onlyand spiritual religion was at the lowest conceivable ebb.

Here and there might be found a Simeon and an Anna, but for the most part men knew nothing of spiritual religion, but said in their heartsWe have Abraham as our father, and this is enough. What a stir John made when he called the lordly Pharisees a generation of vipers! How he shook the nation with the declaration, Now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees! Stern as Elijah, his work was to level the mountains, and lay low every lofty imagination. That word, Repent, was as a scorching wind to the verdure of self-righteousnessa killing blast for the confidence of ceremonialism.

His food and his dress called for fasting and mourning. The outward token of his ministry declared the death amid which he preached, as he buried in the waters of Jordan those who came to him. You must die and be buried, even as He who is to come will save by death and burial. This was the meaning of the emblem which he set before the crowd. His typical act was as thorough in its teaching as were His words. And as if that were not enough, he warned them of a yet more searching and trying Baptism with the Holy Spirit and with fire, and of the coming of One whose fan was in His hand, thoroughly to purge His floor.

The Spirit in John blew as the rough north wind, searching and withering, and made him to be a destroyer of the vain glorying of a fleshly religion, that the spiritual faith might be established. When our Lord Himself actually appeared, He came into a withered land, whose glories had all departed. Old Jesses stem was bare, and our Lord was the Branch which grew out of his root. The scepter had departed from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet, when Shiloh came.

An alien sat on Davids throne, and the Roman called the Covenant land his own. The lamp of prophecy burned but dimly, even if it had not utterly gone out. No Isaiah had arisen of late to console them, nor even a Jeremiah to lament their apostasy. The whole economy of Judaism was as a worn-out vesture. It had waxed old, and was ready to vanish away. The priesthood was disarranged. Luke tells us that Annas and Caiaphas were high priests that yeartwo in a year or at oncea strange setting aside of the laws of Moses. All the dispensation which gathered around the visible, or as Paul calls it, the worldly sanctuary, was coming to a close.

And when our Lord had finished His work, the veil of the temple was rent in two, the sacrifices were abolished, the priesthood of Aaron was set aside and carnal ordinances were abrogatedfor the Spirit revealed spiritual things. When He came who was made a Priest, not after the Law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life, there was, a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. Such are the facts of history.

But I am not about to dilate upon themI am coming to your own personal historiesto the experience of every child of God. In every one of us it must be fulfilled that all that is of the flesh in us, seeing it is but as grass, must be withered, and the comeliness thereof must be destroyed. The Spirit of God, like the wind, must pass over the field of our souls and cause our beauty to be as a fading flower. He must so convince us of sin, and so reveal ourselves to ourselves, that we shall see that the flesh profits nothingthat our fallen nature is corruption itselfand that they who are in the flesh cannot please God.

There must be brought home to us the sentence of death upon our former legal and carnal life so that the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, implanted by the Holy Spirit, may be in us, and abide in us forever. The subject of this morning is the withering work of the Spirit upon the souls of men! And when we have spoken upon it, we shall conclude with a few words upon the implanting work, which always follows where this withering work has been performed.

I. Turning, then, to THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN CAUSING THE GOODLINESS OF THE FLESH TO FADE, let us, first observe that the work of the Holy Spirit upon the soul of man in withering up that which is of the flesh is very unexpected. You will observe in our text, that even the speaker himselfthough doubtless one taught of Godwhen he was bid to cry, said, What shall I cry? Even he did not know that in order to the comforting of Gods people, there must first be experienced a preliminary visitation.

Many preachers of Gods Gospel have forgotten that the Law is the schoolmaster to bring men to Christ. They have sown on the unbroken fallow ground and forgotten that the plow must break the clods. We have seen too much of trying to sew without the sharp needle of the Spirits convicting power. Preachers have labored to make Christ precious to those who think themselves rich and increased in goodsand it has been

labor in vain. It is our duty to preach Jesus Christ even to self-righteous sinners, but it is certain that Jesus Christ will never be accepted by them while they hold themselves in high esteem.

Only the sick will welcome the physician. It is the work of the Spirit of God to convict men of sin, and until they are convicted of sin, they will never be led to seek the righteousness which is of God by Jesus Christ. I am persuaded that wherever there is a real work of Divine Grace in any soul, it begins with a pulling downthe Holy Spirit does not build on the old foundation. Wood, hay, and stubble will not do for Him to build upon. He will come as the fire, and cause a conflagration of all proud natures Babels. He will break our bow and cut our spear in sunder, and burn our chariot in the fire.

When every sandy foundation is gone, then, but not till then, behold He will lay in our souls the great Foundation Stone, chosen of God, and precious. The awakened sinner, when he asks that God would have mercy upon him, is much astonished to find that, instead of enjoying a speedy peace, his soul is bowed down within him under a sense of Divine Wrath. Naturally enough he enquiresIs this the answer to my prayer? I prayed the Lord to deliver me from sin and self, and is this the way in which He deals with me?

I said, Hear me, and behold He wounds me with the wounds of a cruel one. I said, Clothe me, and lo, He has torn off from me the few rags which covered me before, and my nakedness stares me in the face. I said, Wash me, and behold He has plunged me in the ditch till my own clothes abhor me. Is this the way of Divine Grace? Sinner, be not surprisedit is even so. Do you perceive not the cause of it? How can you be healed while the proud flesh is in your wound? It must come out. It is the only way to heal you permanentlyit would be folly to film over your sore, or heal your flesh, and leave the leprosy within your bones.

The Great Physician will cut with His sharp knife till the corrupt flesh is removed, for only thus can a sure healing work be worked in you. Do you not see that it is divinely wise that before you are clothed you should be stripped! What? Would you have Christs lustrous righteousness outside whiter than any fuller can make it, and your own filthy rags concealed within? No, Man! They must be put away! Not a single thread of your own must be left upon you. It cannot be that God should cleanse you until He has made you see somewhat of your defilement. For you would never value the precious blood which cleanses us from all sin if you had not first of all been made to mourn that you are altogether an unclean thing.

The convincing work of the Spirit, wherever it comes, is unexpected, and even to the child of God in whom this process has still to go on, it is often startling. We begin again to build that which the Spirit of God had destroyed. Having begun in the Spirit, we act as if we would be made perfect in the flesh. And then, when our mistaken rebuilding has to be leveled with the earth, we are almost as astonished as we were when first the scales fell from our eyes. In some such condition as this was Newton when

he wrote *I asked the Lord that I might grow*

*In faith and love and every Grace,   
Might more of His salvation know,   
And seek more earnestly His face.   
It was He who taught me thus to pray,   
And He, I trust, has answered prayer.   
But it has been in such a way   
As almost drove me to despair.   
I hoped that in some favored hour,   
At once Hed answer my request,   
And by His loves constraining power   
Subdue my sins, and give me rest.   
Instead of this, He made me feel   
The hidden evils of my heart.   
And let the angry powers of Hell*

*Assault my soul in every part.*   
Ah, marvel not, for thus the Lord is likely to answer His people. The voice which says, Comfort you, comfort you My people, achieves its purpose by first making them hear the cry, All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field.

2. Furthermore, this withering is after the usual order of the Divine operation. If we consider well the way of God, we shall not be astonished that He begins with His people by terrible things in righteousness. Observe the method of creation. I will not venture upon any dogmatic theory of geology, but there seems to be every probability that this world has been fitted up and destroyed, refitted and then destroyed again many times before the last arranging of it for the habitation of men. In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth. Then came a long interval, and at length, at the appointed time, during six days, the Lord prepared the earth for the human race.

Consider, then, the state of matters when the Great Architect began His work. What was there in the beginning? Originally, nothing. When He commanded the ordering of the earth, how was it? The earth was without form and void. And darkness was upon the face of the deep. There was no trace of anothers plan to interfere with the Great Architect. With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of judgment, and taught Him knowledge, and showed to Him the way of understanding?

He received no contribution of column or pillar towards the temple which He intended to build. The earth was, as the Hebrew puts it, Tohu and Bohu, disorder and confusionin a wordchaos. So it is in the new creation. When the Lord creates us new, He borrows nothing from the old man, but makes all things new. He does not repair and add a new wing to the old house of our depraved nature, but He builds a new temple for His own praise. We are spiritually without form and empty, and darkness is upon the face of our heart, and His Word comes to us, saying, Light be, and there is light, and before long life and every precious thing.

To take another instance from the ways of God. When man had fallen, when did the Lord bring Him the Gospel? The first whisper of the Gospel, as you know, was, I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her Seed. He shall bruise your head. That whisper came to man shivering in the presence of his Maker, having nothing more to say by way of excuse, but standing guilty before the Lord. When did the Lord God clothe our parents? Not until first of all He had put the question, Who told you that you were naked? Not until the fig leaves had utterly failed did the Lord bring in the covering skin of the sacrifice, and wrap them in it.

If you will pursue the meditation upon the acts of God with men, you will constantly see the same thing. God has given us a wonderful type of salvation in Noahs ark. But Noah was saved in that ark in connection with death. He himself, as it were, confined alive in a tomb, and all the world besides left to destruction. All other hope for Noah was gone, and yet the ark rose upon the waters.

Remember the redemption of the children of Israel out of Egyptit occurred when they were in the saddest plight, and their cry went up to Heaven by reason of their bondage. When no arm brought salvation, then with a high hand and an outstretched arm the Lord brought forth His people. Everywhere before the salvation there comes the humbling of the creature, the overthrow of human hope. As in the backwoods of America before there can be tillage, the planting of cities, the arts of civilization, and the transactions of commerce, the woodmans axe must hack and hewthe stately trees of centuries must fallthe roots must be burned, the odd reign of nature disturbed. The old must go before the new can come.

Even thus the Lord takes away the first, that He may establish the second. The first Heaven and the first earth must pass away, or there cannot be a new Heaven and a new earth. Now, as it has been outwardly, we ought to expect that it would be the same within us. And when these withering and fading occur in our souls, we should only say, It is the Lord, let Him do as seems Him good.

3. I would have you notice, thirdly, that we are taught in our text how universal this process is in its range over the hearts of all those upon whom the Spirit works. The withering is a withering of what? Of part of the flesh and some portion of its tendencies? No, observe, ALL flesh is grass. And all the goodliness thereofthe very choice and pick of itis as the flower of the field. And what happens to the grass? Does any of it live? The grass withers, all of it. The flower, will not that abide? So fair a thing, has not that an immortality? No, it fadesit utterly falls away.

So wherever the Spirit of God breathes on the soul of man, there is a withering of everything that is of the flesh, and it is seen that to be carnally minded is death. Of course we all know and confess that where there is a work of Grace, there must be a destruction of our delight in the pleasures of the flesh. When the Spirit of God breathes on us, that which was sweet becomes bitter. That which was bright becomes dim. A man cannot love sin and yet possess the life of God. If he takes pleasure in fleshly joys in which he once delighted, he is still what he washe minds the things of the flesh, and therefore he is after the fleshand he shall die.

The world and the lusts thereof are, to the unregenerate, as beautiful as the meadows in spring, when they are bedecked with flowersbut to the regenerate soul they are a wilderness, a salt land, and not inhabited. Of those very things in which we once took delight we say, Vanity of vanities. All is vanity. We cry to be delivered from the poisonous joys of earthwe loathe themand marvel that we could once riot in them. Beloved Hearers, do you know what this kind of withering means? Have you seen the lusts of the flesh, and the pomps and the pleasures thereof all fade away before your eyes? It must be so, or the Spirit of God has not visited your soul.

But mark, wherever the Spirit of God comes, He destroys the goodliness and flower of the flesh. That is to say, our righteousness withers as our sinfulness. Before the Spirit comes we think ourselves as good as the best. We say, All these commandments have I kept from my youth up, and we superciliously ask, What do I lack? Have we not been moral? No, have we not even been

religious? We confess that we may have committed faults, but we think them very venial, and we venture, in our wicked pride, to imagine that, after all, we are not so vile as the Word of God would lead us to think.

Ah, my dear Hearer, when the Spirit of God blows on the comeliness of your flesh, its beauty will fade as a leaf, and you will have quite another idea of yourself. You will then find no language too severe in which to describe your past character. Searching deep into your motives, and investigating that which moved you to your actions, you will see so much of evil that you will cry with the publican, God be merciful to me, a sinner!

When the Holy Spirit has withered up in us our self-righteousness, He has not half completed His work. There is much more to be destroyed, and among the rest, away must go our boasted power of resolution. Most people conceive that they can turn to God whenever they resolve to do so. I am a man of such strength of mind, says one, that if I made up my mind to be religious, I should be so without difficulty. Ah, says another volatile spirit, I believe that one of these days I can correct the errors of the past, and commence a new life.

Ah, dear Hearers, the resolutions of the flesh are goodly flowers, but they must all fade. When visited by the Spirit of God we find that even when the will is present with ushow to perform that which we would, we find not. Yes, and we discover that our will is averse to all that is good, and that naturally we will not come unto Christ that we may have life. What poor frail things resolutions are when seen in the light of Gods Spirit! Still the man will say, I believe I have, after all, within myself an enlightened conscience and an intelligence that will guide me aright. The light of nature I will use, and I do not doubt that if I wander somewhat I shall find my way back again.

Ah, Man! Your wisdom, which is the very flower of your naturewhat is it but follythough you know it not? Unconverted and unrenewed, you are in Gods sight no wiser than the wild ass colt. I wish you were in your own esteem humbled as a little child at Jesus feet, and made to cry, Teach You me. When the withering wind of the Spirit moves over the carnal mind it reveals the death of the flesh in all respects, especially in the matter of power towards that which is good. We then learn that Word of our LordWithout Me you can do nothing.

When I was seeking the Lord, I not only believed that I could not pray without Divine help, but I felt in my very soul that I could not. Then I could not even feel aright, or mourn as I would, or groan as I would. I longed to long more after Christ, but, alas, I could not even feel that I needed Him as I ought to feel it. This heart was then as hard as adamant,

as dead as those that rot in their graves. Oh, what would I, at times, have given for a tear! I wanted to repent, but could not! I longed to believe, but could not. I felt bound, hampered, and paralyzed. This is a humbling revelation of Gods Holy Spirit, but a necessary onefor the faith of the flesh is not the faith of Gods elect.

The faith which justifies the soul is the gift of God and not of ourselves. That repentance which is the work of the flesh will need to be repented of. The flower of the flesh must witheronly the seed of the Spirit will produce fruit unto perfection. The heirs of Heaven are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of man, but of GOD. If the work in us is not the Spirits working, but our own, it will droop and die when most we require its protection. And its end will be as the grass which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven.

4. You see, then, the universality of this withering work within us. But I beg you also to notice the completeness of it. The grass, what does it do? Droop? No, wither. The flower of the fieldwhat of that? Does it hang its head a little? No, according to Isaiah it fades. And according to Peter it falls away. There is no reviving it with showersit has come to its end. Even thus are the awakened led to see that in their flesh there dwells no good thing. What dying and withering work some of Gods servants have had in their souls!

Look at John Bunyan, as he describes himself in his, Grace Abounding! For how many months and even years was the Spirit engaged in writing death upon all that was the old Bunyan in order that he might become, by Divine Grace, a new man fitted to track the pilgrims along their heavenly way. We have not all endured the ordeal so long, but in every child of God there must be a death to sin, to the Law, and to SELF. And it must be fully accomplished before he is perfected in Christ and taken to Heaven.

Corruption cannot inherit incorruption. It is through the Spirit that we mortify the deeds of the body, and therefore live. But cannot the fleshly mind be improved? By no means. For the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither, indeed, can be. Cannot you improve the old nature? No! You must be born again. Can it not be taught heavenly things? No. The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

There is nothing to be done with the old nature but to let it be laid in the grave. It must be dead and buried, and when it is so, then the incorruptible seed that lives and abides forever will develop gloriously! The fruit of the new birth will come to maturity and Grace shall be exalted in Glory. The old nature never does improve, it is as earthly, and sensual, and devilish in the saint of eighty years of age as it was when first he came to Christ. It is unimproved and unimprovable. Towards God it is enmity itselfevery imagination of the thoughts of the heart is evil, and that continually. The old nature called the flesh, lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other. Neither can there be peace between them.

5. Let us further notice that all this withering work in the soul is very painful. As you read these verses do they not strike you as having a very funereal tone? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withers, the flower fades. This is mournful work, but it must be done. I think those who experience much of it when they first come to Christ have great reason to be thankful. Their course in life will, in all probability, be much brighter and happier. I have noticed that persons who are converted very easily, and come to Christ with but comparatively little knowledge of their own depravity, have to learn it afterwards.

And they remain for a long time babes in Christ, and are perplexed with masters that would not have troubled them if they had experienced a deeper work at first. No, Sir, if Divine Grace has begun to build in your soul and left any of the old walls of self-trust standing, they will have to come down sooner or later. You may congratulate yourself upon their remaining, but it is a false congratulationyour glorying is not good. I am sure of this, that Christ will never put a new piece upon an old garment, or new wine in old bottlesHe knows the garment would be worse in the long run, and the bottles would burst.

All that is of natures spinning must be unraveled. The natural building must come down, wood and plaster, roof and foundationand we must have a house not made with hands. It was a great mercy for our city of London that the great fire cleared away all the old buildings which were the lair of the plague. A far healthier city was then built. And it is a great mercy for a man when God sweeps right away all his own righteousness and strength. When He makes him feel that he is nothing and can be nothing, and drives him to confess that Christ must be All in Alland that his only strength lies in the eternal might of the ever-blessed Spirit.

Sometimes in a house of business an old system has been going on for years and it has caused much confusion, and allowed much dishonesty. You come in as a new manager and you adopt an entirely new plan. Now, try if you can, and graft your method on to the old system. How it will worry you! Year after year you say to yourself, I cannot work itif I had swept the whole away and started afresh, clear from the beginning, it would not have given me one-tenth of the trouble. God does not intend to graft the system of Grace upon corrupt nature, nor to make the new Adam grow out of the old Adam.

But He intends to teach us thisYou are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Salvation is not of the flesh but of the Lord alone. That which is born of the flesh is only flesh at the best. And only that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. It must be the Spirits work altogether, or it is not what God will accept. Observe, Brothers and Sisters, that although this is painful it is inevitable. I have already entrenched upon this, and shown you how necessary it is that all of the old should be taken away. But let me further remark that it is inevitable that the old should go, because it is, in itself, corruptible.

Why does the grass wither? Because it is a withering thing. Its root is ever in its way, and it must die. How could it spring out of the earth, and be immortal? It is no amaranthit blooms not in Paradiseit grows in a soil on which the curse has fallen. Every supposed good thing that grows out of your own self is like yourselfmortaland it must die. The seeds

of corruption are in all the fruits of manhoods tree. Let them be as fair to look upon as Edens clusters, they must decay.

Moreover, it would never do, my Brothers and Sisters, that there should be something of the flesh in our salvation and something of the Spirit. For if it were so there would be a division of the honor. Up to now the praises of Godbeyond this my own praisesif I were to win Heaven partly through what I had done, and partly through what Christ had done. And if the energy which sanctified me was in a measure my own, and in a measure Divine, they that divide the work shall divide the reward. And the songs of Heaven, while they would be partly to Jehovah, must also be partly to the creature.

But it shall not be. Down, proud flesh! Down, I say. Though you cleanse and purge yourself as you may, you are to the core corrupt. Though you labor unto weariness, you build wood that will be burned, and stubble that will be turned to ashes. Give up your own self-confidence and let the work be, and the merit be where the honor shall be, namely, with God alone. It is inevitable, then, that there should be all this withering.

7. This last word by way of comfort to any that are passing through the process we are describing, and I hope some of you are. It gives me great joy when I hear that you unconverted ones are very miserable, for the miseries which the Holy Spirit works are always the prelude to happiness. It is the Spirits work to wither. I rejoice in our translation, Because the Spirit of the Lord blows upon it. It is true the passage may be translated, The Wind of the Lord blows upon it.

One word, as you know, is used in the Hebrew both for Wind and Spirit, and the same is true of the Greek. But let us retain the old translation here, for I conceive it to be the real meaning of the text. The Spirit of God it is that withers the flesh. It is not the devil that killed my selfrighteousness. I might be afraid if it werenor was it myself that humbled myself by a voluntary and needless self-degradationit was the Spirit of God. Better to be broken in pieces by the Spirit of God, than to be made whole by the flesh! What does the Lord say? I kill. But what next? I make alive. He never makes any alive but those He kills.

Blessed be the Holy Spirit when He kills me! When He drives the sword through the very heart of my own merits and my self-confidence, then He makes me alive. I wound, and I heal. He never heals those whom He has not wounded. Then blessed be the hand that wounds! Let it go on wounding! Let it cut and tear! Let it lay bare to me myself at my very worst, that I may be driven to self-despair and may fall back upon the free mercy of Godand receive it as a poor, guilty, lost, helpless, undone sinner!

May we, by His Grace, cast ourselves into the arms of Sovereign Grace, knowing that God must give all, and Christ must be all, and the Spirit must work alland man must be as clay in the potters hands, that the Lord may do with him as seems to Him good. Rejoice, dear Brothers and Sisters, however low you are brought, for if the Spirit humbles you He means no evil, but He intends infinite good to your soul.

II. Now, let us close with a few sentences concerning THE IMPLANTATION. According to Peter, although the flesh withers, and the flower falls away, yet in the children of God there is an unwithering something of another kind. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever. The Word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.

Now, the Gospel is of use to us because it is not of human origin. If it were of the flesh, all it could do for us would not land us beyond the flesh. But the Gospel of Jesus Christ is super-human, Divine, and spiritual. In its conception it was of God. Its great Gift, even the Savior, is a Divine Gift. And all its teachings are full of Deity. If you, my Hearer, believe a Gospel which you have thought out for yourself, or a philosophical Gospel which comes from the brain of man, it is of the flesh and will witherand you will dieand be lost through trusting in it. The only word that can bless you and be a seed in your soul must be the Living and Incorruptible Word of the eternal Spirit.

Now this is the incorruptible Word, that, God was made flesh and dwelt among us. That, God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. This is the incorruptible Word, that, Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. He that believes on Him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

Now, Brethren, this is the Seed. But before it can grow in your soul, it must be planted there by the Spirit. Do you receive it this morning? Then the Holy Spirit implants it in your soul. Do you leap up to it, and say, I believe it! I grasp it! On the Incarnate God I fix my hope. The Substitutionary Sacrifice, the complete Atonement of Christ is all my confidence. I am reconciled to God by the blood of Jesus? Then you possess the living Seed within your soul!

And what is the result of it? Why, then, there comes, according to the text, a new life into us, as the result of the indwelling of the Living Word, and our being born again by it. A new life it is. It is not the old nature putting out its better parts. Not the old Adam refining and purifying itself and rising to something better. Nohave we not said aforetime that the flesh withers and the flower thereof fades? It is an entirely new life. You are as much new creatures at your regeneration as if you had never existed, and had been for the first time created.

Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new. The child of God is beyond and above other men. Other men do not possess the Life which he has received. They are but duplexbody and soul have they. He is of triple naturehe is spirit, soul, and body. A fresh principle, a spark of the Divine Life has dropped into his soul. He is no longer a natural or carnal man, but he has become a spiritual man, understanding spiritual things and possessing a life far superior to anything that belongs to the rest of mankind. O that God, who has withered in the souls of any of you that which is of the flesh, may speedily grant you the new birth through the Word.

Now observe, to close, wherever this new life comes through the Word, it is incorruptible, it lives and abides forever. To get the good Seed out of a true Believers heart, and to destroy the new nature in him, is a thing at

tempted by earth and Hell, but never yet achieved. Pluck the sun out of the firmament, and you shall not even, then, be able to pluck Divine Grace out of a regenerate heart. It lives and abides forever, says the text. It neither can corrupt of itself nor be corrupted. It sins not, because it is born of God.

I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. You have a natural lifethat will die, it is of the flesh. You have a spiritual lifeof that it is writtenWhoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. You have now within you the noble and true immortalityyou must live as God lives, in peace and joy, and happiness.

But oh, remember, dear Hearer, if you have not this you shall not see life. What thenshall you be annihilated? Ah, no, but, the wrath of the Lord is upon you. You shall exist, though you shall not live. Of life you shall know nothing, for that is the gift of God in Christ Jesus. But of an everlasting death, full of torment and anguish, you shall be the wretched heritorthe wrath of God abides on him. You shall be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. You shall be one of those whose worm dies not, and whose fire is not quenched.

May God, the ever-blessed Spirit, visit you! If He is now striving with you, O quench not His Divine flame! Trifle not with any holy thoughts you have. If this morning you must confess that you are not born again, be humbled by it. Go and seek mercy of the Lord! Entreat Him to deal graciously with you and save you. Many who have had nothing but moonlight have prized it, and before long they have had sunlight.

Above all, remember what the quickening Seed is, and reverence it when you hear it preached, for this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you. Respect it, and receive it. Remember that the quickening Seed is all wrapped up in this sentenceBelieve in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. But he that believes not shall be damned. The Lord bless you, for Jesus sake. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON Isaiah 40:1-11; Luke 3: 1-17; 1 Peter 1:17-25.   
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #459 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A SERMON FOR MEN OF TASTE   
NO. 459

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JULY 6, 1862, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Therefore laying aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisies, and envies and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that you may grow   
thereby. If, indeed, you have tasted that   
the Lord is gracious.   
1 Peter 2:1-3.

IF, indeed, you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. If. If, then, is not a thing to be taken for granted concerning all of the human race. If then there is a possibility, and a probability, that some may not have tasted that the Lord is gracious. If, ifthen this is not a general but a special mercy. And it becomes our business to enquire whether we are in that company, who know the Grace of God by inward experience.

There is no spiritual favor which may not be a matter for heartsearching. At the very summit of holy delight, we meet the challenge of sentinel IfIf you, then, are risen with Christ, and at the very bottom, even at Repentance Gate itself, he meets us with a warrant of arrest until he sees whether our sorrow is the godly sorrow that needs not to be repented of. If you are the Son of God, is not always a temptation of the devil but often a very healthy enquiry most fittingly suggested by holy anxiety to men who would build securely upon the Rock of Ages.

If at the Lords Table, itself, it is proper for us to say, Lord, is it I? when there is a Judas in the company, and if after the most intimate fellowship, Christ exclaimed, Simon, son of Jonas, do you love me?let no enjoyment of ordinances, let no high and rapt fellowship which we may have known, exempt us from the great duty of proving ourselves whether we are in the faith.

But, Beloved, albeit this should be a matter of heart-searching, I take it that no man ought to be content while there is any such thing as an if about his having tasted that the Lord is gracious. I can understand Believers saying

*It is a point I long to know,   
Often it causes anxious thought.   
Do I love the Lord or no?   
Am I His, or am I not?*

But I do not understand their being comfortable while their souls are under such suspense. I can comprehend the doubts which arise from jealousy and holy distrust, but I cannot understand the continuance of those doubts, without a desperate struggle to clasp the Savior with the hands of faith, and say, I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him.

Do not rest, O Believer, till you have a full assurance of your interest in Christ. Let nothing satisfy you till, by the infallible witness of the Holy Spirit bearing witness with your spirit, you are certified that you are a child of God. Oh, trifle not here. Let no perhaps, and if, and maybe, satisfy your soul. Build on eternal verities and verily build upon them. Get the sure mercies of David and surely get them. Let your anchor be cast into that which is within the vein and see to it that your soul is linked to the anchor by a cable that will not break.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus, I exhort and stir you up to get beyond these dreary ifs. Abide no more in the howling wilderness of doubts and fears. Cross the Jordan of distrust and enter the Canaan of peace, where the Canaanite still lingers but which ceases not to flow with milk and honey.

Our text mentions a tasteIf, indeed, you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. And the Apostle speaks of the duty of those men of taste who have received this special favor. These two things shall take up our time this morningthe taste and the duties arising out of it. And before we conclude, we shall go back to the Psalm with which we commenced this morning, and address those who as yet have never tasted that the Lord is gracious, in the words of DavidO taste and see that the Lord is good!

I. First, then, TASTE is prominent in the text. I scarcely need observe, that in Scripture, the Holy Spirit uses natural things as figures by which to set forth spiritual mysteries. Inasmuch as our language was ordained to speak the thoughts of the mind and to describe the things of the body, it is not fitted, in itself, for the utterance of the things of the spirit. As much as the soul is higher than the body, so much superior is the spirit (that is, the new principle implanted in regeneration) to the mere soul which every man possesses. And, as you will clearly see, if our speech had only been made for the body and had not been adapted for a being that had a soul, we should have been strangely embarrassed for the expression of our mental emotions.

And now, as our speech only reaches unto the natural soul, if we would speak of the higher thoughts and impulses of the inner and newborn spirit, we can only do so by using the words we employ concerning natural objects. In this way we do not so much describe spiritual things as they are in themselves, but bring them down to our comprehension. When we shall become pure spirits, we may have a spiritual language. When we are caught up to the third Heaven, we shall use those words which now are not lawful for a man to utterspiritual words fitted for spiritual things.

1. The taste here meant is doubtless faith. Faith, in the Scripture, is all the senses. It is sight. Look unto Me and be you saved, all you ends of the earth. They looked unto Him and were lightened and their faces were not ashamed. It is hearingHear and your soul shall live. And I will make an Everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Faith hears the voice of the Spirit in effectual callingfor the dead hear the voice of God, and they that hear shall live. Faith is also smelling. All your garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia. Your name is as ointment poured forth. A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto Me.

Faith is also touch. By this faith the woman came behind and touched the hem of Christs garment and by this we handle the things of the good word of life. Faith is equally the spirits taste. How sweet are Your Words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my lips. Except a man eat My flesh, says Christ, and drink My blood, there is no life in him. We shall have an inward and spiritual apprehension of the sweetness and preciousness of Christ, as the result of living faith.

2. The taste here meant is faith in one of its highest operations. One of the first performances of faith is hearing. We hear the voice of God, not with the outward ear alone but with the inward ear. We hear it as Gods Word, and we believe it to be so. That is the hearing of faith. Then our mind looks upon the Truth of God as it is presented to us. That is to say, we understand it, we see what it meansthat is the seeing of faith. Then we perceive its preciousness to others, if not to ourselves. We begin to admire it and find how fragrant it is. That is faith in its smell. Then comes the appropriating act by which we lay hold of the mercies that are offered us in Christ. That is faith in its touch.

Then come enjoyments, peace, delight, communionwhich are faith in its taste. Any one of these acts of faith is saving. To hear Christs voice as the very voice of God in the soul will save us. But that which gives the true enjoyment is the aspect of faith wherein Christ, by holy taste, becomes assimilated to us. We feed on Him. He comes into us and becomes part of us. His living word sustains us and His precious blood cheers us as generous wine. Do you ask, In what respect does faith taste that the Lord is gracious? It is faith operating by experience.

Dear Christian Friends, you remember the time, when laden with guilt and full of fears, you looked to Jesus Christit was the eye of faith which looked. After a while Christs sweet love assured you that your sins were forgiven and you felt a calm in your soul, such as you had never known before. That was tasting Christ. You knew His sweetness, you knew the power there was in Him to take the bitterness out of your mouth and to put in sweetness instead. Since that time you have been in trouble but you have tasted Christ, for He has comforted you and lifted up the light of His countenance upon you.

You have been often greatly tried but He has sustained you and you have experienced that He is a very present help in time of trouble. Temptation has assailed you but you have been able to meet it by, Christ in you, the hope of glory. And perhaps even today your soul is as full as it can be, of delightful contemplations of the loveliness, the faithfulness, the affection, the power and the glory of your precious Lord Jesus Christ. Now, this is what is meant by tasting. It is enjoying Christ by an act of faith and finding Him to be the altogether lovely, sweet, and precious One.

It is something more than believing Christ to be precious. It is perceiving His worth, appreciating His sweetness, enjoying His loveliness. It is lying with His left hand under our head, while His right hand does embrace us. Thrice happy is the man who has thus tasted that the Lord is gracious. Follow me, while by a figure I make this point clear as noonday. There is a rumor running through the camp of Israel, that God on the morrow, at the rising of the sun, will feed His people. The rumor is believed. That is faith as hearing. Israel has heard that God will feed and Israel believes. See nowbefore daybreak the hosts of Israel hasten to the borders of the camp and they see lying upon the ground certain grains like coriander seed.

This, this, they say, is the food that God has sent to us. That is faith as seeing. They take it up in their hands. They examine it, and feel of what sort it is. That is faith as the touch. They put it to their nostrils. They ascertain somewhat of its character by the very smell. This is faith judging and discerning as smell. But lo! They place it in their mouths, and one of them says, It tastes like wafers made with honey. And another says It is as fresh oil. This is faith enjoying, for now they have come, not to hear of, nor see, nor smell, nor touch, alone, but as men to eat angels food and are fed even to the full. Here you see faith in its progressive works ending by the high degree of tasting.

3. Faith as exhibited to us under the aspect of tasting, is a sure and certain mark of Divine Grace in the heart. It is a sure sign of vitality. Man, by nature, is dead in trespasses and sins. See if the dead can taste. Bring the most pungent drugsdo these arouse the palate? Give them a foul draught and see if nausea can be produced. Now, put sweets to the dead mans tonguedo the eyes glisten? It is long since that corpse has fed does it show any satisfaction in the presence of food? No. It is dead and taste has fled with the once sentient soul. Verily, Brethren, no man can taste of Christ in his natural estate, and if you or I know Christ to be precious, we may be sure that we are alive through the Holy Spirit.

We may not be able to say when the Spirit of God came into us perhaps this may be a trouble to usthat we do not know the day when we were quickened from our death in sin. But dear Friend, the life itself is there. Do you enjoy Christ? Is His name sweet music to you? Oh, can you roll the doctrine of His atonement under your tongue as a sweet morsel? Say, is His flesh food to you? Do you rejoice in His redemption? Then you are alive, for no dead soul ever could taste heavenly things. To taste that the Lord is good is a certain evidence that the quickening Spirit abides in you. Or, to put it in another light. If men have a taste of Christ, it is certain evidence of a Divine change, for men by nature find no delight in Jesus.

Books of surgery tell us of a few persons without taste but the cure for such unfortunates is unknown. Their infirmity is beyond the reach of drugs or surgery. If a man should be without hearing, the surgeon might, perhaps, effectually operate. Or if blind, the film might be removed from the visual orb. But if without taste, the defect is beyond the range of mortal power. So, if any man has a taste for Christ, inasmuch as he had it not by nature, and he could not have obtained it of himself, his is a case out of the pale of human ability. That same Christ who raised the dead, must have given this holy taste to the tasteless palate and tongue of the sinner.

I do not enquire what your experience may have been, or may not have been. If Christ is precious to you, there has been a work of Divine Grace in your heart. If you love Him, if His Presence is your joy, if His blood is your hope, if His glory is your object and aim, and if His Person is the constant love of your soul, you could not have had this taste by nature for you were dead. You could not have acquired this taste by learningfor this is a miracle which none but the God who is supreme over nature could have worked in you. Let every tried and troubled Christian, who nevertheless does taste that the Lord is good, take consolation from this simple remark.

4. In the next place. This taste, where it has been bestowed by Divine Grace, is a discerning faculty. There have been instances of persons who could not discern between the various flavors. A man was well known to a certain surgeon, who could just detect the distinction between the smell of garlic and the fragrance of a rose, but was quite incapable of knowing any difference between the perfume of a rose and of a lily. And the same person in feeding could never distinguish between different meats or drinks, except between the more pungent and rancid and the more exquisitely sweet.

Now, there are some Christians of that kind, who have some taste for Christ, but their taste is not very discerning. You may preach to them a doctrine of ifs, and ands, and buts, and if it is warmly delivered and well disguised, they will hardly know what they are taking. Then, on another occasion, you may give them the sure mercies of Davidshalls, and wills, and everlasting verities, and oaths, and covenants, and they like that, too. For they have not yet, by reason of use, become able to discern between the Truth of God and error.

Yet, mark you, there was never yet a Christian who did not know the difference between the Rose of Sharon and the garlic of Egypt. There was never yet a man renewed by Divine Grace who did not soon discover the difference between works and Gospel, between Law and Grace. Between the dead efforts of the flesh and the living power of the quickening Spirit of the living God. I have noticed that some Christians in these modern times have but little taste, and do you know to what I have ascribed it? I think they have taken a cold and have thus lost very much of their power of taste. Oh, how many Believers there are who sit in the draught of worldliness till they get stiff-necks of carnal pride and lose their taste for heavenly things! Besides, if a man will ruin his palate with the high-spiced food of earth, it is little marvel that when he comes back to his natural food, Christ Jesus, he should have lost some of his delight in Divine things!

Now, I know there are some professors who have such a taste for worldly joys, that it is no marvel that they cannot so well discern the Divine and exquisite pleasure that is in Christ Jesus, when they are fed upon by the Holy Spirit. Yet again, I say, though the degree of discernment may vary, there is a discerning power in faith as taste. If you can feed on a religion which gives you ceremonies to trust to, you have never tasted that the Lord is gracious. If, my Hearer, you can live upon a Gospel which leads you to depend upon yourself, you have no spiritual taste, or else you would loathe, as much as any Egyptian loathed to drink of the waters of the Nile when turned into blood.

You would only drink of the cool stream of the river of life which rises at the foot of the Throne of God and flows around the base of Calvary, where Jesus shed His blood. Say, Soul, do you love Jesus only? Is He all your salvation and all your desire, and do you trust and repose wholly and solely in Him? For if not, then you have no spiritual tasteand you have no reason to believe that you belong to Jesus Christ at all.

5. But, again, to pass on, having sufficiently enlarged upon that point. Faith as a taste is not simply a discerning but a delighting faculty. Men derive much satisfaction from the organs of taste. We ought not to be as the glutton, whose only reason for living is that he may eat. But everyone of us may be thankful that God has not made the repairing of our frame to be an obnoxious operation and that He has given us a capacity for enjoying the flavors of food. Certain critics have a faith which is very good for discerning but never for enjoying.

They have a fine nose for heresy. The moment it comes anywhere near them they discover it. And if there is half a word in a sermon they do not like, how sure they will be to take it home. One bad fish in our basket and it will be cried all round the town before tomorrow. But let us offer ever so much that is good, we can scarce win a notice. Dear Friends, I would have Gods people discern, but the discerning propensity ought not to destroy the enjoying faculty. I bless God I love the Doctrines of Grace but I never considered the Doctrines of Grace to be like drawn swords with which to fight every man living.

I know it is a good thing to be like the armed men about the bed of Solomon, each with his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night. But for my part, to recline upon that royal bed and sleep with Jesus bosom for a pillow, is better still. I pray you, dear Friends, delight yourselves in Christ! Let your faith so taste Jesus as to make you glad. Let your joy be as the joy of harvest and sing with Zechariah, How great is His goodness and how great is His beauty! Corn shall make the young men cheerful and new wine the maids. Better is Christ to you than all earths harvests. He is the cluster of Eshcol, so heavy that one man can never carry all of Christ! He is not one grape. But a cluster of sweetness is our Beloved unto us!

Feed to the full! Eat, yes, drink abundantly, O Beloved! Be satiated with delight, and let your soul rejoice as with marrow and fatnessso shall you understand in the fullest degree what this taste is which so delights the soul of man! King Solomon, during his lifetime, sat at a feast. The first rich course was one which he had asked for himself. It was wisdom. He tasted all its dainty morsels and he cried, In much wisdom is much grief: and he that increases knowledge increases sorrow. Then an attendant, all bedecked with gold and silver, brought in the lordly dish of riches and Solomon ate thereof till he cried out, All is vanity and vexation of spirit, there is no profit under the sun.

Then there came in one who looked most bewitching, bearing the dish of carnal and fleshly pleasure and Solomon greedily sat down to eatfor this time, he thoughthe had full sure obtained the honey that would enlighten his eyes. So Solomon feasted to the very full, and at the last he said, vanity of vanities. All is vanity! But he never would have said this concerning the true wisdom. For at the last, when the old man ceased to be a hunter of pleasure, he bore his willing testimony to the perfection of that love which is better than wine.

Dearly Beloved, you who know what it is to taste Christ can witness that Immanuels love makes you like Jonathan in the woods, who did but dip the end of his spear into the honey and his eyes were enlightened. Oh, what enlightenment, what joy, what consolation, what leaping of heart is there to that man who has learned to feed on Jesus, and on Jesus Christ alone!

6. We must remark, dear Friends, that this taste of ours is in this life imperfect. As old master Durham says, It is but a taste! You have tasted that the Lord is gracious, but you do not know how good and how gracious He is. I am sure my soul was hot within me when you were singing that verse just now

*But when I see You as You are,   
Ill praise You as I ought.*

There is another verse, too, which I may aptly quote  
*When I have tasted of the grapes,   
I sometimes long to go   
Where my dear Lord the vineyard keeps,   
And all the clusters grow.*

We have not yet rested beneath the vines of Canaan. We have only enjoyed the first fruits of the Spirit and they have set us hungering and thirsting for the fullness of the heavenly heritage. We groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption. We are like David. We have had a draught of water from the well of Bethlehem that is within the gate, brought to us through the valor of Christ Jesus. But we have not yet drank the clear, cool stream, in all its perfection, at the fountain head.

We are but beginners in spiritual education. We have learned the first letters of the alphabet. We cannot read words yet, much less can we read sentenceswe are but infants. We have not come to the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus. As one says, He that has been in Heaven but five minutes, knows more than all the general assembly on earth, though they were all learned divines. We shall know more of Christ by one glimpse of Him in Heaven, than we shall know by all our learning here. It is but a taste here, and if a taste is so ravishing, what must it be to sit at the table and eat bread in the kingdom of God?

And here I must again remark that this imperfection of taste is in some Christians far more conspicuous than in others. There are some Believers who seem to have no appreciating taste for Christthey hardly know the savor of His blessed name. I declare to you all, if Christ were not better than the visible Church, we might be weary of Him. His Church, alas, is but the blurred and blotted portrait of Himselflovely she is. But sometimes those blots and blurs are so conspicuous to our anxious eyes that we rather mourn her uncomeliness than rejoice over her beauty. Oh, how many there are among you, professors of Christ, that are none of His!

What said the Apostle? For many walk, of whom I have told you often and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of

Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly and whose glory is in their shame. Dear Brethren, let us purge ourselves from the corruptions of these pretenders. Frivolity, pleasure, gain, worldliness, covetousnesswhat have these things to do with us? Get away from us! Get away from us! Be gone, you Fiends! But how many open their hearts and say, Come, hide here, you unclean spirits. Come and dwell with us!

Surely, surely, surely, you have but little taste, if any, for the manna of Christ, or you would never eat the dust which is the serpents meat. God quicken His people! Wash their mouths out, if necessary, even with bitter medicine, till they desire Christ anew and cleave to Him with full purpose of heart.

7. Though ours is an imperfect, we thank God it is a growing taste. Old Barzillai told David that he was too old a man to enjoy dainties. Said he, Can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink? We know that sometimes in the decline of life, the taste, like the other powers of manhood, decays. But glory be to God, a taste for Christ will never decay. The good bishop, when he was dying, was asked by his wife whether he knew her. But he shook his head, for memory had failed. His dearest friends and children, after repeating their names, asked whether their dear friend and father had not some recollection of them. But again he shook his head. Do you remember Jesus? said one. And oh, how he clasped his hands together, for that was a name he never could forget!

Our venerable friends who are present with us this morning, findI hope they dothat they have a loosened grip for the world and a tighter grasp for Christ. While your eyes grow dim and you need your glasses, I hope you can see Christ more clearly than ever. God grant that some of you may be called up to the top of Pisgah and may have a view of the landscape. And there may you see your Masters love in all the length and breadth of its fullness and richness, before yet you are raised up to Heaven by the kiss of the Most High. In dying moments, the Christians taste gets quickened. And whereas before he thought Christ sweet, now he knows He is! Where he once compared Him to honey, now He declares that honey from the honeycomb is sour compared with Christ.

And he can cry out with Rutherford, Black heavens, black moon, black sun! But fair, fair, incomparably fair Lord Jesus! He can now tread everything beneath his feet as he would a dead and corrupt thing. But his soul cries, Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! You are brighter, fairer and more lovely to me than ever You were before! God give us Grace that we may understand and knowexperimentallywhat it is to taste that the Lord is gracious.

II. MEN WHO HAVE THUS TASTED OF CHRIST HAVE SPECIAL SINS TO AVOID AND OBJECTS TO DESIRE.   
We first dwell upon evils to be avoided. Malice. Revenge is sweet, is the proverb of the Italians and many an Englishman has half learned it, if not wholly. Revenge is sweet. But not to the man who has tasted Christ, for he says, How can I have vengeance upon my fellow, when Christ has put away my sin? Now, forgiveness is sweet and he loathes malice and turns aside from it as from venom itself.   
Guilethat is craftiness whereby men rob their fellow creatures. Some men think guile a very fine thing. Thats a sharp fellow, says one. And sage fathers pat their boys on the back and say, If you become a sharp fellow you will be an alderman yet. See yonder trader, you must keep all your eyes open or he will take you in. He does not exactly tell lies but well, he shaves very closely to the truth. It is guilelow craftiness and cunning. A man of God hates that thing. What? I, I the servant of the God of Truth, crouch, bend, fawn, do anything but what is upright, to gain wealth? As surely as the Lord says concerning the Laodicean Church, I will spew you out of My mouth, so the Believer says concerning anything that is not true and straightforward, I am sick of it. I loathe it, I abhor it. I turn from it.   
The next thing is hypocrisy, whereby men are not so much robbed and injured as deceived. A Christian can be no hypocrite. Hypocrisy, like all other sins, lurks in man till the very last. But a Believer hates to pretend to be what he is not. A man who has once tasted that the Lord is gracious, is a true and transparent man in his profession. If any suppose him to be better than he is, he does not wish to wear feathers that are not his own. He would not be glorified by another mans labors, nor build upon another mans foundation. Hypocrisy he utterly detests and would sooner die a pauper than live a pretender. Any man among you who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, will, I am sure, without my exhortation this morning, loathe all malice, guile and hypocrisy.   
Once more, put away all evil speaking. I am sorry to say that there are some, who I hope are Christians, who do not hate evil speaking. Have you heard about Mrs. So-and-So? I shall not mention names but there are fifty, perhaps a hundred, here, to whom it will apply. There is a little mischief in the village about Miss A, or Mr. B. And Mrs. Tittle-Tattle is up as early as possible and calls on Mrs. Scandal and says, Have you heard the sad news? I hope it is not true. No, I have not heard it. Well, dont mention it to anybody else, I hope it is not correct. But I have heard suchand-such.   
And the two sit down and they make such a breakfast over it. And they both say they hope it is not true, while all the time they are as glad of it in their hearts as ever they can be. They go on telling others they hope it is not trueand telling them not to mention it to anybody elseuntil they do all the mischief before they have stopped to enquire whether or not they are telling lies. Then there are the men. They like a bit of scandal in the newspapers every now and then. Public men have often to feel that evil speaking must be very sweet to the people, or surely it would never pay to print such barefaced lies.   
A Christian should have nothing to do with scandal but should say in a company, Stop! I cannot sit by and hear you say that of an absent person. If he were here, you might say what you liked, but as he is not, please hold your tongue, for I am here as a defender of those who are back-bitten. Every absent man should have an advocate in a Christian. More especially should this be true when the rumor injures a Brother or Sister in Christ. It is an ill bird that fouls its own nest. And he is an ill Believer who tells tales about his fellow Christians.   
If you, as a Church member, have anything against a Brother, tell him alone. And then, if it should be some public and crying sin, tell it in an orderly manner to the Church officers. But for you to go chattering about things you do not know to be true is such an offense against Church order, that if you are expelled from Church communion for it, the ejection will be justifiable. You certainly cannot expect to have fellowship with Christ if you mar the fellowship of Christs Church by talking the one against the other.   
See, now, among our different denominations, how pleased some ministers are if they can get a bone to pick against a Brother in another denomination. If there is a fresh hitch in the machinery of the Church of England, how often the Dissenter feels devoutly glad that there is likely to be an upsetting of the Episcopal communion. And I know that some Episcopalians, when they hear that in a Dissenting Church there is something wrong, say, Well, it is a great pity. But they think to themselves, Well, they will eat one another up and will be all the less trouble to us. Rinse your mouths! Rinse your mouths, all of you, who have said anything against your Brethren up to now and from this time forth. If so be you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, eschew all evil speaking against your fellow men.  
The Apostle, having told us what to avoid, tells us what to eat and drink. As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word. A most unfortunate translation, for who ever heard of sincere milk? Unadulterated milk is a more sensible translation. The Christian man should desire pure doctrine. He should desire to hear the Gospel plainly and truthfully preached. Not in the words which mans wisdom teaches, but in the words which the Holy Spirit teaches. It is a sign of declining health in a Christian when he does not love the means of Divine Grace. But how, Sir, if I cannot get on with my minister? Well, it may be your sin that makes him such a poor minister as you think him to be.   
No doubt, while the pew is to be supplied by the pulpit, the pulpit is acted upon very greatly by the chilliness and hardness of the pew. If you prayed more for your minister you would feed better under him. But in London you have not this excuse, for there is such a choice of preachers of the Word here, that if you had a desire for the pure milk, you might obtain it somewhere or other. Oh, what a good thing it is to have spiritual hunger and thirst! When people are not hungry, you may set a fine meal before them, but they will turn up their noses at it. But let a man come fresh from the field, hungrydown he sitsno matter how rough the fare. He only wants it to be sweet, wholesome and nutritious, and he cuts huge slices for himself and feeds to the full.   
Give me a congregation of hungry hearers, such as I usually see here on Sunday, with eyes that seldom turn from the preacher and with ears that catch every word! I think any man could preach to my congregation, for you come up here hungry. A minister would wish to be like the mother bird which comes back with the worm to the nest and finds all the mouths open, everyone desiring to be fed. Now, this is just, I think, what the Apostle meantAs newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word. You know babes do not have set times for desiring their food. When they want it they will have it and will cry till they get it.   
So should it be with Believers. They should have such unceremonious longings to be fed from the breasts of Heavens consolation, that they will cry till they get the heavenly food from God their Fatherthat living food by which they grow and are made strong in Christ. I have thus enlarged upon the first part of the text. And now, two or three minutes only, upon the next. O taste and see that the Lord is good!   
Dear Christian Friends, I have spoken to you of this taste. But among us this morning, in the galleries and down below here, there is a goodly sprinkle of men who do not know Christ. They have come up to this House of Prayer, not that they might know Christ, but that they might see a vast congregation and amuse themselves by novelty. Ah, how many come with this miserable object. Well, let them come for whatever they like, we are glad to see them, for being in the way, God may meet with them.

Now, to such of you who are not Believers in Christ and have never tasted that He is gracious, we say this O taste and see. By which we mean, experience is necessary. Taste and see. You cannot see without tasting. If you would know whether religion is a good and happy thing, try it. It is not rubbing the bread upon the cheek. It is tasting. You must have an inward sense of the things of God. My son, give Me your heart. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. Let your heart believe in Jesus. Be not content with ceremonies. Rest not satisfied with outward morality. Only that which reaches the core will really affect the fruit of the tree. We must make the fountain pure, or else our filtering the stream is all in vain. Taste and see.   
Dear Hearers, I cannot insist too earnestly upon this. Get an inward religionvital godlinesswhich goes into the secret parts of the heart and dwells in the inner man. Nothing but tasting can save your souls. And then we say, Taste and see. We are quite sure that if you will taste you shall see that the Lord is good. I bear my willing witness that Christ makes a man blessed, that religion is a happy thing, and that her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. But you do not believe me. Then taste and see for yourselves. Seek the Lord while He may be found: call upon Him while He is near.   
May the Spirit of God lead you to give your heart to Jesus, and you will find that the true religion of Jesus is a good thing for you. A good thing for you, young woman. A good thing for you, young man. Good for the trader; good for the gentleman. Good for the artisangood for everyone of you. We feel very earnest that you should do this and therefore we say, O taste and see that the Lord is good! Do not despise our invitation! We beseech you, by the mercies of God, to give your hearts to Jesus. From our very souls, as though we pleaded for our own lives, we would beseech you. Give the things of God a patient consideration. Believe in Jesus. This is to taste. Trust Christ. This is to taste and see that the Lord is good. Yes, I know you will turn on your heels and say that religion is a good thing for Sundays but you do not see anything in it for everyday life. Ah, Sirs, it is for want of knowing better. If you would but taste and see, you would regret that you had not tasted beforeand you would rejoice and bless the Lord that you were brought to taste at last. But you say, May I taste? Oh, yes! Divine Grace is free! Christ is free! If you will come, poor Sinner, there is none to push you back. If God has made you willing to take Christ, depend upon it, Christ was always willing to take youfor where God puts a renewed will into man, it is the image of His own eternal will. If you desire Christ, trust Him this morning. This is the way to escape from Hell and fly to Heaven.   
Are you black with sin? The fountain is openwash. Are you hungry? The door is not shut. It stands open all daycome, then, and eat. Ho, everyone that thirsts, come you to the waters and he that has no money, come you, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. If any of you should ever regret of trusting Christ, come and blame me. Find my Master in your hearts and if He is not a good and precious Savior to you, if He does not feed your soul with gladness, keep you from sin and bring you at last to Heavencome and tell me I am found a false witness unto Christ! From the depths of my soul I say it, I would sooner be a Christian than an emperor; sooner have Christ than a crown. And sooner bear His Cross than sit upon the throne of a Caesar.   
Soul, taste and see that He is good. But I am not fit to taste, says one. Well but who is fit to eat? A hungry man? Are you hungry? Eat. Oh but my hands are black with sin. Never mind. It is not hand work here, it is mouth work. Oh but I am afraid I have no taste and that if I did receive Christ into my heart, I should not taste His sweetness. Mark, the taste is in Him and not in your mouth. Come and take Him as he is. A little child, however weak, can be fed. Put up your mouth, you weak and foolish Sinner, weary and heavy laden as you are, and by receiving Christ into your souls mouth, you shall find Him good, and you shall go your way rejoicing.   
Hearken diligently unto the Lord and eat that which is good and let your soul delight itself in fatness. It will be an awful thing to feed on the wind forever and roll the morsels of Hell beneath your tongue to all eternitybut this will be your portion unless you taste of Christ. May He add His own blessing to His own glory. Amen.

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2168 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE TEST OF TASTE   
NO. 2168

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 12, 1890, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

If so be you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. 1 Peter 2:3.

I THINK there can be very little doubt that Peter is here quoting from Psalm 34:8: O taste and see that the LORD is good. As I read you the chapter just now, I could not help observing the constant traces of Old Testament language. It endears Peter to us when we see how he prizes the ancient Word of the Lord and, at the same time, it puts honor upon the Old Testament itself when we see the Holy Spirit in the New thus quoting from the Old. It is noteworthy that in Psalm 34:8 the Lord God is spoken of. The passage actually runsO taste and see that Jehovah is good and Peter does not hesitate for a moment to apply the passage to the Lord Jesus. The word, Lord, is here used in its utmost fullness of meaning as the equivalent for Jehovah and it is applied to our Savior Jesus Christ.

That Peter is here speaking of Jesus we are sure from the context: To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. The chosen foundation stone is, beyond question, the Lord Jesus and Peter uses words concerning Him which were written by Inspiration concerning Jehovah Himself. Evidently to Peter the Lord Jesus was Lord and God. He remembered the voice which he heard in the holy mount, when he was an eye-witness of His majesty: For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent Glory, This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Let us continually pay Divine honor to our Lord Jesus Christ! If He is not God, our faith is vain and our hope is gone. But His Deity is no cunningly devised fable. His own works, as well as the Holy Scriptures, attest to His Godheadthe whole Church of Christ believes in Him as very God of very God and on this Rock we build our everlasting confidence. Peter had special knowledge of His Lord, for you remember that on one occasion he said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but My Father which is in Heaven (Matt. 16:17).

The Father had manifested the Lord unto him as His only-begotten Son. We little wonder that he speaks of tasting that THE LORD is gracious, for by Revelation he was made to know and understand to a very high degree the Glory and Majesty of the Incarnate Son of God. That he should speak of His graciousness is also very natural, for he had himself tasted of His Divine Grace. This same Peter had denied his Master with

oaths and curses and when, after his Lord was risen, he sent a message to him by Magdalenethen he tasted that the Lord is gracious. Afterwards, when the Lord met him by the sea and put the question to him three times, Do you love Me? He betokened perfect reconciliation and Peter knew, then, that he was wholly pardoned and completely restored. By Jesus giving Peter, His once false disciple, the charge to feed His sheep and lambs, then Peter truly tasted that the Lord is gracious.

When Peter was made so useful at Pentecost, was made to work miracles, was released by an angel from prison and on many other occasions, Peter tasted that the Lord is gracious. It was Peter who used those explicit words concerning the Substitutionary Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus, Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree, for right well had he beheld the Lord Jesus as full of Grace and Truth and in his own personal experience he had tasted that the Lord is gracious. Taking these words out of the mouth of Peter, I shall ask you, my Brothers and Sisters, Have you tasted that the Lord is gracious? There is no doubt what is insinuated by Peters use of the word, iffor he believed that those to whom he wrote had feasted upon the love of the Lord Jesus.

Assuredly I would suggest no doubt concerning my Brethren by the use of the same words, yet I would put you upon a search to make assurance doubly sure. Dear Friends, have you tasted that the Lord is gracious? Is this fact past conjecture? Can you say positively, We know in our own hearts the Grace of our Lord Jesus? To help you to a happy conclusion, I purpose to handle my text in the following manner. First, here is a royal dainty The Lord is gracious. Here is, secondly, a special sense, namely, tasteIf so be you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Then, thirdly, we shall ask a searching questionHave we tasted that the Lord is gracious? Oh, for Divine Grace to answer truthfully! In the last place, we shall consider a series of practical inferences. If so be we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, then such and such things follow. Throughout the whole discourse may the Spirit of the Lord rest upon us!

I. First, then, here is A ROYAL DAINTYThe Lord is gracious. Jesus is full of Divine Grace. Jesus flavors the mouth with Grace when we feed upon Him. In Him is Grace which can be tasted by us while here below. Once tasted, this Grace is remembered. Let me remind you that the Lord is gracious in His Person, Nature and Character. He would never have been Immanuel, God with us, if He had not been gracious. What brought Him from above to take upon Him our frail humanity? What held Him here while He endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself? What but His natural and innate graciousness as the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and truth?

What did He here that was not gracious? Was He not always feeding the hungry, healing the sick, teaching the ignorant, comforting the mourners, or raising the dead? If you read His lifetake which you will of the four Evangelistsyou cannot help feeling that you have beheld the face of One who was altogether love, goodness, graciousness. He went about doing good. From His lips poured gracious words and from His hands streamed gracious deeds. Our precious Christ is gracious both as God and Mangracious in His tone and manner and spirit. He is gracious in every office. He is gracious to all sorts and conditions of men. He is gracious in the promise of His coming and gracious in delaying itthat by His longsuffering men may be saved. The Lord is goodblessed are all they that put their trust in Him!

We know that our Lord Jesus is gracious by Nature. But, Beloved, we have found Him exceedingly gracious in the manner of dispensing His salvation. He is most free, spontaneous and generous in His gifts of Grace. He needs not to be prompted or persuaded in order to make Him gracious. We do not drag Grace from Him as from an unwilling giver, but He delights to bestow His mercy, for the Lord is essentially gracious. Remember His great love whereby He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins. When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. When we were His enemies, He reconciled us to God by His blood. And when we had neither thought nor wish to come to Him for salvation, He came to us with salvation.

Many of us are living trophies of His conquering GraceGrace unsought and utterly undeserved. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us and sent His Son to be the Propitiation for our sins. Though we now love the Lord our God, we cheerfully confess that we love Him because He first loved us. When we lay polluted in our bloodcast out and ready to perishit was with Him a time of love. And He passed by and said to us, Live, and we did live through His eternal Word of Life. He began to deal with us when we had no dealings with Him. Remember His coming to the graves mouth when we lay wrapped in the grave clothes of trespasses and sins and were, like Lazarus, even beginning to stink. He came and by His mighty Voice He called us forth and we arose to newness of life! Gracious, indeed, is He who, in the freeness and sovereignty of His Grace, is found of them that sought Him not and is made manifest unto them that asked not after Him.

Beloved, as we know He is gracious by Nature and gracious in manner, so is He gracious in His gifts. How gracious was He when He gave Himself for us! This was a gift unspeakable. What priceless gifts follow! He gave us pardon and life. He took us from beneath the gallows and lifted us up to justification and acceptance. God-condemned and self-condemned, we stood shivering between the jaws of doom and then did Jesus come and speak our pardonperfect, clear and irreversiblesealed with His own blood and spoken by His own Word. He gave us His pierced hands in token that we were accepted in the Beloved. Beloved, you know all about this, but I would stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance.

The Lord is gracious in blotting out our sins. Once we had not obtained mercy, but now we have. Because He is gracious He has put us among the children by the gift of adoption and has made provision for us as members of His family. We are clothed with His everlasting righteousness, nourished upon the Bread of Heaven. We are led and taught, and trained by

His wisdom. We are preserved, sanctified and prepared for the mansions of Glory by the power of His Holy Spirit. Oh, the gifts that He bestows upon worthless good-for-nothings like ourselves! Where sin abounded, Grace does much more abound. Oh, the wonders of love! Truly the Lord is gracious!

Since we have come to know our Lord, how gracious have we found Him to be! He gives more Grace. No word can express all that Jesus has been to us, but this word, gracious, goes some way towards it. We have had many inward struggles and conflicts and much we have needed Divine Grace and as our need such has been our supply. It has sometimes gone hard with us, my Brothers and Sisters, while pressing on to God. But whenever we have been ready to slip with our feet, the Lord has held us up, for His mercy endures forever. Yes, and when we have stumbled, He has set us on our feet again, for He is always gracious. When He might have chided us sharply, yes, and might have laid on the rod, yet has He sweetly smiled and reminded us of His great love and restored us by His graciousness.

We have been full of faults, but He has removed them, all for He is gracious. We have been full of wounds, but He has healed them by His own stripes. We have been full of wanderings, but He has brought us again to His fold. Even now, sitting in this house, some of us feel ourselves to be the most unworthy creatures out of Helland yet we know that Jesus is ours and we are His. We cannot but cry out, Depths of mercy! We are the chief of sinners and yet in the matter of obtaining Divine Grace we are not behind any of His saints. We are both vile and preciousblack as the tents of Kedarand fair as the curtains of Solomon. Oh, the wonders of Free Grace, in its continuance and perseverance! Truly, the Lord is gracious.

The Lord is gracious, for He hears prayer . Our course is set with memorials of the Lords answering our pleas. That bedside of ours is a witness that the Lord is good. That old armchair, where you are likely to kneel, could tell strange stories of what you have sought and found. Everything has gone cross with you in business, but you have bowed the knee and found Divine Grace to help in time of need. You cried unto the Lord when the child was sick and you were comforted! You sought the Lord when the dear one was dead in the house and you found the living God to be your consolation as you went to the open grave. When your wounds were bleeding through bereavement they were stanched in answer to prayer. When your souls windows were darkened, Grace was the sun which came shining into your gloom.

You have knelt before the Lord at times when you have been weighed down with a heaviness which you could not explainand none could removebut you have not knelt in vain. Dark night seemed settling down upon your spirit and neither moon nor star appeared, but even then

*Prayer made the darkened cloud withdraw, Prayer climbed the ladder Jacob saw.*

You came forth from the closet rejoicing, for the Lord was gracious to you! He put off your sackcloth and girded you with gladness. Now you can sing

*In all my trials here below   
Ill humbly kiss His rod,   
For this, through Grace, I surely know,   
Hes still my gracious God.*

I hardly need remind you of these things because they must be ever present with your soul. The Lord has been gracious, very gracious to you.

Beloved, some of you have been favored with choice times, as the days of Heaven upon the earth. You have climbed the mount and been alone with Godand there you have seen your Lord and heard His voice in your soul. Oh, the rapture of intimate fellowship with God! Those to whom the Lord is gracious often enjoy an experience which they would not dare to tell lest they should seem too familiar. If we were forced to tell our joys, we should have to use expressions like those of Rutherford, or say, rather, those of Solomons Song which alone can express the high, mysterious joys of those who lean their heads upon the bosom of their Lord

*When in my heart His heavenly love   
He sweetly sheds abroad,   
How joyfully He makes me prove   
He is my gracious God!*

Possibly your experience has been of a sadder kindyou have backslidden and He has restored you in His Grace. You grew cold. You took less delight in the things of God. You began to absent yourself from the House of Prayer. Your Bible grew dusty and your closet was forsaken. Perhaps you were almost carried away captive by the world. Though you had tasted of the heavenly gift and the powers of the world to come, you had almost fallen awayand if you had altogether done so, you know how it is writtenIt is impossible to renew them again unto repentance. But Jesus held you back from that fatal step, for the Lord is gracious! Your eyes were opened, your heart was broken, you were laid low in the dust of self-abasement and you began to cry unto the LordReturn, O Holy Dove, return.

The Holy Spirit did return, and He brought you back to Christ and to peace and holiness. Then you sang sweetly, He restores my soul. In that day the Lord was seen to be a gracious God. Your face was black because the sun of this vain world had looked upon you and yet the Lord saw comeliness in you and still kept you in His heart. Though you had broken the holy vows which bound you to HimselfHe would not cast you away but still declared that He had espoused you unto Himself in faithfulness and that therefore you should know the Lord. Oh, the graciousness of our Lord to His erring ones! How kind is He to those who fall! And you do not know and I do not know, to the full, how gracious the Lord is.

Remember that He is preparing us for a Glory inconceivable. Everything is working out His perfect design. Here in this world we look upon the wrong side of the fabric that is being woven in the loom of Providence. When we ascend to Heaven we shall see the true pattern to which Christ is working by all His dealings with us and then we shall perceive that He

was carrying out a plan of Divine Grace by which we were made meet for Glory. Beloved, the Lord is preparing us for perfection of holiness and bliss! He is working us into the image of His Son and we shall be like He when we shall see Him as He is. He is making us fit to dwell among the angels of light and to drink eternally of the rivers of Gods pleasure. We are being educated by all the processes of His Providence and of His Grace to dwell in that celestial land where the Lamb is the Light and the Lord God is the delight of His people.

The Lord is graciousgracious to the uttermost! There is enough for a sermon in this one sentence! It is a great dish to taste ofthat the Lord is gracious. Before we go to the next point, I hope you have begun to enjoy the fragrant savor of your Redeemers name and the exquisite flavor of His Word. Blessed be the name of Jesus, He is gracious! Grace is poured into His lips! His hands drop the sweet-smelling myrrh of Divine Grace and perfume all they touch!

II. But now let us think of A SPECIAL SENSE which is exercised in tasting that the Lord is gracious. Faith is the souls eye by which it sees the Lord. Faith is the souls ear by which we hear what God, the Lord, will speak. Faith is the spiritual hand which touches and grasps the things not seen as yet. Faith is the spiritual nostril which perceives the precious perfume of our Lords garments, which smell of myrrh, aloes and cassia. Faith, also, is the souls taste by which we perceive the sweetness of our Lord and enjoy it for ourselves. Taste is an inward sense, a private, powerful, personal appreciation. To taste is to know a thing in the essence, outcome and enjoyment of it. To taste is to exercise discernment, to make discovery and to gain assured knowledge of a thing. Apply this to the fact that the Lord is gracious and what a weighty matter it is to taste thereof!

In answering the question, what is meant by taste? I would bid you notice the likeness of the word, taste, to another, namely, test. Taste is a test as to things to be eaten. We prove and try an article of food by tasting it. He that goes to the market to buy cheese, draws out a piece and eats it, that he may judge of the bulk by the taste. So it is with anything the value of which depends upon the flavorit has to be tasted that it may be testedand taste is the best test. If you desire to know the graciousness of God, you must taste and see, by accepting His Grace and all its blessed influences. No test is superior to this. Experience teaches as nothing else can. The charlatan moves in danger, speculating at every stepbut the man of experience walks on solid ground. Even so, we do not speculate upon the Grace of God, but we have known and believed the love which God has toward us.

In order to spiritual taste, there must be apprehension. We must know and believe that the Lord is gracious. If I do not know the fact and believe that it is so, I cannot begin to taste it. We must have some idea of what being gracious means and some conviction that this is truly the Character of our Lord Jesus. The clearer the knowledge, the more distinct the taste may become. Some of you have come as far as thatyou know and believe that the Lord is graciousthough you fear that He may not be gracious to you. This is the first step, but it is evident that more is needed.

After apprehension must come appropriation. Martin Luther saidAnd this I call tasting, when I do with my very heart believe that Christ has given Himself to me and that I have my full interest in Himthat He hears and answers for all my sins, transgressions and harmsand that His life is my life. When this persuasion is thoroughly settled in my heart, it yields wonderful and incredible good taste. In order to taste, we must make a very close appropriation. We place the gift of God, not in our pocket, but in our mouth when we taste it. That is the closest appropriationwhen we taste a blessing.

O my Hearers, I fear that many of you have heard of our gracious Lord for years and yet have never tasted that He is gracious! You believe that He is so, but you have never personally tried Him for yourselves. See, there is honey! Jonathan saw the woods to be flowing with it, for it dropped from many a bough! But this was not enoughhe tasted and his eyes were enlightened. O taste and see that the Lord is good. Take to yourselves the blessings of His Grace! Appropriate Christ, I pray you! Let each one take Him to himself and then you will know what tasting means. But taste further means appreciation. You may have a thing within yourself and yet not taste it, even as Samsons lion had honey within its carcass, but he was a dead lion and so could not taste it. A man may get the Gospel into his mind, but never taste it. It needs a living man and a living appropriation, and a living appreciation or else the royal dainty is not tasted.

Have you ever enjoyed the Truth that the Lord is gracious? Oh, you say, not as I should like to do. You have well spoken, but I only asked about a tasteI did not enquire about feasting to the full. To be filled with all the fullness of God is our inheritance. But just now it will suffice if we so taste as to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge. Just now we are talking about tastingand a taste of Divine Grace, though it bring us but little joyis a great thing as an evidence of more to follow! Have you tasted enough of your Lord to know that He is incomparably gracious? Have you taken enough of the Lord to yourself to be assured that there is none like He? Have you found all fullness dwelling in Him? There is no Grace like the Grace which comes from a dying Christ, a risen Christ, a reigning Christ, a coming Christ! Jesus is All in All to all who are in Him!

III. So, having considered the spiritual sense which tastes as heavenly meat, I now come to press upon you A SECOND QUESTIONIf so be you have tasted that the Lord is gracious? Dear friends, this is a very simple elementary question. It is not, If so be you have preached that He is gracious? Many of you will never preach, nor even write for others. Nor does it say, If so be you have laid it all down doctrinally in theological form. No, no! Some of you will never be theologians, but that is not the matter in hand. Have you tasted that the Lord is gracious? I may not know what a dish is made of, but I may have tasted it for all that.

I may be grossly ignorant of the mysteries of cookery, but I can tell whether a dish is sweet to my taste. Our self-enquiry is about a primary matter in which even new-born babes in Grace are concerned. I put it to everyone here, whether babes or strong menHave you tasted that the Lord is gracious? However simple is the question, it goes to the root of the matterit takes in the whole case of a mans soul. Have you tasted that the Lord is gracious? Do you know Christ by personal reception of Him? If not, you are in an evil case! If you only know the Lord Jesus in the Book. If you only know Him by the ear through the preacher, what good will it do you? You are sick and there is the medicineyou can interpret the doctors Latin and so you ascertain every drug in the mixture. Will this heal you? No! you must taste the medicine! You must receive it into your inward parts or you will derive no benefit from it.

Suppose you are hungry and before you is spread a meal. There is the menu and you read it through. Yes, you approve of every course. Will this satisfy you? No! You must sit down and handle that knife and fork and get to work or you will remain hungry. I do not need to press youyou are a willing guest at the table. But when I set forth the Truth of God that the Lord is gracious, many of you are content to hear about it and do not proceed to make the test and taste that the Lord is good! Oh, that you would come to the feast! Oh, that you would eat that which is good and let your soul delight itself in fatness!

Every man here must answer that question for himself . I hear a good wife say, I hope my husband has tasted that the Lord is gracious. My good Friend, go on hopingbut your husband must know the Grace of God for himself or your hopes will be vain! A father here says, I hope my daughter has tasted that the Lord is gracious. I am pleased that you have such a hope for herbut your daughter must taste for herself. We cannot, in this matter, be sponsors for one another! Tasting is an operation which must be performed by the individual palate. There is no other method of practicing it. No man can say that he has tasted my food for me and none may dream that they have tasted Christ because their friends have feasted on Him. We must know the Lord for ourselves or die in ignorance of Him!

I am afraid this question will have to be answered in the negative by many hearers, for they have never tasted Christ. This is an extraordinary thing with some of you, for you are very sound in the faith, religious in your conduct and moral in your lives. You would not be content with any preaching which was not the unadulterated milk of the Word, for your mind would reject the concoctions of heresy. And yet, though you know the Truth of God, you have not tasted this particular and all-important fact, that the Lord is gracious! What is the good of knowing that food is good if you leave it untasted? It must be a wearisome business to sit at a table and have the dishes all brought before youand then taken away again! It must be tantalizing to have a sniff of the food but never to have a morsel in your mouth! Many hearers remain in that wretched state. The river of God is at their feet and yet they are dying of thirst! The banquet of Grace is spread at their door and yet they perish with hunger! Alas, the mass of mankind have never tasted, do not know what it means to taste and do not care to know! Ah me, this is woe upon woe!

There are also those who rejoice that they have tasted that the Lord is gracious, yet confess it with a deep blush because they have only tasted. Still, there is a great deal in the tasting, for he that can taste will desire more. I would to God that all of us would go to Jesus and feed upon Him to the full. Oh, for a Divine hunger which would make us eat abundantly! I would be ravenous for Christ! Would God we thirsted after Him as the hart pants after the water brooks, for then we should soon be filled! I fear the most of us must confess that we have only tasted that the Lord is gracious, whereas we might have been sitting in His banqueting house, having our souls satisfied with the rich provisions of His house. Yet, blessed be the Lord,

we have tasted. We have tasted that the Lord is gracious!

To us this taste has come through the Word. Have you not often cried, when you have gone out of this house, Blessed be God for what we have heard today? So, too, in reading the Scriptures, we have felt that the Lord is gracious. When we have enjoyed assurance of our salvation we have tasted that the Lord is gracious. In answered prayer, in Providential supplies, in gracious renewals we have tasted that the Lord is gracious. In our work or suffering, in our joys or sorrows, in our meditations or praises we have tasted that the Lord is gracious. There is no getting this Truth out of our souls creedwe are sure of it. If a man has tasted a thing, he knows the flavor of it and is not to be argued out of his knowledge.

I have eaten sugar and I find it sweet. Here comes a philosopher and declares that it is sour. Go on, philosopher, and philosophize as long and as much as you like, but my palate defies your philosophy! When last I took quinine I held very dogmatic views as to its bitterness. Men who have tasted are inclined to be positive. But, cries one, It must be wrong to be dogmatic. I care nothing about hard wordsI will be dogmatic about what I positively know. When a man is sure of things, why should he pretend to be undecided? There are some matters about which I am past argument, past the power to doubtand the graciousness of my God is one of these things. This I have seen and handled, and tastedfrom now on let no man trouble methe die is cast.

Let me tell you when we have tasted the graciousness of the Lord. We have done so after great bitterness. Our Lord, as George Herbert would say, has put His hand into the bitter box and given us a dose of wormwood and gall. We have drunk the cup in submission and afterwards He has made us taste that the Lord is graciousand then all bitterness has clean gone and our mouth has been as sweet as though wormwood had never entered it! It is wonderful how the delectable Grace that is in Christ Jesus drowns the offenses of life and makes us say, Surely the bitterness of death is passed.

When a man is ill , he often loses his taste. The most delicious food is nauseous to him. His soul abhors all manner of meat. But such is the flavor of the Truth of God that the Lord is gracious, that it is more pleasant to us when we are sick than at any other time! The love of Christ is a delicious refreshment for a sufferer. When our pains multiply and our

spirits are depressed, then is a gracious Christ more precious to us than in the day of health and joy. We get fresh sips of sweetness and new tastes of delight when our tribulations abound.

The taste of Divine Grace is always on some mens palates their mouths are filled all the day with the praises of the Lord. These are happy beingslet us be of their number! When a man grows old he sometimes loses his power of taste. Barzillai at fourscore years, said to David, Can your servant taste what I eat, or what I drink? Age had dulled his palate. But the natural law is not law in the spiritual world, for the older we get the more do we relish the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ! Believers grow more heavenly as they get nearer to Heaven, or at least they should do so. As earth goes, Christ comes. Christ is very choice to us when we are young, but when we are gray-headed He is sweetness itself! We realize our Lord more than ever and we have a keener perception of the Grace which He has manifested towards us. Shortly we shall be with Him where He is and shall behold and share His Glorythen will He be surpassingly delightful to our perfected taste.

Again I put the questionDo you know anything about it? I fear that some of you are quite at sea as to what I mean. You know the taste of fine old port, or sparkling champagne. You know the delicacies of the season but you have never tasted that the Lord is gracious and you smile as you hear the question, for it seems to you too absurd. Why, you have no taste which could apprehend such things and, indeed, you have no spiritual life! Dead men cannot taste the food of the living! So men who are spiritually dead cannot taste spiritual delights. The Lord quicken you! May you this morning find Christ who is the resurrection and the life! The moment you live unto Him you will begin to crave the milk of the Word and soon you will have tasted that the Lord is gracious!

IV. So we come to our last point which is A SERIES OF PRACTICAL INFERENCES. I have seen by the glances of many of you that you feel you have been made to sit at the table of salvation. You have not partaken so fully as you hope to do, but yet you have, at least, tasted that the Lord is gracious. Well, then, as the text puts it, Desire the sincere milk of the Word. If you have tasted it, long for more of it! Do not hanker after the dilutions and concoctions of modern thought, which you will find vended in many a pulpit. Beware of dangerous foods compounded of speculations and heresies! If you have ever tasted the true milk of the Word, you will not desire any other, for there is none like it.

When the other foods come into the market, say to yourself, The best is good enough for me and Christ Jesus is the best of the best. The Lord is so gracious that none can compare with Him for a moment and therefore I shall not leave Him. Let others fly to poisoned cups of error, or intoxicating draughts of superstitionwe will keep to that which is so grateful to our taste, so nourishing to our souls. Next, expect to grow and pray that you may do so. You, dear Friends, have tasted that the Lord is gracious and now you desire to be nourished in sound doctrine that your whole nature may be developed. How do Christians grow? If they grow aright, they grow all over.

Some grow in knowledge, but they do not grow in virtuethis is as if a childs head should get bigger and bigger and the rest of his body should remain as it washe will become a hideous creature or will die of water on the brain. Some say they will make their hearts grow and never mind their heads. This also will not do. If your head remains as a pimple while your hands and feet increase, you will be deformed. We must grow up into Christ in all things. How? Why, by drinking in the unadulterated milk of the Word! To feed thereon makes us grow. Why are some stunted? Because they do not take enough spiritual food, or else because it is not the true Word of God which they hear. It is sad that there should be so much evil teachingit is the pest of our age.

One of the most active agencies in London for the spread of certain diseases is milkand though persons take in their milk carelessly and think it is an innocent fluid, there may often be death in the canand the pint of milk may be a pint of poison. The Gospel is the most sustaining food for the soul, but if it is adulterated it may convey spiritual disease and death into the soul. More mischief can be done by the pulpit than by all other agencies put together! Brothers and Sisters, pray for ministers, for if they preach the Gospel and water it down so that the Gospel loses its power or if they preach the Gospel and poison it so that it ceases to be pure Truth of Godthen the people cannot grow, nor even live! Brethren, let us pray for more faith, more hope, more love, more zeal and so let us grow. Desire the sincere milk of the Word, that you may grow.

Next, If so be you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, abhor the garlic flavor of the worlds vices. I mean those alluded to in the first verse malice, guile, hypocrisies, envies and all evil speaking. If the Lord is gracious to you, be gracious to others. If you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, do not carry about with you the bitterness of malice, or the sourness of envy. Have no savor of cunning about you, nor the least taint of hypocrisy, nor the foul tongue of evil speaking. Is not even a smack of evil too much? A man that has tasted that the Lord is gracious ought to have a sweet mind and a sweet mouth. He should judge charitably and speak kindly of others. If you do not do so, I advise you to taste again and again that the Lord is gracious till the powerful flavor of Divine Grace shall abide in your mouth and cast out all the noisome savors of hate.

I want you also, dear Friends, if you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, to lose the taste for all earthly trifles. Some amusements we are supposed to condemn, but we have not condemned them indiscriminately. We have nothing to say about their suitability for those who can be satisfied with them. Many diversions may be suited to those whose natures can be gratified with them. As to the children of God, we judge them by quite another rule. Let the ox have its grass and the horse its hay, but souls must feed on spiritual meat. A farmer takes me over his farm. I see that he keeps swine and I see the men bring out for them barley-meal and mash. The farmer asks me what I think of it. I think it is capital stuff for those for whom it is prepared. I do not condemn the swine for enjoying

it, nor the farmer for providing it for them. But if he asks me whether I will have some of the mash, I am quick at answering, No, farmer, not I. Why not? Well, I have other tastes. In your own house I have eaten bread and beef, and other foods are not what I hunger for. That is all I say.

Those who want vain amusements may judge themselves by their likings, but if so be that we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, our tastes are from now on spoiled for the worlds impure delights. To dispute about taste is acknowledged to be unwiseand when sin and holiness become matters of taste with men, we shall soon see what manner of men they are. The taste of the world will never be our taste. I hope it never will, for if it were, we should have grave cause to fear that we were of the world. If we were of the world, the world would love its own and we should love the worlds own as much as the world loves it. May you lose all taste for the apples of Sodom and the grapes of Gomorrah!

Lastly, if you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, taste again. For what does the next verse say? To whom coming, as unto a living stone. You have come to Jesuskeep on coming to Jesus. You tell me that you trust Christtrust Him again, my Brothers and Sisters! He is all my hope. Hope in Him yet more! He is my joy. Rejoice in him still more! He is my love. Love Him with all your soul! If you have tasted and enjoyed, then feast and enjoy. Eat you that which is good and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

There is no stint at my Lords table and you need not restrain yourself from fear of surfeit or sickness. You can never partake too freely of the Grace of Christ Jesus your Lord. No man was ever made ill by feeding too freely upon heavenly things. No, the dainties of Heaven create an expansion of soul and as we receive we gain capacity to receive yet more of holy gifts! We feast on when once we have tasted that the Lord is gracious! The Lord feed you to the full, for Jesus sake! Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON 1 Peter 1:17-25; 2:1-12.**   
HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK913, 724, 715.

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COMINGALWAYS COMING   
NO. 1334

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.   
To whom coming.   
1 Peter 2:4.

THE Apostle is speaking of the Lord Jesus, of whom he had previously said, If indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and He follows that sentence up with this, To whom coming as unto a living stone. Now, I want to call your special attention to this present participlethis act of comingfor there is much to counsel and to comfort us in the fact and the reflections it suggests. The Christian life is begun, continued and perfected altogether in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ! This is a very great blessing for us. Sometimes when you go on a journey, you travel so far under the protection of a certain Companybut then you have to change and the rest of your journey may be performed under very different circumstancesupon quite another kind of line.

Now we have not to go just so far to Heaven in the guardian care of Jesus Christ and then at a certain point to change, so as to have somebody else to be our leader, or some other method of salvation. No, He is the Author and He is the Finisher of our faith. If we begin aright, we go on arightwe go on with Christ is All. And if we finish aright we finish with Christ is All. It was a great delusion of some, in Pauls day, that after they had begun in the Spirit, they hoped to be made perfect in the flesh. And there are some, nowadays, who begin as sinners resting upon Christbut they want to go on as independent saints, resting on themselves.

That will never do, Brothers and Sisters. It is not, Christ and Company. The sinner knows that it must be Christ only, because he has nothing of his own. And the saint ought to know that it must be only Christ because he has less than nothing apart from Christ! I believe that if we grow out of Christ we grow in an unhealthy mushroom fashion. What we need is to grow up into Christ in all things, knowing Him more and more and being more and more satisfied that He is what we need. This is really a healthy growth and may God send more and more of it to us as long as we live!

Blessed be His holy name! With us it is Christ in the morning, when we are young and full of strength. It is Christ at noon, when we are bearing the burden and heat of the day. And it is Christ at eventide, when we lean on the staff for very age and the shadows lengthen and the light is dim. Yes, and it shall be only Christ when the night settles down and shades of death curtain our last bed. In all circumstances and conditions we look only to Jesus! Are we wealthy? Christ crowns it. Are we in poverty? Christ cheers it. Are we in honor? Christ calms us. Are we in shame? Christ

consoles us. Are we in health? He sanctifies it. Are we in sickness? He relieves it.

As He is at all times the same in Himself so He is the same to us. To the same Christ we must come and cling under every new circumstance. Our heart must abide faithful to her one only Lord and lovingly sing

*Ill turn to You in days of light   
As well as nights of care.   
You are brightest amid all thats bright,   
You are fairest of the fair!*

We have not to seek a fresh physician, to find a new friend, or to discover a novel hope, but we are to look for everything to Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever. You are complete in Him. Stand to this, my Brothers and Sisters! Never think that you need anything beyond the provision which is stored up in Him for sanctification, for satisfaction, or for safety! Cast not your eyes around you to find a supplement to the Lord Jesus, or you will deceive yourselves and dishonor Him.

It is not with our Lord as it was with Moses. Moses led the people through the wilderness, but he could not bring them into the promised landthat was reserved for Joshua. Brothers and Sisters, the Lord Jesus has led you so far through the wilderness and He will lead you over the Jordan and secure your heritage for you! He will see you safely landed in itlook not, therefore, for any other leader or lawgiver! It is not with Christ as it was with David. David collected the materials for the temple, but though he could gather together vast stores of great value, he could not build them up, for the Lord said that this honor should be reserved for his son that should be after Him and, therefore,, the construction of the temple was left for Solomon.

But our Lord Jesus Christ, blessed be His name, has not only gathered together His people and the precious treasures with which He is to build a living temple unto God, but He will also build it, stone upon stone, and bring forth the top stone with shouting! He shall build the temple of the Lord and He shall bear the Glory! Christ in the Christians alphabet is A, B, C right down to Zand all the words of the pure language of Canaan are only compounds of Himself! Has He not said it, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end?

Our text speaks about coming to Him and I shall endeavor to expound it to you thus. This is a full picture of Christian life. I consider it to be a complete picture of a saint drawn with one stroke. It is not easy to make a portrait with one line, yet I remember seeing a somewhat famous portrait of our Lord in which the artist never lifted his pencil from the paper from beginning to end. He drew the whole of it with one continuous series of circles. So here I may say the whole Christian life is drawn in one line coming unto Christ. To whom coming.

When we have spoken upon that, I shall answer two questions. The firstwhat is the best way of coming to Him at first? The otherwhat is the best way of coming to Him afterwards? May the Holy Spirit bless the whole discourse to our souls.

I. First, then, HERE IS A COMPLETE DESCRIPTION OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. It is a continuous coming to Jesus. If you have your Bibles open at the text, I want you to notice that the expression occurs in connection with two figures. There is one which precedes it in the second verse, namely, the figure of a little child fed upon milk. As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby. If indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming. Children come to their parents and they frequently come rather longer than their parents likeit is the general habit of children to come to their parents for what they need.

They begin with coming to the mothers when they are newborn babes. Look at the little child. It cannot provide for itself. If it were left to shift for itself, it must die. But having tasted the unadulterated milk, it thirsts for more of it. When the time comes round for it to be fed, and it comes very often, it gives unmistakable signs even before it can speak that it needs its food! It knows where to come and it will not rest till it reaches its place and nestles down. As the child grows up it knows the breakfast hour, the dinner hour and knows where to come for the grateful meal and the hearty welcome. You do not need, in most of your houses, I suspect, to ring a bell to call your children together to the family table! They all carry little interior bells which let them know pretty accurately when mealtimes are and they come freely, without persuading or forcing.

Some of them are now getting to be 15 or 16 years of age and they still keep on coming! They come to your table just as they used to come. When first you had to lift them into their little chairs, they were coming. And now they take their big chairs as if they quite belonged to themand they still keep on coming! Yes, and they come to you not only for bread and for meat, but they come for a great many things besides. In fact, the older they grow, the more they come! They used to come for little shoes and little garments, but now they need them cut of a larger size and of more expensive materialand they come accordingly. Though they cost you more, they come with greater freedom, for habit has made them very bold in their coming!

They do not require any entreaty or encouragement to come for what they needthey look for many things as a matter of courseand for the rest they come with all the readiness imaginable. Perhaps they let you know their desires a little sooner than you need them to, and when you think that they might manage a little longer with what they have, they press their claims with earnestness and vote them urgent! They very soon find out their requirementsyou never have to call them together and say, Now girls, I need you to earnestly consider whether you really need more dresses. Now boys, I need you to lay it to heart whether you really require new clothes.

Oh, nothing of the sort! Your children do not need to be called in such a way. They come without calling! They are always coming for something, as you very well know! Sometimes they constrain you to put your hands

into your pockets so frequently and for such a variety of expenses that you wonder how long the purse will hold out and when your resources will be exhausted! Of one thing you feel quite sureit will be easier to drain your purse than to stop your children from coming for one thing or another! They come to you, now, for a great many things they did not come for at first. It seems that there is no end to the things they come for, and I believe there is no end at all.

Some of them, I know, continue to come after they have got beyond their boyish years. Though you have a notion, I suppose, that they might shift for themselves, they are still coming for sovereigns where shillings used to suffice! There was a time when you could put them to bed at night with the reflection that you had found them food and raiment and house and home. You knew your expensesbut now the big fellows come to you with such heavy demands that you can hardly see the end of it! So it is. They are always coming!

Now, in all this long talk I have been showing you how to understand the figure of coming to Christ. Just what your children began to do from the first moment you fixed your eyes on themand what they have continued to do ever sincethat is just what you are to do with the Lord Jesus Christ! You are to be always coming to Himcoming to Him for spiritual food! Coming to Him for spiritual garments! Coming to Him for washing, guiding, help and health! Coming, in fact, for everything! You will be wise if, the older you grow, the more you comeand He will be all the better pleased with you.

If you discover other needs, come for more than you used to come for! You will prove, thereby, that you better understand and appreciate what manner of love it is that you should be called the sons of God. He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Has He not said to you, Open your mouth wide and I will fill it? It is rather strange that you never have to tell your children to do that! They do it without any tellingbut you have been told to do it and yet you do not do it! Our Lord complains, you have not called upon Me, O Jacob.

The infinite liberality of your heavenly Father has urged you to make great requests of Him and yet you have stuttered and stammered and been afraid to ask! He now tells you that you have not because you ask not. Beloved, let us learn from our children, and let it be the habit of our lives to be incessantly coming to the heavenly Fathercoming more often, coming for more reasons, coming for larger blessings, coming with greater expectations, coming in one life-long perpetual comingand all because He bids us come!

If you will look again at your Bibles, you will get a second illustration from the fourth and fifth verses, To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. You also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Here we have the figure of a building. A building comprises, first, a foundation, and then the stones which are brought to the foundation and are built upon it.

This furnishes a very beautiful picture of Christian life. I have read that there has been discovered beneath Jerusalem an immense cavern or quarry near the Damascus gate. Travelers who have been into this quarry say that there are niches in the live rock out of which the magnificent stones were cut with which Solomons temple was built. The temple is up there on the top of the rock, and then far down in the quarry can distinctly be seen where the huge stones used to be. Now there was a process of coming by which each stone came to the foundation. Some stones that were expected to form part of the building never reached itthere is one huge stone of that sort in the Bezetha cavern right now.

It is still there for this reasonthough it is squared and chiseled on the front and two sides and also on the top and the bottomyet it has never been cut away at the back. And so it cleaves to the rock of which it is naturally a part and remains in its original darkness. Now, the passage that I would like you to think of is that in the 51st chapter of Isaiah Look unto the rock from which you were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. There are many here present who have been cut off from the rock and lifted up out of the horrible pit! And since the early operation of Divine Grace they have been coming and coming till they have reached the Foundationand are built up as living stones in the temple which is established upon Christ!

But there are others of you who need further excavating. God has begun His work upon you. He has used sharp tools and begun to separate you from the worldit has taken a long time to get you cut away from the rock, even in part. You used to be altogether sinful and earth-bound. You lived in worldliness, just as the stone formed a part of the rock. God has been using His great chisel upon you. He has cut you away and separated you, to a great extent, from your fellow men. But still, at the back, in secret, your heart cleaves to sin! You have not given up the darling lust of your heart and, therefore,, you are not quarried yet. And you cannot come to Christ, for that is impossible till you are separated from the rock of which you naturally form a part!

Oh, how I wish that almighty Grace would take the saw of the Word of God, tonight, and make clean cuts right across your stony heart until you are sawn right off from the hard rock of sin that you may afterwards be made to come to Christ to be built upon Him as your Foundation! That is how the work of Grace beginsby cutting loose the soul from the evil world of which it has been a component part! This is part of the process by which the living stones are brought to rest on the Foundation, for it is clear that they cannot come to the Foundation till first they are removed from their native bed in the pit of sin. Oh, may Gods Grace continue to take out many of this congregation like stones divided from the quarry, that so by Grace they may come to Jesus!

Well, after they had cut out those stones in the quarry, which, with a little imagination, you can see lying there, detached and distinct, the next operation was to pull them up to the top of Mount Zion. It was a long

drag up to the summit of the hill. How Solomon managed to remove such enormous masses we do not know. If he had no machinery or motive force that could supersede manual labor, and the force on which he relied was in the sinews of men, the matter is all the more amazing! They must have pulled away, perhaps, many thousands of them at one single stone, hauling it out of the pit, dragging it up the zigzag roads till, at last, the gigantic mass reached its place.

Now, there is a lifting, a drawing of the soul to Christ after this fashion and I see among you some who have recently been drawn. You have not been dragged by men. All the men in the world could not draw a sinner to Christ! No machinery is known or will ever be invented that can ever draw a proud, stubborn will to Christ! We may tug and pull till we break the ropes, but we shall never make a soul stir one inch toward Christ! But there is another power which can accomplish the work impossible to us. I, if I am lifted up, says Christ, will draw all men unto Me. He has such attractive power that He draws the stones out of the quarry of nature, right up to the Foundation which His free Grace has laid in Zion and they are built upon Him. This is the second part of the work of Grace in the soulfirst it separates us from the rock, and then it draws us up to the Foundation. And in both it is working out our coming to Christ.

Well, we have watched the stone as it has been carried up. What is the next process? Why, the next work is to let it down so that it lies in due order upon the foundation. The foundation of the temple very likely was far below the adjacent soil and so this mass of stone had to be let down to the foundation steadily and wisely, that it might rest in its proper bed. What a task it is sometimesto let a huge stone down upon the foundationand to get it to lie square and true so that every bit of it is in its proper position with the rest of the structure!

Picture the process in your minds eye. We have got the stone upon the base, but half of it projects beyond the foundation and, so far, it has nothing to lean upon. That will never do. It must be moved till it lies plumb with the foundation, exactly square with the other stonesand till every portion of it rests firmly on its proper bed. Oh, dear Hearts, this is one work which the Grace of God has to do with youto bring you to lie upon Christ, to recline upon Christ, and that wholly, rightly, and squarely!

It takes a long time to bring some sinners to this. They want to be propped up with a little bit of self-righteousness! They cannot be induced to lie right square upon Christthey want to tilt a little, have a little shoring up with their own doings and a little dependence on themselvesbut this will never do! To whom coming, says the text, coming as to a living stone. Oh, that almighty Grace would constrain you all to be coming till you lie flat and square on Christ! Till you have Christ at one corner and Christ at the other cornerand Christ at all the four corners where your soul liestill you are resting on the Lord Jesus Christ at all times, in all respects, under all circumstances, for everything! Other Foundation can no man lay! You must be sure that you rest wholly upon Jesus!

Bless the Lord, says one, I know I have come as far as that! Can I get any farther? Well, look, Brother, as long as ever that huge stone lies on the foundation it is always coming to the foundation! Its own weight is always pressing it down upon the foundation and the heavier it is, the more closely and compactly it lies. I feel myself, now, to be more close to Christ than ever I was! My weight of sin helps to press me down on Him. My weight of trouble, my weight of care, my weight of anxiety about the souls of my hearers and even my weight of joy all help me to press more on my Lord! The way to be coming to Christ, Brothers and Sisters, as long as you live, is to lean more on Christ, press more heavily on Christ, and depend more upon Christ than ever before!

In this way, you know, some stones seem, by long abiding and pressing, to cleave to one another and unite together till they appear to be no longer distinct, but one mass. Have you not often noticed in an old Roman wall that you cannot distinguish the mortar from the stone? You cannot tell where the stones were joinedthey have grown to be one piece. And blessed is that Christian who, like a living stone, has continued so to come to the Foundation till Christ and he have become one, as it were! Yes, one in conscious fact, so that nothing can divide them!

Thus we continue to come to Jesus and draw nearer to Himnearer and yet nearer, still, built up into Himperfectly joined in one spirit. Then, only then, shall Christian life be perfected! These two figures of the babe and the stone have shown you, I trust, what the text means. I have not gone far afield to find themthey lie, as you have seen, in the immediate context. To whom coming is an apt description of the whole of Christian lifemind that you make it the rule of yours.

II. But now, secondly, I have to ANSWER THE QUESTION, what is the best way of coming to Christ at first? There are some poor hearts among you longing to be saved. Ah, you say, I hear that if I come to Christ I shall be saved. But how can I come to Him? What do you mean by coming to Jesus? Well, our reply is plain and clearit is to trust Christ, to depend upon Him, to believe Him, to rely upon Him. Then they enquire, But how can I come to Christ? In what way would you recommend me to come? The answer is, the very best way to come to Christ is to come with all your needs about you. If you could get rid of half your needs apart from Christ, you would not come to Jesus half so well as you can with the whole of them pressing upon you, for your need furnishes you with motives for coming and gives you pleas to urge.

Suppose a physician should come into a town with motives of pure benevolence to exercise the healing art? What he needs is not to make money, but to bless the town. He does not intend to charge any or take any fees, but he lets it be known that he has come into the town to display his skills. He has a love to his fellow men and he wants to cure them and, therefore,, he gives notice that as he only wishes for opportunities of displaying his kindness and skill, the poorest will be welcome and the most diseased will be best received.

Now, then, who is the man that can come to the doctors door with confidence and give a good rat-tat-tat and feel that he will be welcome? Well, there is a person who has cut his fingerwill the doctor rush into the surgery to attend to him? No doubt he will look at the cut, but he will not grow very enthusiastic over it, for doctors do not get much credit out of curing cut fingers! Here is another gratis patient who has a wart on his hand. Well, there is nothing very famous about curing warts and the physician is by no means excited over this work! But here is a poor forlorn body who has been given up by all the other doctorsa patient who is so bad that he lies at Deaths door! He has such a complication of diseases that he could hardly tell what diseases he has not suffered fromand certainly his condition is terrible enough to make it appear hopeless.

He seems to be a living wonder of disease. That is the man who may come boldly to the physician and expect his immediate attention and his best consideration! Now, Doctor, if you can cure this man, he will be a credit to you! This man exactly answers to your advertisement. You say that you only wish for patients who will give you an opportunity of displaying your skills. Here is a fine object for your pity! He has bad lungs, bad heart, bad feet, bad eyes, bad ears, bad head, bad all over! If you desire an opportunity of showing your skill, here is the man! Jesus, my Lord and Master, is the Great Physician of souls and He heals them on just such terms as I have mentioned. Is there a far gone sinner here tonight? Is there a deeply sin-sick soul anywhere within the range of my voice? Is there man or woman who is altogether bad? Come along, my Friends, you are just in a right condition to come to Jesus Christ! Come just as you are, that is the best style of coming.

Another illustration may be furnished by the common Scriptural figure of a feast. A king determines to act with generosity and, to show how liberal his disposition is, he desires to make a banquet for those who need it most. He says, If I make a great feast for my lords and dukes, they will think little of my hospitality, for they fare sumptuously everyday. Therefore I will seek out guests who will be more likely to be grateful. Where shall I find guests who will most enjoy my dainties? Men who will eat with the greatest gusto and drink with the greatest delight? Having considered the matter, he cries to his heralds, Go into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in.

From among the tramps by the roadside the heralds soon gather starving wretches who exactly meet the kings wishes. Here is a poor man who has had nothing to eat for the last 48 hours. Look at his eager delight at the sight of the food! If you want somebody to eat largely and joyfully, is not he the man? Look how he takes it in! It is wonderful how the provisions disappear before him! Here, again, is a poor woman who has been picked up by the wayside, faint for lack of bread. She has scarcely any life in her, but look how she begins to open her eyes at the first morsel that is placed before her, and what delight there is in her every expression as she finds herself placed at a table so richly loaded!

Yes, the poorer, the more hungry, the more destitute the guests, the more honor is accorded to the king who feeds such mendicants and receives such vagrants to his table. Hear how they shout the kings praises when they are filled with his meat! They will never have done thanking him! Now, if I address a soul tonight that is very needy, very faint, very desponding, you are a fit guest for my Master because you have such a fine appetite for His generous repast of love! The greatness of your need is your fitness for coming to Christand if you want to know how to come come just as you are! Tarry not to improve yourself one single atomcome as you are, with all your sin and filthiness and need about youfor that is the best way to come!

If you want to know how to come aright the first time, I should answer, come to find everything you need in Christ. Do not come with a load of your own wealth. Remember what Pharaoh said to JosephAlso regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours. Do not bring your old rubbish with you. I thought I was to bring repentance. Do not attempt to do so, but look to Jesus for it! COMINGTO JESUSALWAYS COMING. Christ is exalted on high to give repentance and remission of sins. Come and receive a heart of flesh, for you cannot make one for yourself!

Oh, but I thought I was to bring faith. Faith, also, is the gift of Christ. It comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Draw near, then, to that Word to find faith. Come for everything. Oh, but I want to feel. And then, I suppose, after you have found a nice lot of feelings you will come to Christ, and say, Lord, You are now able to save me, for my feelings are right? What conceit! Come to Christ for feelings! Come to Christ for everything!

What? says one, Can you mean it, that I, an unfeeling, impenitent wretch, am bid to come at once and believe in Jesus Christ for everlasting life? I mean just that! I do not mean to send you round to that shop for repentance and to the other shop for feelingand to a third store for a tender heartand then direct you to call on Christ, at last, for a few odds and ends. No, no, but come to Christ for everything!

*Come, you needy, come and welcome,   
Gods free bounty glorify!   
True belief and true repentance,   
Every Grace that brings you near,   
Without money   
Come to Jesus Christ and buy.*

I heard of a shop, some time ago, in a country town where they sold everything, and the man said that he did not believe that there was anything a human being needed but what he could rig him out from top to toe. Well, I do not know whether that promise would have been carried out to the letter if it had been tried, but I know it is so with Jesus Christ! He can supply you with all you need, for, Christ is All. There is not a need your soul can possibly have but the Lord Jesus Christ can supply it and the very best way to come, is to come to Him for everything! The best way to come to Christ is to come meaning to get everything and to obtain

all the plenitude of Grace which He has laid up in storeand promised freely to give.

Some poor souls who come to Jesus Christ seem as if they need a little relief from fear, a hope that they may just get saved and a fair chance of going to Heaven when they die. Pray do not come in that way, my dear Friend! Come intending to obtain the fullness of love, the uttermost of Grace! Some time ago, when there was a dinner given to poor people, they were told to come and they should have all they could eat. Do you know what they did, some of them? There was not to be any dinner till six oclock. Well, that they might have a noble appetite, they did not eat any breakfastnot they! They meant to get all they could, now they had an opportunity, and so they came as hungry as possible.

Many years ago, I am told, it used to be the custom of the lord of the manor, in certain villages, on Christmas Day to give the poor people a basin of food. The rule was that whatever basin was brought, his lordship always filled it. It was perfectly marvelous how the basins grew, till at last, when some of the women came with their basins, the lord of the manor looked at the huge bowls and wondered how they could dare to bring such huge vessels! But he was a man of a generous heartall he would say to his steward would be, These people believe in my generosity. Go and fill their bowls. Fill and fill on till you have filled them all. As long as they bring their bowls none shall say that I denied them.

And now, when you go to Christ, take a spacious vessel of large prayer and great expectation! Enlarge your desire and make up your mind to thisI am not going in to be a miserable Christian, with barely enough Grace to keep me from open profanity, to whitewash me with a respectable profession and ensure me against the peril of everlasting perdition. I mean to take a higher aim and to seek a better portion! Gladly would I vie with saints and angels and be the most happy, the most useful, the most joyous, the most holy Christian that ever lived, if God will help me to be so.

I wish we had some of the old Methodist fire back among us again. Some of those dear old people, if they did not know much, used to enjoy much and when they went to hear a sermon they listened with a zest, for they received the Word of God as a fresh inspirationit was a lively oracle to them. The Gospel, as it was preached to them, awoke an echo in their hearts! They were all alive to its good cheer and they shouted, Amen, hallelujah, bless the Lord, as they heard it, for it went home to their souls!

Nowadays we are very proper and decorous in our behavior, all of us, and we are not a little critical in our tastes. As we pick up a crumb of the Gospel we like to know whether it is the real aerated bread baked in a tin, or whether it is the common household bread of the shops. The preacher is a little odd and he does not cut the bread exactly into dice pieces, and so we do not like the manner of service, for we are rather fastidious and we air our own conceits by fault-finding. Because the Lords servant does not very daintily bring us our portion on a silver platter and hold it out to us, we curl our lips and say, No, thank you.

Oh, may God deliver us from the fashionable stiffness and artificial nonsense! May He revive in us the reality both of nature and Divine Grace so that we may come to His table of love with a good appetite! Modern Christians remind me of our boyish days, when we went to bathe in the sea and used to dip our toes in the waves instead of taking a plunge head first. I am sure that to plunge right in is the best way with religion! Throw your whole soul into it and allow the glorious waves of everlasting love to go right over your head! And then dive and swim in that sea which is bottomless and rejoice in the Lord with all your heart!

But this mere dabbling about with goody-goody goodliness, instead of the grand old godliness, makes professors all of a shiver and they stand in doubt, as though they hardly liked it, and would rather get back to the world and put on their old clothes againonly they are half afraid to do so. Oh, may the Lord grant us Divine Grace to come with all our needs to Himto come to Him for everything and to come determined to have everything that is to be had, and to go in for it thoroughly! That is the way to come to Christ!

III. There remains one other questionWHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO COME AFTERWARDS? The answer isCome just as you used to come! Brothers and Sisters, the text does not say that you have come to Christ, though that is true, but that you are comingand you are to be always coming. The way to continue coming is to come in the same way as you came at first. I have many things to say about this, but my time has gone and, therefore, I will not enlarge, but I will only put them in brief.

I am persuaded that the only happythe only safe way for a Christian to live is to live in daily dependence upon the mercy of God in Jesus Christjust as he did when he was a babe in Grace and a stone newly drawn from the quarry of nature. I know what it is to build up a nice structure of my own experience on the Foundation of Christ and to climb upon it instead of standing on my own foundation. If you were ever on the top of Snowdon, or some other high mountain, you will have noticed that to make the standing a little higher they put up some wooden scaffold or othersome 10 or 12 feet of platform to increase the elevationand then everybody wants to get up on that platform.

Well, now, I have built my little platform on Christ. My own experience has made a very handsome edifice, I can tell you. I have felt, Well, I know this and that and the other by experience, and I have been quite exalted. Sometimes, too, I have built a platform of good worksI have done something for Christ, after all. The proud flesh says, Oh yes, you really have performed something you might talk about if you liked. Self-confidence has piled my platform up and it has been a very respectable looking concern and I have even asked a few friends up.

But, do you know what has occurred? Why, I have felt my platform shake! It began to tremble! Stress of weather has rotted the beams and the supports have begun to give way. And I have seen all my building tumble downand I have gone down with it! And as I have gone down

with it, I have thought, It is all over with me now. I am going to crash down, I do not know how far, but perhaps I shall fall to the bottom of the mountain. Instead of that I alighted on the top of the mountain. I did not fall very far, but came right down where it had been most sensible of me if I had always kept, namely, on terra firma, down on the solid earth!

I have noticed, lately, that a great many have been building some very pretty little wooden structures on the top of Jesus Christ. I think they call them, the higher life, if I rightly remember the name. I do not know of any life that is higher than that of simple faith in Jesus Christ! As far as I am concerned, the highest life for me out of Heaven is the life of a poor publican saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. My very good friends are not content with this position, though he who keeps it goes to his house justified more than boasters! Some friends built very high a little while agoI thought they would soon reach the moon! But certain of them went down in a very ugly way, I have heard, and I am afraid some more will go down if they do not mind what they are doing.

Give up building these artificial elevations! Give up resting on them and just stand on the level of Christs finished work, the blood of Christ shed for sinnersthe righteousness of Christ imputed to sinners! Be yours the humble plea

*I am the chief of sinners,*

*But Jesus died for me.*   
He that is down there will never falland he who stays there is really as high up as the man who thinks he is all aloft! All above living by faith in Christ is mere dream and moonshine! There is nothing higher, after all, than just being nobody, and Christ being everybody, and singing with poor Jack, the huckster

*Im a poor sinner, and nothing at all,   
But Jesus Christ is my All in All.*

If you grow till you are less than nothing, you are full grown, but few have reached that stage! And if you grow till Christ is everything to you, you are in your prime! But, alas, how far short of this do most men fall! The Lord bring you to that highest of all growthsto be daily coming to Christalways empty in yourself, but full in Him! Always weak in yourself, but strong in Him! Always nothing in self, but Christ your perpetual All in All! The Lord keep you there, Brothers and Sisters, and He will have praise and glory of you, both now and forever. Amen.

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COMING TO CHRIST   
NO. 3509

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 1916.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, JUNE 17, 1868.

To whom coming.   
1 Peter 2:4.

IN THESE three words you have, first of all, a blessed Person mentioned under the pronoun, whomTo whom coming. In the way of salvation we come alone to Jesus Christ. All coming to Baptism, coming to Confirmation, coming to sacraments are all null and void unless we come to Jesus Christ! That which saves the soul is not coming to a human priest, nor even attending the assemblies of Gods saintsit is coming to Jesus Christ, the great exalted Savior, once slain, but now enthroned in Glory. You must get to Him, or else you have virtually nothing upon which your soul can rely. To whom coming. Peter speaks of all the saints as coming to Jesus, coming to Him as unto a living stone, and being built upon Himand no other foundation can any man lay than that which is laid, and if any man says that coming anywhere but to Christ can bring salvation, he has denied the faith and utterly departed from it! The coming mentioned in the text is a word which is sometimes explained in Scripture by hearing. At other times by trusting or believing, and quite as frequently by looking. To whom coming. Coming to Christ does not mean coming with any natural motion of the body, for He is in Heaven, and we cannot climb up to the place where He isit is a mental coming, a spiritual comingit is, in one word, a trusting in and upon Him. He who believes Jesus Christ to be God, and to be the appointed Atonement for sin, and relies upon Him as such, has come to Him, and it is this coming which saves the soul! Whoever the wide world over has relied upon Jesus Christ and is still relying upon Him for the pardon of his iniquities, and for his complete salvation, is saved!

Notice one thing more in these three words, that the participle is in the present. To whom coming, not, Having come to Him, though I trust many of us have come, but the way of salvation is not to come to Christ and then forget it, but to continue coming, to be always coming! It is the very spirit of the Believer to be always relying upon Christ, as much after a life of holiness as when he first commenced that life. As much when he has been blessed with much spiritual nearness of access to God and a holy, heavenly frame of mind. As much, then, I say, as when a poor trembling penitent, he said, God, be merciful to me a sinner. To Christ we are to be always comingupon Him always relyingto His precious blood always looking!

So I shall take the text, then, this evening thusThese three words describe

our first salvation, describe the life of the Christian and then describe his departure, for what even is that but to be still coming to Christto be in His embrace forever? First, then, these three words describe, and very accurately, too

I. THE FIRST SALVATION OF THE BELIEVER.   
It is coming to Christ. I shall not try to speak the experience of many present. I know if it were necessary, you could rise and give your, Yes, yes, to it. In describing the work of Grace at the first, I may say that it was, indeed, a very simple thing for us to come to Christ, but simple as it was, some of us were very long in finding it out! The simplest thing in all the world is just to look to Jesus and live, to drink of the life-giving stream and find our thirst forever relieved. But though it is so plain that he who runs may read, and a man needs scarcely any wit to comprehend the Gospel, yet we went here and there and searched for years before we discovered the simplicity which is in Christ Jesus! Most of us were like Penelope, who spun by day and then unwound her work at night. It was even so we did. We thought we were getting up a little. We had some evidence. We said, Yes, we are in a better state and shall yet be saved. But before long the night of sorrow came in. We had a sight of our own sinfulness, and what we had spun by day, I say, we unwound again quite as quickly by night! Well, there are some of you much in the same way now. You are like a foolish builder who builds a wall and then begins to knock down all the stones at once. You build and then pull down! Or, like the gardener who, having put into the ground his seeds and planted his flowers, is not satisfied with them and thinks he will have something else, and so tries again. Ah, the methods and schemes we will try and save ourselves, while, after all, Christ has done it all! We will do anything rather than be saved by Christs charity! We do not like to bow our necks to take the mercy of God as poor undeserving sinners! Some will attend their church or their chapel with wonderful regularity and think that that will ease their conscienceand when they get no ease of conscience from that, then they will try sacraments, and when no salvation comes from themthen there will be good works, Popish ceremonies and I know not what besides!   
All sorts of doingsgood, bad, and indifferentmen will take to if they may but have a finger in their own salvation, while all the while the blessed Savior stands by, ready to save them altogether if they will but be quiet and take the salvation He has worked. All attempts to save ourselves by our own works are but a base bargaining with God for eternal life, but He will never give eternal life at a price, nor sell it, for all that man could bring, though in each hand he should hold a starHe will give it freely to those who want it. He will dispense it without money and without price to all who come and ask for it and, hungering and thirsting, are ready to receive it as His free gift, but   
*Perish the virtue, as it ought, abhorred, And the fool with it, who insults his Lord,* by bringing in anything that he can do as a round of dependence, and putting that in the place of the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ!   
I said, dear Friends, that it was very simple, and indeed it is soa very simple thing to trust Jesus and be savedbut it cost some of us many a day to find it out. Shall I just mention some of the ways in which persons are, long before they find it out? Some ask, What is the best way to get faith? What is the best way to get this precious believing that I hear so much spoken of? Now the question reminds me of a madman who, standing at a table which is well spread, says to a person standing there, Tell me what is the best way to eat. What is the philosophy of eating? Why, the man replies, I cannot be long about that! I need not write a long treatise on itthe best way I know of is to just eat. And when people say, What is the best way to get faith? I say, Believe. But what is the best way to believe? Why, believe! I can tell you nothing else. Some may say to you, Pray for faith. Well, but how can you pray without faith? Or if they tell you to read, or do, or feel, in order to get faith, that is a roundabout way. I find not such exhortations as these put down as the Gospel, but our Master, when He went to Heaven, bade us go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creatureand what was that Gospel to me? His own words are, He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, and we cannot say anything clearer than that! Believethat is, trustand be baptized, and these two things are put before you as Christs ordained way of salvation! Now you want to philosophize, do you? Well, but why should a hungry man philosophizes about the bread that is before him? Eat, Sir, and philosophize afterwards! Believe in Jesus Christ, and when you get the joy and peace which faith in Him will be sure to bring, then philosophize as you will!   
But some are asking the question, How shall I make myself fit to be saved? That is similar to a man who, being very black and filthy, coming home from a coal mine or from a forge, says, seeing the bath before him, How shall I make myself fit to be washed? You tell him at once that there cannot be any fitness for washing except filthiness, which is the reverse of a fitness! So there can be no fitness for believing in Christ, except sinfulness, which is, indeed, the reverse of fitness! If you are hungry, you are fit to eat. If you are thirsty, you are fit to drink. If you are naked, you are fit to receive the garments which charity is giving to those who need them. If you are a sinner, you are fit for Christ, and Christ for you! If you are guilty, you are fit to be pardoned. If you are lost, you are fit to be saved. This is all the fitness Christ requirescast every other thought of fitness far from you! Yes, cast it to the winds! If you are needy, Christ is ready to enrich you. If you will come and confess your offenses before God, the gracious Savior is willing to pardon you just as you are! There is no other fitness needed.   
But then, if you have answered that, some will begin to say, Yes, but the way of salvation is coming to Christ and I am afraid I do not come in the right way. Dear, dear, how unwise we are in the matter of salvation! We are much more foolish than little children are in common, everyday life. A mother says to her little child, Come here, my dear, and I will give you this apple. Now I will tell you what the first thought of the child is aboutit is about the apple! And the second thought of the child is about its mother. And the very last thought he has is about the way of coming. His mother told him to come, and he does not say, Well, but I do not know whether I shall come right. He totters along as best he can and that does not seem to occupy his thoughts at all! But when you say to a sinner, Come to Christ, and you shall have eternal life, he thinks about nothing but his coming! He will not think about eternal life, nor yet about Jesus Christ, to whom he is bid to come, but only about coming, when he need not think of that at all, but just do itdo what Jesus bids himsimply trust Him. What kind of coming is that, says John Bunyan, which saves a soul? And he answers, Any coming in all the world if it does but come to Jesus. Some come runningat the very first sermon they hear, they believe in Him. Some come slowlyit may be many years before they can trust Him. Some come creepingscarcely able to come, they have to be helped by others, but as long as they do but come, He has said, Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out. You may have come in the most awkward way in all the world, as that man did who was let down by ropes through the ceiling into the place where Jesus was, but Christ rejects no coming sinnerand so you need not be looking to your coming, but looking to Christ! Look to Him as GodHe can save you! As the bleeding, dying Son of ManHe is willing to save you, cast yourself flat before His Cross, with all your guilt upon you, and believe that He will save you! Trust Him to do it, and He must save you, for that is His own word, and from it He cannot depart. Oh, cease, then, that care about the calling and look to the Savior!   
We have met with others who have said, Well, I understand that, that if I trust in Christ, I shall be saved, butbutbutI do not understand that passage in the Revelation! I cannot make out that great difficulty in Ezekiel! I am a great deal troubled about predestination and free will, and I cannot believe that I shall be saved until I comprehend all this. Now, my dear Friend, you are altogether on the wrong tack! When I was going from Cooks Haven to Heligoland to the North of Germany, I noticed when we were out at sea, far away from the sight of land, innumerable swarms of butterflies. I wondered whatever they could do there and when I was at Heligoland I noticed that almost every wave that came up washed ashore large quantities of poor dead, drowned butterflies. Now do you know those butterflies were just like you? You want to go out on to the great sea of predestination, free will, and I do not know what. Now there is nothing for you there, and you have no more business there than the butterfly has out at sea! It will drown you. How much better for you just to come and fly to this Rose of Sharonthat is the thing for you! This Lily of the Valleycome and light here! There is something here for you, but out in that dread-sounding deep, without a bottom or a shore, you will be lost, seeking after the knowledge of difficulties which God has hidden from manand trying to pry into the thick darkness where God conceals His Truth which it were better not to reveal. Come to Jesus! If you must have the knots untied, try to untie them after you get saved, but now your first business is with Jesus! Your first business is coming unto Him, for if you do not, your ruin is certain and your destruction will be irretrievable! But I must not enlarge. Coming to Christ is very simple, yet how long it takes men to find it out!

Again, we, bear our witness tonight, that nothing but coming to Christ ever did give us any peace. In my own case I was distracted, tossed with tempest and not comforted for some years. And I never could believe my sin forgiven or have any peace by day or night until I simply trusted Jesusand from that time my peace has been like a river. I have rejoiced in the certainty of pardon, and sung with triumph in the Lord my Godand many of you are constantly doing the samebut until you looked to Christ, you had not any peace. You searched, and searched, and searched, but your search was fruitless until you looked into the five wounds of the expiring Savior, and there you found life from the dead!   
And once more, when we did come to Christ, we came very tremblingly, but He did not cast us out. We thought He never died for us, that He could not wash our sins away. We conceived that we were not of His elect! We dreamed that our prayers could only echo upon a brazen sky and never bring us an answer. But still we came to Christ because we dared not stay away. We were like a timid dove that is hunted by a hawk and is afraid. We feared we should be destroyed, but He did not say to us, You came to Me tremblingly, so I will reject you. No, but into the bosom of His love He received us and blotted out our sins! When we came to Jesus, we did not come bringing anything, but we came to Him for everything! We came strictly empty-handed and we got all we needed in Christ. There is a piece of iron, and if it were to say, Where am I to get the power from to cling to the loadstone? the loadstone would say, Let me get near you and I will supply you with that. So we sometimes think, How can I believe? How can I hope? How can I follow Christ? Yes, but let Christ get near us and He supplies us with all that! We do not come to Christ to bring our repentance, but to get repentance! We do not come to Him with a broken heart, but for a broken heart. We do not so much even come to Him with faith, as come to Him for faith   
*True belief and true repentance,   
Every Grace that brings us nigh   
Without money,   
Come to Jesus Christ, and buy.*   
This is the first way of salvationsimply trusting and looking up to Christ for everything. But, then, we did trust. There is a difference between knowing about trust and trusting. By Gods Holy Spirit, we were not left merely to talk about faith, nor to think about it, but we did believe! If the Government were to announce that there would be ten thousand acres of land in New Zealand given to a settler, I can imagine two men believing it. One believes it and forgets itthe other believes it and takes his passage to go out and get the land. Now the first kind of faith saves nobody, but the second faith, the practical faith, is that which, for the sake of seeking Christ, gives up the sins of this life, the pleasures of itI mean the wicked pleasures of itgives up all confidence in everything else and casts itself into the arms of the Savior! There is the sea of Divine Lovehe shall be saved who plunges boldly into it and casts himself upon its waves, hoping to be borne up. Oh, my Hearer, have you done this? If so, you are certainly a saved one! If you have not, oh, may Divine Grace enable you to do it before yet that setting sun has hidden itself beneath the horizon! Have you known this before, that a simple trust in Christ will save you? This is the one message of this Inspired Volume. This is the Gospel according to Paul, the one Gospel which we preach continually. Try it and if it saves you not, we will be bondsmen for God for you. But it will save you, for God is true and cannot failand He has declared, He that believes on Him is not condemned, but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed on the Son of God.   
Thus I have tried to explain as clearly as I can that coming to Jesus is the first business of salvation. Now, secondly, and with brevity. This is   
II. A GOOD DESCRIPTION OF THE ENTIRE CHRISTIAN LIFE.   
The Christian is always coming to Christ. He does not look upon faith as a matter of 20 years ago, and done with, but he comes today and he will come tomorrow! He will come to Jesus Christ afresh tonight before he goes to bed. We come to Jesus daily, for Christ is like the well outside the cottagers house. The man lets down the bucket and gets the cooling draught, but he goes again tomorrowand he will have to go again at night if he is to leave a fresh supply. He must constantly go to the same place. Fishes do not live in the water they were in yesterday, they must be in it today. Men do not breathe the air which they breathed a week agothey must have fresh air into the lungs moment by moment. Nobody thinks that he can be fed upon the fact that he had a good meal six weeks agohe has to continually eat. So the just shall live by faith. We come to Jesus just as we came at first, and we say to Him *Nothing in my hands I bring,   
Simply to Your Cross I cling!   
Naked come to You for dress,   
Helpless, look to You for Grace.   
Foul, I to the fountain fly,   
Wash me, Savior, or I die!*   
This is the daily and hourly life of the Christian.   
But while we thus come daily, we come more boldly than we used to do. At first we came like cringing slavesnow we came as emancipated men. At first we came as strangers. Now we come as Brothers and Sisters. We still come to the Cross, but it is not so much to find pardon for past sins, for these are forgiven, as to find fresh comfort from looking up to Him who worked out perfect righteousness for us!  
We come, also, to Jesus Christ, more closely than we used to do. I hope, Brothers and Sisters, you can say that you are not at such a distance from Christ now as you once were. We ought to be always getting nearer to Him. The old preachers used to illustrate nearness to Christ by the planets. They said there were Jupiter and Saturn far away, with very little light and very little heat from the sun. And they have their satellites, their rings, their moons and their belts to make for that. Just so, they said, with some Christians. They get worldly comfortstheir moons and their beltsbut they have not got much of their Master. They have got enough to save them, but oh, such little light. But, they said, when you get to Mercury, there is a planet without moons. Why, the sun is its moon and, therefore, what does it need with moons when it has the full blaze of the suns light and heat continually pouring upon it? And what a nimble planet it ishow it spins along in its orbit, because it is near the sun! Oh, to be like thatnot to be far away from Jesus Christ, even with all the comforts of this life, but to be near Him, filled with life and sacred activity through the abundance of fellowship and communion with Him. It is still coming, but it is coming after a nearer sort.   
And I may say, too, that it is coming of a dearer sort, for there is more love in our coming, now, than there used to be. We came at first, not so much loving Christ, as venturing to trust Him, thinking He, perhaps, to be a hard Master. But now we know Him to be the best of friends, the dearest of husbands. We come to His bosom and we lean our heads upon it. We come in our private devotion. We tell Him all our troubles. We unburden our hearts and get His love shed abroad in our hearts in return, and we go away with a joy that makes our heart to leap within us and to bound like a young roe over the mountaintops. Oh, happy is that man who gets right into the wounds of Jesus and, with Thomas, cries, My Lord and my God! This is no fanaticism, but a thing of sober, sound experience with some of us. We can rejoice in Him, having no confidence in the flesh. It is still coming but it is coming after a dearer fashion.   
Yet, mark you, it is still coming to the same Person, coming still as poor humble ones to Christ! I have often told you, my dear Brothers and Sisters, that when you get a little above the ground, if it is only an inch, you get too high. When you begin to think that surely you are a saint, and that you have some good thing to trust to, that rotten stuff must all be pulled to pieces! Believe me, God will not let His people wear a rag of their own spinningthey must be clothed with Christs Righteousness from head to foot! The old heathen said he wrapped himself up in his integrity, but I should think he did not know what holes there were in it, or else he would have looked for something better! But we wrap ourselves in the Righteousness of Christ and there is not a cherub before the Throne of God that wears a vestment so right royal as the poor sinner does when he wears the Righteousness of Jesus Christ! Oh, child of God, always live upon your Lord! Hang upon Him, as the pitcher hangs upon the nail. Lean on your Beloved! His arm will never weary of you. Stay yourselves upon Himwash in the precious Fountain always! Wear His Righteousness continually and be glad in the Lordand your gladness need never fail while you simply and wholly lean upon Him. And now, not to detain you longer, I come to the last point, upon which we will only say a word or two. The text is  
III. A VERY CORRECT DESCRIPTION OF OUR DEPARTURE.   
To whom coming. We shall soon, very soon, quit this mortal frame. I hope you have learned to think of that without any kind of shudder. Can you not sing  
*Ah, I shall soon be dying,   
Time swiftly glides away,   
But on my Lord relying   
I hail the happy day!?*   
What is there that we should wait here for? Those who have the most of this worlds goods have found it paltry stuff. It perishes in the using. There is a fullness about itbut it cannot satisfy the great heart of an immortal man. It is well for us that there is to be an end of this life, and especially for us to whom that end is glowing with immortality! Well, the hour of death will be to us a coming to Christ, a coming to sit upon His Throne. Did you ever think of that? To him that overcomes will I give to sit upon My Throne. Lord, Lord, we would be well content to sit at Your

feet! It were all the Heaven we would ask if we might but creep behind the door, or stand and be manual servants, or sit, like Mordecai, in the kings court. No, but it must not be. We must sit on His Throne and reign with Him forever and ever! This is what death will bring youa glorious participation in the royalties of your ascended Lord!   
What is the next thing? Father, I will that they also whom You have given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My Glory. So that we are to be going to Christ before long to behold His Glory! And what a sight that will be! Have you ever thought of that? What must it be to behold His Glory? Some of my Brothers think that when they get to Heaven they shall like to behold some of the works of God in Nature and so on. I must confess myself more satisfied with the idea that I shall behold His Glory, the Glory of the Crucified, for it seems to me that no kind of Heaven but that comes up to the description of the Apostle when he says, Eye has not seen, nor has ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God has prepared for them that love Him. But to see the stars has entered into the heart of man! And to behold the works of God in Nature has been conceived of! But the joys we speak of are so spiritual that the Apostle says, He has revealed them unto us by His Spirit, and this is what He has revealed, That they may behold My Glory. St. Augustine used to say there were two sights he would like to have seenRome in her splendor, and Paul preaching the last the better sight of the two! But there is a third sight for which one might give up allgive up seeing Naples, or seeing anythingif we might but see the King in His beauty! Why, even the distant glimpse which we catch of Him through a glass or a telescope darkly ravishes the soul! Dr. Hawker was once waited upon by a friend who asked him to go and see a naval review. He said, No, thank you, I do not want to go. You are a loyal man, Doctor, and you would like to see the defenses of your country. Thank you, I do not wish to go. But I have got a ticket for you, and you must go. No, he said, thank you, and after he had been pressed hard he said, You have pressed me till I am ashamed, and now I must tell youmy eyes have seen the King in His beauty, and the land which is very far off, and I have not any taste, now, for all the pomp that this world could possibly show. And if such a distant sight of Jesus can do this, what must it be to behold His Glory with what the old Scotch divines used to call, a face-to-face viewwhen the veil is taken down, when the clouds are blown away, and you see Him face to face? Oh, longexpected day, begin, when we shall be coming to Him to dwell with Him forever!   
Once more only. Recollect we shall come to Christ not only to behold His Glory, but to share in it. We shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is. Whatever Christ shall be, His people shall bein happiness, riches, honorand together they shall take their full share! The Church, His bride, shall sit on the same Throne with Him, and of all the splendors of that eternal triumph she will have her half, for Christ is no niggard to His imperial spouse, but she whom He chose before the world began, bought with His blood, wrapped in His Righteousness and espoused to Himself forever, shall be a full partaker of all the gifts that He possesses world without end! And this shall be, and this shall be, and this shall be foreverforever you shall be with Christ, forever coming to Him! When the misers wealth has melted. When the honors of the conqueror have been blown away or consumed like chaff in the furnace. When sun and moon grow dim with age and the hoary pillars of this earth begin to rock and reel with stern decay. When the Angel shall have put one foot on the sea and the other on the land, and shall have sworn by Him that lives that time shall be no more. When the ocean shall be licked up with tongues of fire and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and all the works that are therein shall be burnt upthen, then shall you be forever with the Lord, eternally resting, eternally feasting, eternally magnifying Himbeing filled with all His fullness to the utmost capacity of your enlarged being, world without end!   
So God grant it to us, that we may come to Christ, now, that we may continue to come to Christ, that we may come to Christ, then, lest rejecting Him tonight we should be rejecting Him forever! Lest refusing to trust Him, we should be driven from His Presence to abide in misery forever! May we come now, for Christs sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **MATTHEW 8.**

Verse 1. When He was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. There was a charm about His preaching, not that He modified His Doctrine, or that He cut down His preceptsHe spoke very plainly, very searchingly, and yet the people came to hear Him. There is a something in the conscience of man that makes Him turn away from that which flatters and makes him hear almost against his liking that which searches him!

2. And, beholdNever mind about the crowd! Fix your eyes on the one Man! Behold, etc.here is a mark of attention.   
2. There came a leper and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, if You will, You can make me clean. He could not live in the city, but he might be found on the mountain, in the outskirts of the crowd, where he would hear that gracious voice. And he came and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, if You will, You can make me clean, in which I detect no unbelief, but rather a very strong faith. If You do but will it, I can be made clean. And Jesus, seeing the man was willing to dispense with any outward form used one.   
3. And Jesus put forth His hand and touched him. Not making Himself unclean, as any other man would have done, but making him clean whom He touched!   
3. Saying, I willA word of encouragement.   
3. Be you cleanA word of power.   
3. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. Christs Grace, which usually worked at once, in an instant, worked foreverthe man was cleansed, never to be sick again! Cured perfectlythe leprosy was cleansed.   
4. And Jesus said unto him, See you tell no man. Do not spread the news, the crowd is already inconvenient. It was not only Christs modesty, but Christs wisdom to keep down the throng a little, for they were too many which gathered about Him.   
4. But go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. While the Ceremonial Law stood, Christ was very careful to pay it honor. He came not to destroy, but He came to build up and to fulfill. He would have this man go and get a certificate from the priest that he was cleansed. Perhaps if he did not go at once, when it was found out that Christ healed him, the certificate might have been denied, and the man might not have been able to mingle with the company, so He sent him away quickly, to go to the priest with his offering to get the assurance he was really cleansed. When Christs work is certified by Christs voice, then is it sure, indeed!  
5. And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum. Which I may call His headquarters, He seems to have taken up His abode here for a time, to have gone to and fro to Capernaum.   
5. There came unto Him a centurion. An officer over a hundred men, of some importance in those daysa small band of the Roman army placed in Herods territory, perhaps to keep watch.   
5, 6. Beseeching Him, and saying, Lord, my servant lies at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. Sir Risdon Bennett tells us that there is a species of palsy which is accompanied with great pain, and we know, even from the Apocrypha, there is a case there of a man grievously tormented with palsynot exactly the same thing, perhaps, that we call palsy nowadays.   
7. And Jesus said unto him, I will come and heal him. He did not say, I will come and see himthat would have been kindHe did not say what you and I would say, I will come and pray with himthat is all we can do. But He said, I will some and heal him. Here is the tenderness of man and the power of God!   
8, 9. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof; but only speak the word and my servant shall be healed. For I, too, am a man under authority. Here was a great pointa man commissioned, a man authorized, girt with authorityand he looked upon Christ as in the same condition, sent of God, under Divine Authority, girt about with a heavenly commission.   
9. Having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goes: and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it. He did not further explain. It is a pity, sometimes, when we explain things to God in prayer, as I am afraid we often doGod knows what we mean. And so here he did not explain his meaningwe can see it clearly enough. You too, O Christ, are under the authority of God, and sent by Him, and You have the powers of nature under Your control. You have but to say the word, and they godo this, and they do it.   
10. When Jesus heard it, He marveled. He had marveled at mens unbeliefnow He marvels at their faith, so that the things which touch the wonder of God are mans unbelief and mans faith!   
10. And said to them that followed, Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. This man is not an Israelitehe is a Roman soldierbut I have never found as much faith in those to the manner born as I find in this stranger.   
11. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west. From differing lands and extreme distances.   
11. And shall sit down. Or recline in ease and rest.   
11-12. With Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven. But the children of the KingdomThose born in Israel, who belong to the promised seed.   
12-13. Shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go your way, and as you have believed, so be it done unto you. And his servant was healed in the very hour. It is greatly important not only that we believe, but that we believe as much as ever we canthat we believe all that Christ has spoken. Some people, when they are converted, believe that they may fall from Grace, and they doaccording to their faith, so is it unto them! If they could believe for eternal life and lay hold on everlasting life, they would find it so, for generally it is according to their faith that it is unto them.

Adapted from the C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.   
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1376 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE TRUE PRIESTHOOD, TEMPLE AND SACRIFICE   
NO. 1376

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 30, 1877, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed, indeed, of men, but chosen of God, and precious, you also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.   
1 Peter 2:4, 5.

AT the outset I call your special attention to the connection of the two verses. To whom coming, as unto a living stoneyou also, as living stones, are built up. Or, To whom coming...are built upan holy priesthood. Everywhere throughout Scripture the connection between the saints and their Head is perpetually mentioned. In Christ is the very symbol of New Testament writers. Whatever choice and good things are mentioned concerning the saints, their privileges and honors, we are always reminded that they are only enjoyed in connection with the Lord Jesus, according as the Father has blessed us in Him and made us to be accepted in the Beloved.

Coming to Him as a Foundation, we become a temple! Coming to Him as the Holy One of Israel we become an holy priesthood! And resting in His sacrifice we, also, offer spiritual sacrifices. Coming close to Himfor such is the force of the wordcoming closer and closer, we grow up in all things into Him and become perfect in Christ Jesus. Realizing and consciously enjoying our vital union with Him, we obtain promises, receive blessings, possess privileges and exercise offices which can only be ours in union with our Lord. It is only by coming to our great Covenant Foundation and, only in proportion as we daily come to Him and rest upon Him, that God dwells in us as in a temple.

It is only as we are seen in union with the Apostle and High Priest of our profession that the Father allows us to serve Him as priests and accepts the sacrifices which we present. Let this Truth of God be always in your view because there are many who judge us otherwise. The true judgment of any man is how he stands towards Christ, whether he is in Him and believes in Him or not. If he believes on the Lord Jesus, he is in Him and he is, by coming to Him, built up as a part of the spiritual house. But if he is not in Christ, he may call himself by what name he pleases and may assume this or that lofty pretension, but he boasts himself beyond his line and beyond the truth.

Union to Christ is the test of union with the true Church. If we are members of the most orthodox Church in Christendom it will avail us nothing unless we are spiritually joined to Christ, Himself. Without Christ we can do nothing and we are nothing. There are some who judge us because we dont follow them. They cry, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we. They claim to be the Church beyond whose pale

there can be no salvation. Brothers and Sisters, regard them not, for if you are in Christ, you are built up as a spiritual house and so are a portion of the true Church. If you have come to Jesus by a living faith and if it is your daily practice to come to your Lord and live upon Him and unto Him, you are priests unto God and need not mind the censure of those who are ordained of men.

There are others who condemn us because we reject the pomp of their ceremonies, the prestige of their State connection and the venerableness of their antiquity. These have weight with the unlearned and unspiritual, but those who are taught of God discern the vanity of their boasts! Be not moved by their judgment, no, not for an hour, for if you, indeed, come to the Lord Jesus, you are built up by Himself into a spiritual houseand that which He does, does not lack for honor or reverence. It is enough of prestige and of antiquity for us to be accepted by our Lord Jesus! Unto you that believe, He is honor.

Whether your critics are so or not, you are, beyond question, living stones built up a spiritual house, if, indeed, you are evermore coming to your Lord. There are some who in the serenity of their infallibility, because we cannot endorse their creed or pronounce their shibboleth, straightway cut us off and count us to be mere pretenders. But if we are in our very heart coming to Christ. If He is the end of our conversation. If we make Him Alpha and Omega and if He is to us the beginning and the end of all things, we may make small account of the condemnation or the approval of the best of our brethren, since we are in Christ and so we are a spiritual house built up for the inhabiting of God!

I remember an anecdote of the Jesuit Fathers of the South Seas which illustrates this. When they intruded themselves upon a native population who had been converted to Christ, they began to instruct them in their Popish idolatries by means of pictures and, among the rest, showed them a famous tree. The natives asked, What is this? It sets forth the Church. And what is this root? O that is Jesus Christ. And this trunk, what is that? That is the succession of the Popes, who are the vicars of Christ. And these great branches, what are these? They are the cardinals. And these branches, what are they? They are the bishops of the Church. And what are these small branches and little twigs? They are the priests and the faithful. And what are these poor twigs which are cut off and are falling into the fire? They are the heretics such as Martin Luther, Calvin, and the like.

The natives looked at the picture for a while, rubbed their eyes, declared that they did not understand much about it, but with great glee exclaimedIt is all right with us, for we have the root! We have the root! So we can say if we have come to Jesus Christ our Lord, we are growing out of the root and we need have no doubt as to our being in the right place. The branch which grows out of Him must be a true branch of the vine! The stone which rests upon Him as a foundation must be a true part of the spiritual temple! Our only hope lies in our being of Him and in Himwe know no other.

Whatever the dignity which men ascribe unto themselves apart from Him, verily, I say unto you, we know them not, neither do we give place for subjection to them. They may tell us of what they are, but we only know what Jesus is! It is written, The sheep hear His voice and a stranger they will not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers. We know not the many strange voices which are in the world, of those who would have us follow them and yield to their authority. But we know the voice of the great King in Zion and we rejoice to feel that if we are found in Him we are accepted in Him! And in Him, today, as living stones, we are built up a spiritual house.

I propose, this morning, to show that we who are in Christ have the reality of all that which Ritualism pretends to possess. The votaries of that faith delight in the shadow, but we have the substance! For, first, we are a temple built up a spiritual house. Secondly, we are a priesthood an holy priesthood. And thirdly, we have our own peculiar sacrifices to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

I. First then, all those who are coming to Christdaily coming nearer and nearer to Himare, as living stones, built up into A TEMPLE. The saints in their corporate capacity are a holy temple unto the Lord. They are called a spiritual house in opposition to the old material house in which the emblem of the Divine Presence shone forth in the midst of Israelthat temple in which the Jew delightedcounting it to be beautiful for situation and the joy of the whole earth. We have nothing to do with material temples nowwe are quite clear of that, for the typical has given way to the real and spiritual.

Solomons Temple, itself, is always to be spoken of with honor, seeing that God did, for a time, make it the center of His worship, yet it must not be too highly honored, for God never had any great delight in its magnificence and worked but few mighty deeds amid its splendors. You remember that when David proposed to build it, the Lord seemed rather to yield to the weakness of His servant than to rejoice in the proposal, for He said, For I have not dwelt in an house since the day that I brought up Israel unto this day; but have gone from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another. Wherever I have walked with all Israel, spoke I a word to any of the Judges of Israel, whom I commanded to feed My people, saying, Why have you not built Me an house of cedars?

The Lord sought not for such a palace, nor, when it was built, did He much regard it, for He says by His servant Isaiah, Thus says the Lord, the Heaven is My Throne and the earth is My footstool; where is the house that you build unto Me? And where is the place of My rest? For all those things has My hand made, and all those things have been, says the Lord; but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of contrite spirit, and trembles at My Word. Stephen in the latter day, when he was rehearsing the history of Israel, alludes to the Temple, but he carefully guards himself from being supposed to attach any great importance to it. He says, But Solomon built Him a house. However, the Most High dwells not in temples made with hands and goes on to quote the passage from the Prophet which I have just mentioned.

When the Apostles sat down opposite the Temple which Herod had renovated, they were filled with wonder at the great stones of which it was made. But our Lord did not seem at all to sympathize in their admiration of its gloriesrather, He said, There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. Had God cared for the Temple, He could have preserved it to this day, but lo, like a dream of night it has passed away! And no order has since been given to the servants of the Lord to build temples. We have nobler work to do in building up the

spiritual house and need not be occupied with gorgeous architecture of buildings made with hands!

I fear that the pretentious architecture which is now so much in vogue for professedly Christian places of worship is only one of those evil signs of the times which indicate a departure from inward and spiritual worship. The Prophet Hosea said of old, Israel has forgotten his Maker and builds temples. There is, I fear, too much going back to the beggarly elements of outward and materialistic worship and a receding from pure spiritual adoration. Even the purer sort are hankering after visible show and the delights of music and the fine arts as accessories to worship. God, the Everlasting One, has beneath yon blue canopy studded with a thousand stars, a far more glorious temple than all that architects shall plan, or wealth of builders and skill of masons shall ever be able to build!

All mans architecture is but childs play compared with the great universe of God which is the temple of the Infinite! And what seems to us the most enchanting music must surely be but discord in His ears. It is significant that of Heaven, where God is best worshipped, John says, I saw no temple there. Where every place is holy, what need is there of a temple? And where every being shall be perfect and forever full of adoring love, there shall be no need of any select shrine or settled hour of assembly! When we become holy, as we should be, we shall count all places and all hours to be the Lords! And we shall always dwell in His Temple because God is everywhere.

For one spot to be holy and not another is but to show how much of the earth we resign to the devil! From this dreary superstition, I pray you, shake yourselves loose! We have not so learned Christ as to count one edifice more sacred than another, for we know Him as cleansing all places and things and from now on nothing to us is common or uncleanexcept only as sin defiles and spreads pollution. We are, then, a spiritual temple in opposition to all material temples, even that of Solomon included among the rest. We are a spiritual temple, but not the less real. That which is spiritual is sometimes supposed to be mythical and imaginary, but indeed, it is not so. The things which are seen are the shadowy and the dreamythe things which are not seen are the substantial and the eternal!

Our Lord Jesus called His body the Temple of God. He said, Destroy this Temple and I will build it in three days. As a Temple of God, the body of Christ was most real. There was no fiction about His humanity. The Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us, so that the Apostle John says, We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and truth. His perfect body was a true Temple which God had pitched and not menand just as true and real is the spiritual Temple of which the text speaks. With equal truth the Apostle Paul tells us that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in usand that not by imagination but in reality, as the context of that expression proves, since he, therefore, bids us avoid all fornication (1 Cor. 6:18, 19). He would not use a mere fancy as a practical reason for guarding the purity of our bodies! The force of the argument must lie in its truthfulness and so the bodies of the saints are really and, indeed, temples of the Holy Spirit.

Moreover, the whole Church together, the whole body of the elect, the whole company of the redeemed, regenerate and called are, built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit, and this, also, is most real. Read verses 16 and 17 in the First of Corinthians and the 3rd chapter. Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man defiles the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. Surely this cannot relate to a fiction or a dreamor the punishment for defiling a mere notion would hardly be so terrible. Yet while real, the Temple of God in the saints is spiritual. A Church is made up of spiritual men and her temple form is spiritual. Your eyes cannot, as yet, see the Church in which God dwells.

Words have come to be so misused, nowadays that they call a steeple and a building made of stone or brick and mortar a Churchwhich cannot possibly be correctfor a Church is a company of faithful men. Alas, they have yet further perverted language and make a company of ecclesiastics, whether regenerated or not, to be the Church. Going into the Church is a current phrase which shows the ignorance of those who use it! Nor is this allthere is no one visible Church which can claim to be the Church. I tell you the Church of Jesus Christ differs greatly from these associations which are called Churches! The visible Church contains a large part of the true Church of Christ, but it is not identical with it. Like its Lord, the Church is as yet hidden and the creation, itself, waits for the manifestation of the sons of God.

The Lord has a people scattered abroad everywhere, whose lives are hid with Him in Godand these make up the real Temple of God in which the Lord dwells. Men of every name and clime and age are quickened into life, made living stones and then laid upon Christ. These constitute the true Temple which God has builtnot man! God dwells not in temples made with hands, that is to say, of mans buildingHe dwells in a Temple which He Himself has built for His habitation forever, sayingThis is My rest forever. Here will I dwell, for I have desired it.

This temple is spiritual and, therefore, it is living. A material temple is dead. A spiritual temple must be alive and so the text tells us, You, also, as living stones. I cannot understand why the translators put the word, lively, since it is precisely the same word in the original as above where they have translated it, a living stone. Those good men wished to infuse a little variety into their version, but this was hardly justifiable in interpreters who ought to have given us the exact meaning. They should have left the sacred style to take care of itselfeven its monotony is more refreshing than the variety of any other book! True Believers are stones full

of life, so joined to Christ as to be part of the live Rock, filled with spiritual vitality!

God has quickened them from the dead! The Holy Spirit has come to take possession of them and whereas they were dead in trespasses, they now live by the living Seed which God has put into themand the life that they live in the flesh is the life of Christ within them. I live, yet not I, said the Apostle, but Christ lives in me. Can your eyes of faith see that Temple of God made up of living men and womennot alive through the life of the First Adambut alive through that Second Adam, of whom it is said, The Second Adam is made a quickening Spirit? Put these live people together in an organization which allows free action to the life within and you have before you the Divine Cathedral in which Jehovah dwells forever and ever! We are a spiritual house, my Brothers and Sisters, and, therefore, spiritually built up!

Peter says, You are built upbuilt up by spiritual means. You cannot force men and women under rule and call them a Churcheven if they come together willinglythey will not be a temple for the Lord unless the Divine Spirit shall fitly frame them together. Gods Temple does not build itself, neither does man build it, but it is the sole work of God! The Spirit of God quarries out of the pit of nature the stones which are as yet dead, separating them from the mass to which they adhered. He gives them life and then He fashions, squares and polishes them. And then they, without sound of axe or hammer, are brought, each one, to their appointed place and built up into Christ Jesus!

The old heathen fable says the music of Orpheus was so sweet that as he poured forth the mellifluous sounds, the rocks began to dance around himand as he continued to play, they piled themselves up into a temple at his bidding! This is true of our Lord Jesusthe music of whose Divine Word by the Spirit brings us stones from different parts of the fields in which we lay and fits us together, stone to His stone, till a holy temple in the Lord arises to His praise! May the Holy Spirit work among us in this manner and may we all become indwelt by the ever-blessed Spirit. As you and I, who have long been brought into the Church, think of how we became built upon the Foundation, let us praise the hand which laid us in our places!

And as we cling closer and closer to the great Cornerstone to whom we are always coming, let us bless Him that the same love which, in the beginning, cemented us to the Cornerstone still holds us in our place so firmly that none shall separate us! We are a spiritual house, dear Friends and, therefore, the more fit for the indwelling of God who is a Spirit. It is impossible, if you consider for a moment, to conceive of God dwelling within walls! The roof may be of cedar and the walls of polished marble overlaid with fine gold, but can Omnipresence be enclosed by a wall or surmounted by a roof? The Infinite, who fills all things and who makes all thingswho stretches out the heavens like a tent to dwell in, who rides on the wings of the winddoes He dwell within walls of mans building?

It can only be in some typical sense that He can be said to abide in a templebut that He should dwell within spiritual beings whom He has created in His own imagethat He should dwell in intellect, thought, love, hope and all those high and spiritual powers which adorn the minds of His people is most fitting! A Spirit dwelling in a spiritual house! A Spirit inhabiting other spirits and making them all to be resplendent with His excellencethis is a beautiful conception and, by no means, impossible to realize. Within the assemblies of the saints, God is known, loved, remembered and consulted. In the Church He is heartily worshipped, for all true worship is in the hearts of His people and all else is mockery. Not at your altars, O you that pile up your hewn stones! Not under your groaning arches, O you who seek to show the skill of the stonemason! But in your

hearts, Believers, where Gods skill and power are seenthere is God worshipped, whether you are in cathedrals or by the wayside.

Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, the hour comes when you shall neither in this mountain of Gerizim, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father, but the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeks such to worship Him. Material temples are abolished and a spiritual temple is instituted! It is in the Church that God reveals Himself. If you would know the Lords love and power and Grace, you must get among His people, hear their experiences, learn from them how God deals with them and let them tell you, if you have Grace to understand them, the height, depth, length and breadth of the love of Christ which passes knowledge, for He manifests Himself to them as He does not to the world. Has He not said, I will dwell in them and walk in them? And it is out of the Church, the spiritual palace of God, that His glory shines forth among men!

The promise of the 110th Psalm is, The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion; rule You in the midst of Your enemies. If you desire to see Gods spiritual power, you will discern it best by seeing how it is exerted in and through spiritual men and spiritual women, built up together as a spiritual house! The Church of Christ is the camp from which the armies of the Lord go forth to conquer the nations! It is the pavilion in which the Prince of Peace has fixed His headquarters during this last crusade. If you ask for the center of the nations. If you would discover the eye and soul of this poor world. If you would gladly see the glory and excellence of the sons of men, find out the quickened stones that God has built together and you will see the habitation of the great King!

But I must now bring you back to the point from which I started, that all this is in subordination to Christ, To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed, indeed, of men, but chosen of God and precious, you also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house. You live because He lives! You are a building because He is the Cornerstone! You are honored because, to you that believe He is honor. Of Him and through Him are all things. You are no member of the Church unless you are a member of Christ! You are not a living stone unless you live by the life of Christ. You are not built up unless you are built up on Him.

What do you think of Christ? That is the test of your whole state. Is He your Savior, your All in All? If He is, then, by this sign do you know that God has built you up into His Temple. But if not, you are cast forth as a rejected stone. God grant us Grace to realize as a Church that we are a Temple of Godand realize it best by coming daily to Christ more and

more closelythat we may be vitally one with Him.   
II. In addition to being a temple, Gods people are said to be A PRIEST  
HOOD. Observe that they are spoken of together and not merely us individuals. They make up one indivisible priesthoodeach one is a priest,  
but all standing together they are a priesthood, by virtue of their being one   
with Christ. For we, being many, are one body in Christ. Never let us   
cease to walk in unity and love, for we are all one in Christ Jesusand   
what God has joined together let no man put asunder. We are an holy  
priesthood.   
This stands in opposition to the nominal and worldly priesthood. I  
think I see the worlds priests, decorated with many different robes and   
ornaments! A gallant show, indeed, for fools to stare at! I see them with   
their garments of all colors. I see them with their shaved heads or unshaven, as the case may be. These are the priests of Baal! They are mere   
mimics, servants of a visible shrine, servitors of idols! These are not the   
priests of the living God, who is a Spirit and is served by spiritual priests!  
It is of these outward priests that He says, He that offers an oblation is as   
if he offered swines blood and he that burns incense as if he blessed an   
idol. There are no priests, now, except those who are in Christand this   
priesthood belongs to all Believers alike!   
When a man comes forward and claims that he is a priest, beyond and   
above the sense in which all Christians are so, we spit upon his lie! We utterly loathe the idea of fellowship with such falsehood and we regard the   
poor mortal as going back to the elements of old Judaism, if not turning   
aside altogether unto Antichrist! All men and women who are in Christ,   
believing in Him, become sanctified by His Spirit, and so they become  
not some of them but all of thempriests and kings unto God through  
Christ Jesus! This they are, not in themselves in any way, nor by any   
derivation of Grace from men by Apostolic succession and the like, but by   
the personal and direct union with their great High Priest, in whom,   
alone, they become an holy priesthood unto God   
*Blest inhabitants of Zion,   
Washed in the Redeemers blood!   
Jesus, whom their souls rely on,   
Makes them kings and priests to God.   
Tis His love His people raises   
Over self to reign as kings   
And as priests.   
His solemn praises   
Each for a thank-offering brings.*   
This priesthood is most real, although it is not of the outward and visible order, for Gods priests become priests after a true and notable fashion. The priests of Aarons line were priests by birth and so are webornagain with a high and spiritual birth which brings the priesthood with it!   
In that day when we were begotten, again, unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, we assumed our spiritual priesthood. We are priests by anointing, too, for if the Spirit of God does not   
dwell in us, neither are we priests of God by whatever names we may aspire to be called. But where the Spirit of God, with His Divine anointing   
has descended, that man, that woman, has become a priest unto the living God, for in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female, but of whatever sex we are, we are, alike, qualified to exercise this priesthood. If we  
have been anointed of the Holy Spirit, our orders are received from   
Heaven and none can make them void.   
And we have, also, been consecrated. Brothers and Sisters, I shall leave   
it to yourselves as to the reality of that consecration, but some of us can  
solemnly declare that if anything was ever true in our lives, it was the giving up of ourselves to God. The priest of old was touched with the blood   
upon his earand is not your ear the Lords to hear His Word? The blood   
was, also, smeared upon his thumband is not your hand the Lords,   
with all its dexterity and force consecrated to Him? He was, also, marked   
with blood upon his big toe, to show that his feet belonged to the Lord.   
And is it not so with you? Do you not feel that you would run on His   
commandments, that you would work in His service and that you would   
listen to the voice of His Word? You acknowledge that you are His. You  
confess that you are not your own but bought with a price and, therefore,  
you present yourselves to Him to be forever His in spirit, soul and body.  
This consecration is a proof of the actual process by which you are, in  
very deed, constituted priests unto God.   
We are priests, Beloved Friends, in the aspect of priesthood towards   
God. Priesthood meant in Israel that these men were set apart to speak   
with God on behalf of the rest of the congregation. They had to offer the   
daily sacrifices and kindle the fire of the incense. Now, you who believe in  
Christ are all priestspriests for mankindto speak for them to God. As  
man is spokesman for a dumb world, so are you intercessors for a sinful  
race. Whereas fields and hills and rocks and cattle cannot speak, nor even  
the surging waves of the seaman is the worlds eye and heart and   
tongue to speak for them all! But, alas, men, themselves, have become as  
dumb as driven cattle towards God! And as dead as the earth they tread   
upon.   
But you, quickened into life, are to be the priesthood of the universe,  
the ordained intercessors for the sons of men. You are to speak with God   
on mans behalf and bring down, each of you, according to the measure of  
your faith, the blessing upon the sons of men among whom you dwell.   
You stand before God to speak for your fellow mentake care that you do   
this with solemn earnestness. And you are priests towards men, also, for   
the priest was selected from among men to exercise necessary offices for  
mans good. The priests lips should keep knowledge and if you are as you   
should be, you hold fast the faith once delivered to the saints. The priests   
taught Gods Word and so, also, must you publish among the people the  
Divine message of Divine Grace. As lights, you must shine in the world,  
holding forth the Word of Life. It is yours to be the nations teachers! God   
has consecrated you to the officedo not neglect it, lest the blood of mens   
souls should lie at your door.   
The priest, in addition to being the instructor of the people, was, also,  
their intercessor. So must you be. Oh, cease not day or night to pray for   
men till God shall send forth His light into the darkest parts of the earth!   
You that make mention of the Lord, keep not silent till the time to favor   
Zion comes. The priests, also, were to awaken the people and, therefore, they had the keeping of the silver trumpets. It was theirs to blow them on the new moon and to proclaim the Sabbath and the Jubilee. It was theirs to give the alarm of war. It was theirs in the wilderness to summon the tribes together, to bid them march or bid them halt according as the Lord commanded. O, believing men and women, you are to awaken the world! God has quickened you, not for your own sakes, alone, for no man lives unto himself in this priesthoodbut that you may have compassion on the ignorant and those that are out of the wayand may seek to  
awaken the careless and lead them to God.   
The priests were to bless the people. It was their prerogative to pronounce Gods name upon them. Oh, live a blessed life and, as your Master

rose to Heaven, went there with outstretched hands blessing His people,   
let your course on earth be like that of the Ascended One! Pray it will be a   
life scattering blessings among the sons of men and let its closing scene   
be full of love to those you leave below. Thus shall you be practically the   
holy priesthood which God would have you to be. This is to be your function and ministry always and in every place. You are an holy priesthood  
not only on the Lords Day when you come into this house, but at all   
times! What is this house more than any other? You are a priesthood everywhere at all times, owing nothing to the place you stand in or to the  
garb you wear!   
How this invests the Christians life with dignity! You are to eat, drink,   
sleep, wake and all along to abide in your priesthood. For you the chamber, the parlor, the workshop, the open field and the street are to be a   
place for the exercise of your priestly functions. Do you not see that it   
must be so, for you carry your temple with you? You, yourselves, make  
the temple, for you are the Temple of God. You are always in your temple,   
for your body is your temple. You are always in your temple, for you are   
built up into it and stones do not move when once built upso that wherever you dwell, you are in the place of service and worship.   
Do you live up to this, my Brothers and Sisters? Do you seek to do so?  
Do you make your ordinary meals into sacraments? Do you turn the   
common garments of your toil into vestments? Do you make your speech  
to be an offering of the sacrifice of thanksgiving? Do you cause your  
thoughts to be as a sweet perfume of incense unto the Most High? This is   
why you are calledto be an holy priesthood. Unholiness in you is a slight   
upon the office with which God has invested you! Unholiness in you is as   
though the High Priest put off His garments of beauty and glory and robed   
Himself in the garments of a fool!   
Now, Brethren, I call you back to the point from which we started. You   
are an holy priesthood only as you are in Christ. Christ is the Elect of God   
and you are elect in Him. He is a King and, therefore, you are a royal  
priesthood in Him. He is a holy Prince and you become a holy nation in   
Him. He is Gods peculiar treasure and you become a peculiar people in  
Him. All this is in oneness with Him. If you can be severed from Christ,  
you have lost your priesthood. Only as we abide in our Lord do we abide   
in our condition of honor and privilege.   
III. We must now consider the SACRIFICES which we offerspiritual   
sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. We offer spiritual sacrifices as opposed to the literal. There were sacrifices of bulls and goats under the Law, as you right well know, yet the Lord never cared much for them, for the Holy Spirit, when He spoke by men of old, frequently set these things in the place of small esteem. In an evangelical frame of mind, deeply penitent for sin, the Patriarch David was able to see the inefficiency of the legal offerings and he wrote thus, You desire not sacrifice, else   
would I give it. You delight not in burnt offering.   
And again he says concerning thanksgiving, This, also, shall please the   
Lord better than an ox or bullock that has horns and hoofs. To the same   
effect and even more comprehensive, is that expression in the 40th Psalm,  
Sacrifice and offering You did not desire. Burnt offering and sin offering   
have You not required. And what follows, Then said I, lo, I come. In the   
volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do Your will, O my God;   
yes, Your Law is within my heart. Upon which remarkably clear passage   
Paul remarks, He takes away the first, the sacrifices, that He may establish the second, or set up the doing of the Divine will by Christ as the   
great Sacrifice forever. You and I bring no lambs or bulls, but we present  
a real sacrifice which is far more pleasing in His sight, for it is written,   
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O   
God, You will not despise.   
The text which I have just quoted shows what our sacrifices are, for we   
imitate our Lord and say, I delight to do Your will, O God. This is the   
true sacrifice! Had not the Lord before spoken by Samuel and said, To   
obey is better than sacrifice and to listen than the fat of rams? So this   
day, Beloved, when you do the will of God from your heartwhen you   
studiously strive to find out what Gods will is and then conscientiously   
endeavor to attend to ityou are as priests offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.   
This sacrificing takes various forms. I beseech you, Brethren, that you   
present your bodies a living sacrifice. You are to present yourselves,   
spirit, soul and body, as a sacrifice unto God. You are, also, to, do good   
and to communicate, for with such sacrifices God is well-pleased. To   
Him, also, you are to, offer the sacrifice of praise continually, the fruit of   
your lips giving glory to God. To the Lord, also, you must present the incense of holy prayer. But all these are comprehended, I think, in the expression, I delight to do Your will, O God. That scribe spoke discreetly  
who replied to our Lord that to love God with all the heart, with all the  
understanding, with all the soul, with all the strength and to love his   
neighbor as himself is more than whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. Oh,  
you saints, live to do Jehovahs will! Lay self aside! Put self-seeking far   
away! Live wholly to make Jesus great, to make His Gospel known and to  
perform the will of God which is your sanctification! Live unto God and so   
offer unceasing sacrifice!   
We come back to where we began. The text says, acceptable to God by  
Jesus Christ, and so reminds us of our dependence upon our Lord Jesus.   
You have no sacrifice to bring apart from His sacrifice and it is only as you   
live in the spirit of the self-sacrificing Jesus that you can possibly offer  
unto God such sacrifice as He will accept. I have done when I have said   
this much to you. Beloved Believers, you see your honorable office rejoice therein! Are you poor? Are you obscure? Have you to work hard for a living? Nevertheless behave not yourselves before the sons of men as though you were of mean degree, for you are priests unto God! I delight to think of Gods priests working in our fields and toiling in our shops, as well as gathered here at this time in a holy convocation! Gods priests as   
much in one place as in another!  
Such holy priests are all around you. You know them not by their wearing a biretta, or by that hideous long coat and Roman dog collar in which   
the worlds priests drape themselves! No, you know the priests of God by  
their practical holiness! If you are holy unto God, you have your priestly   
garments on. And if the world disallows you, as it disallowed its Lord, and   
rejects you as a stone not to be built into the temple, it does not matter  
The Lord knows them that are His. He has built you into your place in  
His spiritual Temple and He will dwell with you, yes, does dwell with you   
and will abide with you forever!   
See, now, your responsibility and walk circumspectly, because whatever you do will be a part of the acts of the holy priesthood. The priests   
of God must be pure! Be you clean that bear the vessels of the Lord. The   
Temple of the Lord must not have buyers and sellers and thieves and robbers to defile it. Christ would have it purged. This puts you into such a   
responsible position that I would earnestly implore you, Be you perfect,   
even as your Father in Heaven is perfect. You must set apart, to such an   
office as this, everything about you to be marked with, Holiness unto the   
Lord.   
And now, see once more what Divine Grace has been bestowed upon  
you, that you should become priests, who in times past were enemies to  
God! You were not a people, but are now the people of God! You had not   
obtained mercy, but have now obtained mercy! You were sometimes in  
darkness, but now you are light in the Lord! You were once the servants of  
Satan, but now you are priests unto God! Go, and so live, that men shall  
say of you, They are the priests of the Lord. May you show forth the virtues of your God and declare His praises!   
You have received the officehonor it, live up to itpray for Grace to   
fulfill it. Think how it dignifies you, for the text which I quoted, just now,  
says, Unto you that believe He is honorthat is the Greek word. It is   
your honor to have Christ for your Savior! It is your honor to be Christs   
servants! It is your honor to be like Christ! It is your honor to be priests  
through His Grace and, by-and-by, it will be your honor to be with Him,   
world without end! Amen.

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THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS   
NO. 3266

A SERMON   
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An holy priesthood.   
1 Peter 2:5.

IN this Epistle Peter is speaking of the scattered saints in all parts of the world and, taught by the Holy Spirit, he says of them that they were an holy priesthood. He is not talking about ministers! He is not speaking of a certain number of men who have passed through many grades of office and are, thereby, qualified to wear robes of a certain colorhe is speaking of every Believer and he calls every saint a member of an holy priesthood! Every Mary and every John, every peasant girl and every laborer that puts his hands upon the plow, every servant of God in every capacity is a member of this holy priesthoodat least so Peter says, and Peter was not mistaken, for he spoke as he was moved by the Holy Spirit.

Let us, for the ten-thousandth time, state our own solemn conviction that it is time for England to wake up and solemnly rebuke the priestcraft that seems rising up in our midst! No man has any right to call himself, in any exclusive sense, a priest. When I take down the Book of Common Prayer and read, Then shall the priest sayI shut it up again with detestation! And if it were the best human book ever printed and had no other blunder and error in it, yet if it ventured to call any class of men, priests, I would denounce it as being tainted with Roman Catholicism! Christ is the only Priest who can offer sacrifice for the expiation of sin! He is the Great Apostle and High Priest of our profession. But there is another priesthoodone of offering prayers and praises and this belongs not to me because I am a minister, nor to any number of men who are called Reverend, or Very Reverend, or Right Reverend, but to you as well, and to everyone else who by faith has believed in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord! If truly converted to God, a man though barely able to read his Bible, is a priest unto Him, because he has a new heart and a right spirit! He may never mount a pulpit, nor preside at a Church Meeting, but he may be a priest unto God! His only pulpit may be a cobblers stallhis only platform for witnessing to Christ may be behind the counter or in the factorybut he is a priest for all that!

Or if the Lord calls a sister to Himself, she is to be silent in the Church Meeting, but she belongs to the Divine priesthood and her prayers and praises will go up with as much acceptance before God, through Jesus Christ, as if she were an eminent Divine, or the most gifted of the saints! All Gods children are priests and this is the song of all in Heaven and all on earth who are truly savedHe has made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign forever and ever.

Now, it is on this theme of priesthood that I desire to speak tonight. And the way in which priests were made under the Law of God is described for us in the 8th Chapter of Leviticus. So I invite you to turn with me and look at the subject as expounded there, for surely the way in which the sons of Aaron were ordained to their earthly and temporal priesthood is richly suggestive and intentionally typical of the manner in which God calls all His people to their holy priesthood! On turning to that Chapter we find that one of the first things with regard to the ordination of Aaron and his sons to their priesthood was that, THEY WERE CLEANSED. We read in Leviticus 8:6, and Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water. That was one cleansing. But several times in the Chapter we find that a second cleansing was theirs and that by blood! In verse 2 we find that they brought a bullock far a sin-offering, and two rams, and with the blood of one of the rams, and the blood of the sin-offering they were sprinkled that they might be clean before God. This powerfully teaches that every one of us aspiring to be a priest for God must first be cleansed, and that with a double purifying

*Let the water and the blood,   
From His riven side which flowed,   
Be of sin the double cure,   
Cleanse us from its guilt and power.*

If we look closer into this cleaning by blood we see that Aaron and his sons put their hands upon the ram, confessing their sins. Then the ram was slain, the blood sprinkled upon the altar and the laver, and upon all the vessels of the sanctuaryand then upon Aaron and his sons. What deep instruction is here! If we are Gods priests, we lay our hand upon Christ, accept Him as our Substitute, trusting in that blood shed for the remission of sins! He will have no priests in His sanctuary who have not been cleansed with the blood of Christ! All service until this is experienced, is a vain oblation which He cannot accept. Go to the altar, confess your sin and lay it upon the Lamb of Godand then, but not until thencan you be a holy priest.

Moreover, the priests were afterward also washed in water. On this first occasion they were cleansed from head to foot, but on later occasions when going into the Tabernacle, they needed only to wash their hands and feet. So is it with our Christian life. By the Holy Spirits application of our Lords merits, Believers are completely cleansed and there remains neither spot nor wrinkle on their acceptance with Him. But though a man is perfectly clean who leaves his bath, yet his feet may be soiled as he goes to his room and he needs to wash them again. So you and I need to pray, Forgive us our sins, though they have all been forgiven! We are washed, but daily defiling calls for constant cleansing. Though every true Christian has been cleansed, as was Peter, he must not say, You shall never wash my feet. When Jesus comes by His cleansing Word and Spirit, and girt with the towel and carrying the basin, we must be willing to let Him cleanse usno, beg Him to wash our feetthat we may be clean, every whit. We need to pray, Forgive us our sins. It is not in the least in conflict with the Doctrine of a complete Sanctification, or complete Justification.

The priests, every one of them, were washed. They had a clear right to go into the sanctuary, yet none the less, they had to wash their hands and feet each time they entered.

So we are clean. God accepts us. We are His children and yet, day by day, we must go with the prayer to Him, Lord cleanse me again in the Redeemers Blood: make me pure by the washing of water by the Word! So when defiling comes, His cleansing power may be proved again and again.

Well, Beloved, have we ever attempted to serve God without this cleansing? If so, may we repent of our imagined righteousness as much as of our sins, for even our righteousnesses are nothing but sins until we have been washed! Do we long for this perfect cleansing? The fountain is full the blood, the water, have the same efficacy as they ever had. Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Step down into this heavenly bath! Trust Christ to save you and, being cleansed by Him, you shall be forever a member of this holy priesthood.

Referring again to Leviticus 8, we see that the second thing in the ordaining of the priesthood was THEY WERE DIVINELY CLOTHED. However clean they were, they must be suitably arrayed, or they cannot appear before the Lord. We have given to us a list of the garments and find that Aaron, as High Priest, was sumptuously clothed, but not so his sons. In the 13th verse we are told that they had coats, and belts and bonnets. Let us glance at each of these for they are packed with spiritual significance. The Coat is a priestly robe. Everyone who ministered at the altar put on an ephod, a coat hanging from the shoulder, generally in one piece and woven from the top throughout, like that which the Lord Jesus wore. So every Believer is to put on the imputed righteousness of Jesus given to us at our conversion!

He officiates as High Priest before the Throne of God clothed in white linen, and so do all the saintswhite linen which is the righteousness of the saints, says John in the Revelation. Now we have no righteousness of our own, but the voice from Heaven speaks, I counsel you, buy of Me white raiment that you may be clothed. We come to Christ just as we are and He clothes us with His righteousness, active and passive, and this is the ephod in which we minister unto God. With our Lords righteousness clothing us, we can stand without fear before the awful searching eyes of God now and hereafter, and not fear

*Bold shall I stand at that Great Day   
For who anything to my charge shall lay, While through Your blood absolved I am   
From sins tremendous curse and shame?*

Are you, Beloved, robed in the righteousness of your Savior? Then come forward and officiate as His priest!

Next to the ephod, came the belt. In the case of Aaron we are told it was a curious belt. Ah, how curious, how matchless, how marvelous is the belt which encircles the loins of Christ! He is girt about the waist with a golden belt. His faithfulness, His truth, His love, His every attribute of excellency combined, make up this curious belt comprising the ephod. But every other true priest has his belt. You and I, if called to this holy office, are to have our loins girt about, standing always ready, instant to obey Gods command and revel in His service. Orientals wore flowing garments and when these were loose, they could not hasten in their activities. So they used the belt to brace themselves, gathering up their robes for special labor, or conflict, or flight. So every priest of Christ must wear his belt of faithfulness. There is a wicked world always on the watch. Be careful! Be vigilant! You may be tripped up by the sin that does so easily beset us. See to it that you are well braced, so that if the enemy came suddenly you may meet him with courage, or if a message came from your Master you may run upon it with diligence.

Yet another part of the priests clothing is called the bonnet literally, the turban. This, so we are told, was for glory and for beauty. Truly our Lord has put upon His people His own Glory and beauty. We are not merely acceptable, but beloved. Not passable, but admirable. Not merely not to be condemned, but full of imparted loveliness. Jesus says to every saved soul, You have ravished My heart, My sister, My spouse with one look of your eyes, with one chain of your neck. Jesus so falls in love with His own image in each saved soul, that His heart is captured. Here is the Glory and beauty with which He has invested us. Every Believer is looked upon by God as if he were Christ. Christ took your place and was cursed for youyou take Christs place and, notwithstanding all the blemishes, all the backslidings, all the hardness you may feel withinif you are truly in Christ, you are so clothed that Glory Divine and beauty is yours! The priests were not only washed but clothed. My Soul, what joy is this! Ponder it until it masters and enthralls you!

After the cleansing and clothing, came this to the priests, THEY WERE ANOINTED. This is mentioned more than once. Aaron had the holy oil poured upon his head until it ran down to the skirt of his garment. So Jesus was anointed of the Holy Spirit without measure. The other priests were also touched with the oilsprinkled with it.

And you and I, if we have been both washed and clothed, must yet be anointed. Child of God, do you distinctly and intensely recognize your need of this anointing? If I have preached without the Holy Spirit I have preached in vain. If I have gone to my prayer chamber, no matter how earnest I desired to be, I have prayed in vain unless the Spirit of God has been upon me. This anointing is the Christians supreme need! Dear Joseph Irons very often used to say as he went into the pulpit, Oh, for an unction from on high! Sunday school teacher, you are a priest and this is your great needanointing! You who preach in the streets. You who are intercessors in private for Christ. You who seek to show God in your daily lifeyou all need the anointing! What can we not do when the Spirit is in us? What can we do if He is withholding His Presence and power? As Gods priests we maywe must have a daily unctionanointing from the Holy One!

After this, THEY WERE CONSECRATED. Here I must enlarge more than upon the last point. This setting apart to priestly function and work was very remarkable. We find that blood was taken and that Moses touched the priests with it (according to the 24

th verse) first, upon the tip of the right ear, then upon the thumbs of their right hand and then upon the great toes of their right feet. And Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about. This description is very full and suggestive. Every Christian is to be consecrated to God by blood as to his ear. That is, we are to be eager to hear Gods voice, whether in His Word printed or preached. Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound! They only recognize it because the blood is on the ear. We are to hear Gods voice in Providence. When there is a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees, like David, we are be bestir ourselves! We are to be willing to hear even the rod and Him that has appointed it. There are many voices that the sanctified ear detects that the carnal ear has never listened to. The godly man has monitions from the Most High when the natural man catches no whisper. To always hear the still, small voice, is the listening we should desire. So too, with regard to man, we should hear his misery and feel for ithear his sin and pray to God for its full forgiveness as Jesus did. Yet on the other hand, there are some sounds that the ear so consecrated must not hear. We are deaf to the insinuations of suspicion, the slander of calumny, yes, to many an intended insult that otherwise might have provoked and angered us! May we always feel that as there was blood on the priests ear, so all our reception powers are to be consecrated to God! If so, I shall feel that there are some books I cannot read, for I have blood on my earsome songs I dare not listen tosome talk I dare not share in, for I have a consecrated ear. I am to use that for Him, for I am His priest.

Next in order was the thumb. This consecrated the hand. And as the ear stands for our receptive faculties, so the hand represents our active powers. There are some things we must not touch nor handlesome things we cannot do, in which we can have no hand, no, cannot finger. Since our hand is sanctified by the blood, all it does must be pleasing to God. I know that a common mistake is to think that you cannot serve God unless you get into a pulpit, or attend a Prayer Meeting. Nonsense! You can truly serve God behind the counter, in the work-room! You can serve God by digging a ditch, or clipping a hedge. I believe that God is often served by the tailor or shoemaker who is conscientious in his calling, quite as well as by bishops and archbishops, or by men of any Church in the world! At any rate if you cannot serve God in all that you do, you have need to ask to be taught the secret of the Christian life, for that secret is the consecration of everything to Jesus Christ!

You are to make your garments, vestments, your meals, sacraments, your everyday a holy day, your every hour a consecrated season unto God! Our hands, with all their manifold activities, are to be consecratedblood-markedto Him!

After this, came the feet. The blood was put on the great toe of the right foot, so the feet were set apart for God. Ah, these legs of ours used to carry us to theaters! We could run fast enough the downward road with them! I recollect a man who would stand in the aisle for a long timehe said he would serve his legs outthey had served the devil so long, that they should bear a little hardship for his new Lord and Master, Jesus Christ! I know some of you who used to walk many miles to come to the House of Godsix miles. I used to say to you that it was too far. It was not too far for you, then, but lately it has become much too far. The road has not grown longer, but you have gone backward as to your zeal! And when the zeal declines, the miles get dolefully long. But I have marked that when men and women are in a right state of mind and soul, it does not matter how far they walk, nor what they have to do for Christthe consecrated feet can do it joyfully. If I have consecrated feet, I must not let them take me into bad company. If anybody says to you, Can you come with me to such-and-such a place? You must answer, No! I cannot. I have feet that wont go and I cannot go without them! And if any should say, What is the matter with your feet? say, I have a foot that has blood upon it! They will say, Strange! They will not understand you, but if you attempt to explain to them that the blood of your Lord Jesus Christ bought you and so, your feetthen they will understand that it cannot go anywhere except where Christ would have you go. It may mean that you will have to change your position in lifeyou have to move and have a choice as to where you shall go. Make that choice on the principle of having consecrated feet! Do not go where you cannot hear the pure Word of God. A Jew heard of a good business where there was much money but no synagogueand of another where there was a synagogue though but little trade. And being a pious Jew, he chose the place with the synagogue. I am afraid that there are but few Jews who would do that todayand quite as few Christians who think first of Gods house and the hearing of the Gospel! Better to have a dinner of herbs and the Gospel with it, than a stalled ox and not to listen to the Truth of our Lord Jesus Christ! In choosing your homein fact in everything that concerns your progress in lifeact as if you had and knew you had consecrated feet!

Gathering up all, it surely teaches that a Christian is always, and everywhere, and altogether not his own, but consecrated to Christ! Not merely to be baptized, to come once a month to the Lords Table, to take a pew and sit and look so heavenly-minded. Any hypocrite can do that! But it is the mark of a Christian to be so honest, upright, charitable, kind, Christlike, holy, that all who see may be compelled to say, That man differs from other men. The secret, though they may not discover it, is that while other men are but common men, where father Adam left them in the Fall, this man has been found and made anew in Jesus Christ! Ear, thumb and foot all consecrated to Christs service!

Hastily running through the rest of this chapter (Leviticus 8) we observe that the consecration was very thorough. There is mention made of unleavened bread. This teaches that a Christian is not to follow religion for the sake of honor, gain, or fame. None of the leaven of hypocrisy, or mere formalism is to be tolerated. We are to serve Christ for Christs sake, and follow God because our heart is right with Him.

Again, the consecration is set forththough I have little time to notice itby the different parts of the victim being offered to God. You will observe that the deepest feelings of the Christian are to be with Godthat the inwards and the fat of the kidneys were to be burnt upon the altar. Thus the richest and fullest emotions of the Christians mind and heart are to belong to God, for the fat and marrow were to be burned as well. And the Christians greatest strength is to be the Lords, for the right shoulder was to be offered as a wave offering, and then to be consumed with fire. We are to give God our inmost thoughts, our deeper passions, our greatest strength. Blessed is the man whose strength is in You! Some people can call loud enough to wake up a town when they are in their business, but when they come to pray you can scarcely hear them. But I would have a Christian never so much, or so fine a man as when he is serving God. Give the world, if you will, the ends of your mind, soul and strengthbut give God your whole man, your inward and your outward life, every part and power and passion, strung to its greatest height and all devoted to Him!

But to conclude once more, the Christians consecration is to be constant. This remarkable Chapter has greatly interested me in observing that these priests were to be for one whole week associating in the Tabernacle. They were not either by day or night to leave their holy work. How they found strength enough, or whether this really included absolutely necessary seasons of rest, I cannot tell. But it says that for seven days they were to serve without intermission both by day and night. So the Christian priesthood is to be perpetual! We are never to cease to serve God. You have heard of one that was so in love that he did eat, drink and sleep for such an one! So the Christian is to do all to the Glory of God. Says one, Can this be done? Are we to follow Romish monks and get into a monastery? No! I have no doubt they are right in shaving their headsthere is probably a great necessity for it. But unless we become demented, there is no need for us to imitate their example! The Christian is not to shut himself up and become a hermit, and think that thereby he can cultivate holiness! That is unholiness! Christian holiness is socialthe light of the world, the salt of the earth. We are to be in the world, though not of itour priesthood exercised is in the street, the shop, the family and at the firesideby day and night, to offer up prayers and praises and thanksgivings unto Godand so be perpetually a priest.

But what am I talking about? There are some, here, that have never yet been priests to God. What have they been doing today? Why even on Gods holy day they do not serve Him but themselves! Why, Sir, God has never reaped a solitary ear of grain from your field. Take care lest having lived to yourself, you die to yourselfhaving lived without God, you die without God and find it a tremendous thing to stand and be judged without a Savior to be your helper, or interceding priest! I say nothing to you about being a priest to God. You need a priest for yourself, first. Do not go to any man. No man has power to help your soul except to pray and plead for you. The saving, pardoning power lies only with Jesus Christ. Look away to Him! He diedtrust in His Sacrifice! He rose, He ascendedHe is standing at Gods right hand. There is life for a look at Him. Look! Trust! And you shall then be cleansed, clothed, anointed, consecrated and so serve God. But your first business is to go to Christ. Oh, may Christ come to you and save you nowand He shall have Glory out of us, world without end! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **1 JOHN 2.**

Verse 1 . My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not. For this we ought to watch and strive, that we sin not.   
1. And if any man sinsWhat then? Is it a hopeless case? Oh, no, far from it! It is a sad case, but there is a remedy for it! And if any man sins   
1, 2. We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous: and He is the Propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. Come you, then, to Christ for pardon, whether you are Jews or Gentiles, whether you are saints or sinners, whether you are old or young, whether you are moral or immoral, for God is both able and willing to forgive all manner of sin because of the Propitiation offered by His well-beloved Son Jesus Christ the Righteous.

3. And hereby we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. Obedience is the test of discipleship. Mere head knowledge is all in vain, and all in vain our fears unless we render a practical obedience to the commandments of Christ. We shall not only savingly know Him, but we shall know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.

4. He that says, I know Him, and keeps not His commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him. This is a terrible condition for anyone to be into say that he knows Christ, and yet to have the Holy Spirit calling him a liar because he is not keeping Christs commandments! Again I remind you that obedience is essential to Christian discipleship. If we refuse to obey Christs commandments, it is clear that we do not really know the Savior at allwe are not even beginners in the school of Christ.

5. But whoever keeps His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him. When every word of His is precious to us and when we strive to live according to His precepts, then we know that we are in Him. This is even more than knowing that we know Him, for it is the assurance that we are united to Him by a living connection which can never be broken.

6. He that says he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk even as   
He walked. [See Sermon #1732, Volume 29IN HIMLIKE HE ISRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] What a walk would that be!

How holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners is the man who tries to walk even as Christ walked   
**Lord, I desire to live as one   
Who bears a blood-bought name,   
As one who fears but grieving You,   
And knows no other shame.   
As one by whom Your walk below   
Should never be forgot   
As one who gladly would keep apart   
From all You love not.**   
7-9. Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in Him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now yours. He that says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now. Love is the true test of lightthat light which leads us to love God, to love Christ, to love the Truth of God, to love Gods people, yes, and to love the whole world of men for their goodthis is the love that attests the light we have to be the very Light of God!   
10. He that loves his brother abides in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. A loving spirit, kind, generous, forgiving, unselfish, seeking the good of othersthis is one of the best proofs that our natural darkness has gone and that true spiritual Light of God is within us. Some persons think very much of the Doctrine of Christ, but very little of the Spirit of Christ. Let such remember that it is written, If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. If we do not know what it is to love, then we do not, in the Scriptural sense, know what it is to live! We are dead! Hatred is the cerement in which the dead soul is wound up, the grave clothes in which it is put away in the tomb. But love is the garment of life in which a truly quickened spirit arrays itself. The one who is full of hatred dwells in darkness, but he that loves, abides in the light. Note how love and life and light are most blessedly linked to one another.   
11-13. But he that hates his brother is in darkness, and walks in darkness, and knows not where he goes, because that darkness has blinded his eyes. I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you, for His names sake. I write unto you, fathers, because you have known Him that is from the beginning. You are old men, and you like to think of old things. The everlasting love of God, the Covenant made with Christ before the worlds were formedthese are things that are very dear to youand you prize beyond all other, Him that is from the beginning. 13. I write unto you, young men, because you have overcome the Wicked One. In the days of your strength, you have won the victory which no human power can ever win unaided. You have overcome that Wicked One who would easily have overcome you if you had been left to fight him by yourselves.   
13. I write unto you, little children, because you have known the Father. That is all that little children need to know at first. They may not know the great mysteries that the fathers have fathomed, they may not well know some things that the young men know, but even babes in Christ know the Father and rejoice in His love!  
14. I have written unto you, fathers, because you have known Him that is from the beginning. Twice, you see, John says the same thing about the fathers and he says nothing more concerning them. But truly, to have known Him that is from the beginning is practically to know all that even the fathers need to know or can know, for this knowledge includes all other that is worth knowing!   
14. I have written unto you, young men, because you are strong, and the Word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the Wicked One. Here again John repeats his former statement concerning the young men, but he adds to it because you are strong and the Word of God abides in you. There is a purpose in the repetition of each caseit is to emphasize the importance of the Apostolic declarations.   
15. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. Your affections are meant for something better than these transient and defiled things, so let not your hearts love flow out to things so soiled and base. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 15. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. These two things are such deadly opposites that they cannot live together! Where the love of the Father is, there cannot be the love of the world! There is no room in us for two loves. The love of the world is essentially idolatry and God will not be worshipped side by side with idols. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Does not that text draw a very sharp distinction between those who love the Lord and those who love Him not? Remember, children of God, that this is the language of John, the Apostle of Loveand true love is honest, outspoken, heart-searching, heart-trying! Do not imagine that there is any love to your souls in the heart of the preacher who preaches smooth things and who flatters you with his, Peace, peace, when there is no peace! No, the highest, deepest, most Heaven-inspired love is that which searches and tries the heart lest there should be any deception there.   
16. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. That devils trinitythe lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of lifeis not of the Father, but is of the world.   
17. And the world passes away, and the lust thereof. It is only a puff, a phantom, a bubble, a mirage which will melt away as you try to approach it! There is nothing substantial in it.   
17. But he that does the will of God abides forever. Not, he that does some great thing to be seen of men. Not, he that builds a row of almshouses, or leaves a great mass of money to charity when he dies because he could not possibly carry it away with him. Not, he that sounds a trumpet before him to let everybody know what a good man he is. Not, he that must outdistance everybody else. But, he that does the will of God abides forever. Obedience to the will of God is the pathway to perpetual honor and everlasting joy!   
18. Little children, it is the last time: and as you have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. And now, I think, even more than when John wrote, is this the fact, for antichrists are multiplying on all sides and there are even worse evils to come than we have seen as yet! And it, therefore, behooves Christians to be upon the watch and to let this Truth comfort them, that, it is the last time. Once get through this dispensation, and the battle is ended even though the dispensation should be

protracted beyond our hope and [See Sermons #811, Volume 14UNTO YOU YOUNG MEN and #1715, Volume 29A DESCRIPTION OF YOUNG MEN IN CHRISTRead/download both sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org] desire, yet, still, once get

through it and it is over! This is to be the last charge of our great adversary and all his hosts. Stand fast, therefore, you soldiers of the Cross, stand like rocks amidst the onslaught of the waves, and the victory shall yet be yours!

19. They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. The worst of men go out from among the best of men. The antichrists go out from the Church of Christ. The raw material for a devil was an angel. To make a Judas, you must make him out of an Apostle! May God purify His professing Church since even in her own loins she breeds adversaries of the faith.

20. But you have an unction from the Holy One, and you know all things. The Spirit of God will teach you as you need to know. He will so instruct you that you shall know all that is for your souls good and for His Glory.

21. I have not written unto you because you know not the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. That which is of mans making is false, but the Word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.

22, 23. Who is a liar but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son, the same has not the Father: [but] he that acknowledges the Son, has the Father also. Some pretend to honor the Father while they dishonor the Son, but this can never really be done. Jesus truly said, I and My Father are One, so that he that denies the Son, also denies the Father.

24. Let that therefore abide in you, which you have heard from the beginning. If that which you have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, you also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. As it was the Truth of God that was revealed to them at the first, there was no need of a later Revelation to correct the mistakes of the first, as some foolishly and falsely teach nowadays.

25. And this is the promise that He has promised us, even eternal life. Let those that want them have these novelties, these constant changes. We who believe in Jesus have something far better, even the promise of eternal life!

26. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. They would lead you astray if they could, so beware of them. Forewarned is forearmed.

27, 28. But the anointing which you have received of Him abides in you, and you need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, you shall abide in Him. And now, little children, abide in HimHow John continues to urge us to stand fast in Christ! As the Holy Spirit has taught us to trust Christ, so would He have us abide in Him. And this is one great reason why we are to abide in Him

28, 29. That, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone that does righteousness is born of Him.

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FAITHS SURE FOUNDATION   
NO. 1429

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 18, 1878, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

He that believes on Him shall not be confounded. 1 Peter 2:6.

MY sermon last Sabbath morning [#1428, The True Position of the Witness Within] was upon the true position of the witness within and I then tried to show that the guarantee and ground of our believing in Christ unto eternal life is the witness which God Himself has borne concerning His Son. Not our feelings, or experiences, but the testimony of God is to stand to us as the reason for our believing. I tried to set forth that doctrine very clearly and I have been greatly delighted to find that the blessing of God rendered it effectual. I have met with five young men who have each one said, If this believing in Christ because God has set Him forth and borne witness to Him, is really the way of salvation, then we are saved and we come forward to declare that we are on the Lords side.

When a fisher fills his basket in one place, he is glad to fish there again and, therefore, close to the former spot. Upon a subject near akin to it, I cast in my lines a second time! I do so the more readily in the hope that those who have been brought to Christ may be established in the present faith and may see yet more clearly what is the basis of their salvation. As I tried on last Sabbath morning to show why they should believe, it shall now be my business to explain what they should believe. We will think not so much of the reason for believing as of the Object of our faith, the facts which are to be received and the Person who is to be trusted. We saw the Lord God laying the foundation upon which faith is to restwe shall now consider the Foundation itself.

The passage before us is a very favorite quotation with the Apostles. If you turn to the Epistle to the Romans you will find Paul quoting it again and again in rapid succession. The last verse of the ninth chapter is, Whoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed. And in the 11th verse of the 10th chapter he repeats the quotation. It is a quotation from Isaiah 28:16 where we find it writtenTherefore thus says the Lord God, behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation. He that believes shall not make haste, which Paul interprets, shall not be ashamed and Peter renders, shall not be confounded. From the variation of the translations we obtain two or three different shades of meaning but all amounting to the same thing.

That must be a very important part of Gods Word which even the Holy Spirit Himself has quoted so frequently! He is prolific of thought and is always able to create new ideas. He abounds in language and cannot be straitened for expression and yet He quotes Himself in these three instances which I have given youtherefore we may be quite sure it is because no other expression would be more suitable! This sentence seemed, to the Divine Author, to be so full, so complete and so forcible that He repeated it often! The harp is a choice onelet us play upon it and let our ears drink in the melodyHe that believes on Him shall not be confounded.

I. I shall first of all, this morning, consider THE FOUNDATION OF THE BELIEVERS FAITH, this being the main subject of our discourse, He that believes on Him. The foundation of the Believers faith is Christ Jesus Himself. The Believer receives doctrine because Christ has taught it, but still it is not a doctrine which is the foundation of his confidenceit is a PersonHe that believes on Him. The Lord Jesus Himself, as the Son of God, is the Object of our faithit is upon Him that we lean. The Apostle does not say in the Epistle to Timothy, I know what I have believed, though that would be true, but, I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him. The faith which saves the soul is confidence in a Person, reliance upon One who will certainly effect the salvation of those who trust Him.

But in what sense am I to believe in Jesus Christ? Under what aspects does the Believer rest in Christ? I reply, first, as Gods appointed Savior of men. Mark how the text runs in Isaiah. The Lord says, Behold I lay in Zion a sure foundation. We trust in Christ Jesus because God has set Him forth to be the Propitiation for sin. When sin first came into the world, God, in tender mercy gave our parents the first promise concerning the Seed of the woman who should bruise the serpents headwe believe Jesus of Nazareth to be that Seed of the woman and we trust in Him to bruise the serpents head on our behalf. Promises were multiplied as the ages went on and Jesus was set forth under various types and figures, but always as the Messiahone whom God would send, who would undo the mischief of the Fall, remove the guilt of sin, deliver ruined soulsand give them to partake of the mercy of God.

Now, all those promises and prophecies are fulfilled in Jesus Christ the Son of God and, therefore, we rest in Him. Since God appoints Him as a Savior, we accept Him as a Savior! Since He comes authorized and empowered from the court of Heaven to be the Ambassador of Peace, we joyfully receive Him and find peace with God! We are glad to see the marks and seals upon Him by which God the Father has certified Him to be His beloved Son in whom He is well-pleased. We believe the Apostolic witness by the mouth of John, We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. This is the great stronghold of our confidence!

We also believe in the Lord Jesus because of the excellency of His Person. I began by saying that our faith was in a Person and so it is. We trust Christ to save us because we perceive Him in every way to be adapted by the Nature and constitution of His Person to be the Savior of mankind. It was necessary that the Savior of men should be a man. A man had broken the Law and a Man must keep it, for only the obedience of man could answer the requirements of the Law. By the sin of a man we became subject to punishment and only by the penal sufferings of a Man could the Law be vindicated. It is with gladness that we perceive that the Son of God became a partaker of flesh and blood and came under the Law. Born of a virgin, He was wrapped in swaddling clothes like any other childHe grew in stature as other children do and lived with His parents till the time of His showing to the world.

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His Glory. He labored, He suffered, He died among us. He was really a man, but all the while a perfect Man without trace of fault. And thus He was able to fulfill the perfect Law of God on our behalf! We rejoice as we see that Jesus is our next of kin to whom the right of redemption belongs, the perfect Man, the second Adam of our race. But yet more confident are we because we see that His Manhood is in union with Deity! We subscribe to that ancient confession, He is very God of very God. In no diminished sense, but with the strongest emphasis which can be laid upon words, we believe Him to be God over all, blessed forever! He is Immanuel, God With Us, and we each one salute Him as, My Lord and my God.

We perceive that His Deity must have put an infinite merit into the sufferings of His humanity. We believe that because He was God, He was able to undertake the stupendous labor of our redemption and that His holy life and suffering death are, because of His godhead, fully equal to the redemption of the vast multitudes who by Him do believe in God who raised Him from the dead. My Brothers and Sisters, there is something here to rest upon! Surely we can trust Him who is the true God and Eternal Life. We see Jesus to be completely equipped for His work. He is divinely strong yet humanly compassionate. He is eternally existing as God and yet capable of death because He was encompassed with a human body. O glorious One, whose name is fitly called Wonderful, my soul cannot imagine a Savior in whom she could confide with so much ease!

Jesus is worthy of all confidence! It seems, now, but natural to us who are Believers, to rest in such a Person as Hewho can with one hand touch the Godhead and yet with the other hand embrace our naturewho is the Son of the Highest and yet the Son of Mary! He is The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father and yet a Child born unto us the Son of Man! We trust Jesus because we see Him to be first, ordained of God and then to be, in Himself, fitly constituted to achieve our redemption. Nor is this all. Another ground of our reliance upon Christ is that He has actually finished the work of our redemption. There were two things to be done. The first was the keeping of the Law on our behalfthat He has performed to the uttermost, even as He said to His Father, I have glorified You on the earth, I have finished the work which You gave Me to do.

The very best Life of Christ is the four Gospels. We read them with delight and we perceive the exceeding beauties of His matchless Character and are fully agreed that He is fairer than the children of men. Righteousness was the belt of His loins, and He was clad with zeal as with a cloak. For innocence, He is spotless as the lily! For zeal He is red as the rose! There is no fault in our Belovedin His Character there is no redundancy and no deficiency! He is a Lamb without blemish and without spot. His Character is rounded with perfection. He fulfils both tables of the Law and presents unto God a perfect righteousness on our behalf. When the Lord presents that righteousness to us that it may be set to our account, we feel the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputes

righteousness without works and we are exceedingly glad.

We also see our Lord doing the other part of His work, namely, suffering in consequence of our sins and our faith becomes fully established. I do not know a more delightful exerciseI hope you are familiar with its delightsthan to accompany our blessed Lord to the garden of Gethsemane. There, every drop of blood pleads with us that we should trust Him! There His sighs, cries and throes of anguish while He wrestles with His God all plead with us that we should rely upon Him! Remember who and what He was. Regarding Him as the Son of the Highest we see an overwhelming argument for faith, for who can doubt the merit of that work which begins with the holy Son of God lying prostrate in Gethsemane, exceedingly sorrowful even unto death? We can surely trust our souls with a Divine Savior who suffered as this!

Then, rising from the ground, we trace Him as He is seized by His captors and hurried to the High Priest, to Herod and to Pilate. How they pour contempt upon Him! How the smiters scourge Him! How the soldiers mock Him! Now, indeed, He seems to be a worm, and no man; a reproach of men and despised of the people. His lowest shame, His worst desertion, His most bitter griefs, His dying pangs all say to usCannot you trust Him? When you see the Lord of angels derided and His glorious name made into a by-word and a proverb, can you not trust in the merits of His substitutionary woes?

Then comes the death scene! With tears in our eyes we stand at the Cross and see those blessed hands and feet nailed to the tree that He might be made a curse for us! Can unbelief live after this? Before His heart is opened by the spear-thrust we see it bleeding in every part of His body and soul, for He is a mass of anguish! Of His sufferings we do not dare to speak, for they are of a depth which no plumb line can ever fathom! O Son of God, if ever it were treason to doubt Your power to save, it must be so when we see You hanging upon the Cross! You have triumphed over our unbelief upon the bloody tree! Now You lead our captivity captive and we bow before You, fully assured that You are mighty to save! We feel compelled to cry, I must believe! Those nails have crucified my unbelief! That spear has slain my doubts! I trust You, O everlasting Son of God, when thus I see You made a curse for me. It is upon the sufferings of our Lord Jesus that we rely for our cleansingThe chastisement of our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed.

One other Truth of God must be mentioned, seeing that our Lord is now no longer dead we feel it more easy to place our confidence in Him because He always lives to see to the completion of our salvation. A living faith delights in a living Savior! This is the seal of all that went before. He must have finished the transgression, made an end of sin and brought in everlasting righteousness, or else He would not be sitting at the right hand of the Father, crowned with Glory and honor! Beloved, that one Sacrifice which our High Priest offered upon Calvary has put away, forever, all the sins of His people! There is, therefore, no need of a repetition of it. It is blasphemous to talk of the unbloody sacrifice of the mass as a continuation of the one Sacrifice, for it is finished! There is no continuation needed, for, This Man, after He had offered one Sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.

The righteousness with which we are clothed is completely woven! The fountain in which we are washed is completely filled! And now none can condemn those for whom Jesus died and neither shall any soul be charged with sin whose sin He bore upon the accursed treefor, it is finishedhas ended every accusation. He lives to take possession of Heaven for His people and He has entered it as our Forerunner. He is our Representative by whom we are, today, in actual possession of Heaven! As a man holds a farm or other land by his agent who is upon it to keep possession for him, so all the Lords people have possession of Heaven right now by their Representative! Being there, in our name, our Lord is preparing everything for us so that when the time shall come for us to climb to our thrones, nothing may be lacking to complete our joys.

Meanwhile He is pleading the merit of His blood on behalf of all those who trust Himand He is also working, by His unseen Spiritto preserve His own in every day of temptation and to keep and perfect themthat they may be presented faultless at the last before His Presence with exceedingly great joy. Why also He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them. So then, our faith rests on thisGod has set forth Christ to save usChrist is, in His constitution and Person, such a One as we can trust to do the deed. He has already virtually accomplished it by His life and death and He lives to secure unto Himself the result of what He has done. For these most sufficient reasons we trust ourselves with the Redeemer, that He may save us from our sins. Into His hands we commit our spirits as unto a faithful Creator. This we do with all sincerity and deliberation, believing that these reasons will bear examination and are such as none need to be ashamed of.

II. Secondly, let us consider THE MANNER OF THIS BELIEVING. How do we believe in Jesus Christ? Now, we have not to go a single inch to find an instructive illustration of what faith in Jesus is! The verse before us is connected with building. Wherefore also it is contained in the Scriptures, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious: and he that believes on Him shall not be confounded. Now, if we were to carry out the figure it would run thusHe that is built upon Him shall not be removed. So I take it that we can most naturally understand the laying of a stone upon the foundation to be suggested as a description of faith.

If, then, you want to know what it is to believe on Jesus, it is to lie upon Him as a stone lies upon a foundation when the mason puts it there. There is the foundation, firm and strong, a precious cornerstone, tried and sure. Here is a smaller stone, quarried from the pit and the builder places it upon the foundation. Its lying on the foundation represents faith. Our souls eternal interests are laid on Christ! The foundation bears up the stone and holds it in its placeso Christ bears up our souls and holds them in their position so that they do not fall to the ground. The stone presses with all its weight upon the foundation and that is what the Believer does with His Lordhe casts all his cares upon Him. Faith is leaning, depending, relying! As the key hangs on the nail, so we hang on

Jesus.

Faith is the giving up of self-reliance and self-dependenceand resting of the soul upon Him whom God has laid in Zion for a Foundation! A stone thrown about from hand to hand is self-contained and independent, but when the mason puts it on the foundation it is dependent, it leans on the cornerstone upon which it is placed. Poor tempted Soul, that is just what you have to do! You must not be a loose stone resting on yourself and tossed here and there upon the earth, but you must lie still upon Christ and let Him bear your whole weight upon Himself! A stone rests wholly on the foundation. If a wall is well-built it is not shored up with timber so that the stones have two supports, but the whole structure rests on a common basis. There is a good foundation and each stone lies upon it.

It can do no more, for it could not keep its place for an instant if the foundation were removed. If the foundation fails, the stone falls, but while the foundation stands, the stone remains secure. That is faithresting wholly upon Christ and looking entirely to Him for everything that has to do with our salvation. Genuine faith in Christ does not trust Him to pardon sin and then trust itself to overcome sin. No, it trusts Christ for both the conquest of evil and for the forgiveness of it! Some of our friends make a great muddle here. They say they believe that the Lord Jesus will keep them as long as they are faithful to Him. That is truebut where do you rely for your being faithful to Him? Do you depend upon yourself for faithfulness?

If so, there is a very weak spot in your confidence. That stone is not lying square upon the foundationpush it more homeit must not stand out of the line or it will be over directly. Personally I depend as much upon my Lord to keep me to the end as to pardon the past! And I feel that I need Him as much for tomorrow as for today. I could not rejoice in Him as a Savior if He would only promise to keep me as long as I kept myselffor I need a Keeper to keep me that I may keep myself! If His promise was that He would keep me, ifalasthat, if, would spoil it all! There must be no reliance upon anybody but Christ for anything that has to do with your salvation, or you are not laid square on the Foundation. Whether it is to your regeneration by which you enter into life, or your ultimate perfection by which that life shall come to its complete maturity, there must be no reliance for you but upon Christ!

Dear Friends, see to it that for everythingfor wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemptionyou lie plumb and straight with Christ! Depend on no man, but only Jesus. You are complete in Himyou cannot add to perfection! It is the not getting down to the foundation and resting nakedly upon Christ which makes the most of our soul-trouble. There used to be on the top of Snowdon a raised platform for certain people to stand upon who wanted to see a little further than others. Now, if you got upon that platform, it might shake and tremble, but the mountain never did. I have known Brethren build up a pretty little wooden platform of their own experiencesome of them have built it so high that they talk about being perfector very near it!

These wooden affairs shake with a little extra weight and make people tremble. Get down upon the Rock! Stand on terra firma! Rest on the everlasting love of Jesus and you will be safe! Take care to lie flat on the promiseget as low as you can and grasp the Rock. Lie flat on Christ as a stone lies on the foundation, for that is the proper and natural position of all the living stones that are built up in Him. The stone laid on the foundation comes closer to that foundation every day. To whom coming, says Peter, as unto a living stone. When a house is finished there still goes on a measure of settlement and you are glad if it settles all in one piece! Every day the stone is brought, by its own weight, a little closer to the foundationmay every days pressure bring you and me closer to Christ! Oh, that the pressure of our joys and griefs may press us nearer to our Lord!

A well-built stone gets to be one with the foundation. In the old Roman walls the mortar seems to be as hard as the stones and the whole is like one piece! You must blow it to atoms before you can get the wall away. So is it with the true Believerhe rests upon his Lord till he grows up into Himtill he is one with Jesus by a living union, so that you scarcely know where the foundation ends and where the building begins! The Believer becomes all in Christ, even as Christ is All in All to him. I hardly know any illustration that would better explain faith. It is none of mine, you seeit is taken from the text itself. The Lord help you to lie upon Christ for all that concerns your eternal interests!

But, says one, I thought I had to do something for my own salvation! Does the stone do anything to maintain its position beyond lying in its place? Your strength is to sit still! Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him, for your expectation is from Him. There is plenty for you to do for your Lord to show your love to Him and to glorify His name. But you cannot add to the Foundation of your confidence, nor should you dream of doing so. How could you improve what your Lord declares to be finished? Is not His work all-sufficient? Do you want to move the Foundation? Does it not stand fast forever? Lean on it steadily and let this be your chief concern.

O poor fainting Believer, the more you can lean upon Jesus the better He will be pleased. Lean hard, He cries, and prove your love to Me! Trust Jesus for everything and trust Him at all times! Trust Him in life, in death and to eternityand you shall not be ashamed or confounded, world without end!

III. We have, thirdly, to consider THE EVIL WHICH WILL NEVER COME UPON THE MAN WHO BELIEVES ON JESUS. The text says, He shall not be confounded, and the meaning of it is, first, that he shall never be disappointed. All that Christ has promised to be, He will be to those who trust Him. If the Father set forth Christ to save the believing sinner, depend upon itHe will be as good as His Fathers word! He does not begin to build and then leave off from lack of means. He will keep the Believer. He will support the Believer. He will perfect the Believer! You shall never have to say of Christ, Well, there is much good in Him, but not so much as I expected. You will never have to lament, Alas, I placed too implicit a reliance upon the Christ of God and I was deceived.

No, never! But, on the contrary, you will exclaim with the Queen of Sheba, The half has not been told me. Even Inspiration itself could not tell us, so that we could fully understand it, how sweet, how excellent, how sure, how full our Lord is! We know His love, but yet it passes knowledge. When you know more of your Lord you will say, I wish I had never doubted Him, for I never had a cause. Oh that I had trusted Him more fully, for He has never disappointed me, but far exceeded my largest hopes. In consequence of our not being disappointed in our hope we shall never be ashamed of having indulged it.

Alas, some Christians are, at times, ashamed to acknowledge their Master, but that is not what is meant in the text. What is intended here is the grand Truth of God that they shall never have any cause to be ashamed of Jesus upon whom they believe! They shall never be driven to confess that they made a mistake in trusting Him and are, therefore, ashamed at having been so miserably duped. No Believer will ever say, I came with a childlike reliance and did cast myself upon Him because He promised so fairly, but I was taken in a snare. I ought to have known better and I am quite ashamed of my credulity. No, no! The most childlike confidence in God in Christ Jesus is nothing more than He deserves! Credulity towards Jesus is the purest reason.

You are always most prudent when you cast away all caution and throw yourself upon Jesus, sink or swim! It can never be prudent to doubt Him who is the Truth, but it is always the highest wisdom to place all in His hands and leave it there for time and for eternity. To risk all with Jesus is to end all risk. Our hymn says

*Venture on Him, venture wholly;*

*Let no other trust intrude.*   
But, indeed, there is no venturing in itit is safe as the Throne of the Eternal! May the Holy Spirit lead you to make a speedy trial of it!

And then comes the next renderingyou shall never be confounded or confused. When a man gets to be ashamed of his hope because he is disappointed in it, he casts about for another anchorage and, not knowing where to look, he is in a troubled state and greatly perplexed. If the Lord Jesus Christ were to fall through, my Brothers and Sisters, what should we do? It is a supposition which we need not indulge, but if He is not true, there remains no other person in whom we may confide. There are many religions on the face of the earth, but not one of them bears as much comparison with our holy faith as a candle to the sun! They are all hollow mockeries, offering nothing which can satisfy a hungry heart. Lord, to whom should we go if we should turn from You? Where could we fly? If wisdom is not in You, where shall we search for it? The depth says, It is not in me: and the sea says, It is not with me.

There remains no hiding place for man if this cleft of the Rock is closed! There is no ransom from wrath if this redemption price is null and void! No, Jesus, we shall not be confounded, for we shall never be disappointed in You, nor made ashamed of our hope! According to Isaiahs version we shall not be obliged to make hastewe shall not be driven to our wits end and hurried to and fro. We shall not hurry and worry, fret and fume, trying this and trying that, running from pillar to post to seek a hope! But rather, he that believes shall be quiet, calm, collected, assured, confident. He awaits the future with equanimity as he endures the present with patience. Beloved, see what a blessed promise this is to those of you who are believing on Jesus!

Now, the times of our special danger of being confounded are many, but in none of these shall we be confounded. Let us just turn them over in our minds. There are times when a mans sins all come up before him like exceedingly great armies. It is a mighty easy thing to think that you are believing in Christ when you are not conscious of any great sinbut true faith is not confused even when it groans under a grievous sense of sin, conscious that it is the chief of sinners! No, though sin rolled over the Believers head, he would still believeas David did when he cried, My iniquities are gone over my head!

Have you never had times in which all the ghosts of your dead and buried sins rise up and come marching upon you, armed to the teeth? If you have never experienced such a visitation, I hope you may, for it is good for us to be driven to our Lord Jesus by distress of soul! All your thoughts, words and deedsyour bad tempers and rebellions against Godsuppose they were all to rise at once, what would become of you? Why, even then, my Brothers and Sisters, He that believes on Him shall not be confoundednot even by a sense of horrible sin, for after he has seen the whole horde of his sins march by, he cries, they are all gone into the tomb where Jesus slept! The blood of Jesus has cleansed me from them! The depths have covered themthere is not one of them left! They sank like lead in the mighty waters, for God has cast them all unto the depths of the sea! He that believes on the pardoning Savior shall not be confused, though all his sins should accuse him at once!

The unbelieving world outside labors to create confusion. The gentlemen of the higher criticism, the scientific discoverers, the possessors of boastful culture and all the other braggers of this marvelously enlightened 19th century are up in arms against the believers in Jesus. When I think of how this century has been befooled by its statesmen and philosophers, I, for one, feel small reverence for it! Perhaps it has the most light, but it has not the best eyes! Well, let all this wisdom of the world assail us! Let proud pretenders point their fingers at us and say, You trust in Christ. You rely upon Jesus of Nazareth alone for your salvation. You are oldfashioned and as much out of place as the extinct animals would be if they could come back again!

I say that if all the sages of the world were to utter one thundering sarcasmif they concentrated all their scorn into one universal sneer of contemptI do not think it would affect me the turn of a hair, so sure am I that my Lord will justify my confidence! I know whom I have believed and I know, also, that my Lord Jesus Christ sits above the floods! The Lord sits King forever! Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing? He can save me and I trust Him to perform all that which concerns me. Faith in Jesus can be justified before a synagogue of Satans! Faith in Jesus deserves the respect of a parliament of philosophers! To trust the Incarnate Son of God, whose advent into this world is a fact better proved by history than any other that was ever on recordto trust oneself upon His atoning Sacrifice is the most reasonable thing that a

man can do!

There is nothing illogical about itnothing which demands apology! We fling back in the teeth of the scoffers the charge of unreasoning dogmatismours is the most reasonable of all beliefs. O you mighty thinkers and skeptics, you are more credulous than we are! We may seem fools to you, but we are not judged of your judgment. You shall see your own folly when He comes, whose name is Faithful and Truewhen He comes to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords! He that believes on Him shall not be confounded by human wisdom, for God has long ago confounded it and turned it into foolishness!

But the world has done more than sneerit has imitated Cain and sought to slay the faithful. The enemies of the Gospel have raged fiercely against the Church of God. What opportunities has God given to them to conquer if they could! Christ has seemed to say, Come on, world! Here are My poor disciples whom you despise! Come and see if you can conquer them! I give you a fair opportunity. There is the Coliseumheap up tier upon tier of men and women with your cruel eyes and savage hearts! Bring out the saints. Cry, Christians to the lions! There they stand. The lions are loose upon them. Do they cry for mercy and treacherously deny Christ? They are feeble men and womendo they recant and leave their Master? Not they! They die as bravely as ever a soldier fell in battle!

The enemy resolves to try them with torture, with rack, rod and firelet us see what will come of it. Blandina shall be tossed upon the horns of bulls and then shall be placed in a hot iron chair! Does her womanly nature flinch? Ah, no, she is more than a conqueror! They try every kind of torment with the saints, but they fail in every case. Remember Marcus Arethusa, smeared with honey and a hive of bees put upon him? Yet never for a single moment did he relent! Every form of possible cruelty has in later persecutions been tried by Romes infernal Inquisition, but Believers have not been confused!

Fiends in human form have glutted themselves with blood till they have turned away from Christian destruction as from a hopeless taskthey saw that they could not overcome the true people of God, for, He that believes on Him shall not be confounded. They tried persecution in this land in the days of Queen Mary, but their defeat was self-evident. Weavers and farmers defied bishops and cardinals and held their own. Even women laughed to scorn the wretched sophistries of their tormentors! Tompkins trusted in God and stood firm when Bonner held his hand in the candle flame and equally well did he play the man at the stake! What notable stories Foxe has preserved for us of how the saints of the Lord clapped their burning hands and cried, None but Christ! while the flames were devouring them! The enemy could not confound them. If persecution should revive, we shall again conquer, for, He that believes on Him shall not be confounded,

We cannot strike our adversariesbut by bearing their blows we shall, like the anvil, break the hammers! As it has been until now, so shall it be unto the endwe shall not be ashamed of our hope. Well, but there will come other troubles to Christians besides these and even in them they shall not be confounded. They will be tried by the fleshnatural desires will break forth into vehement lusts and corruptions will seek to cast them down. Will Believers then perish? No! He that believes in Christ shall conquer himself and overcome his easily besetting sins. There will come losses and crosses, business trials and domestic bereavements. What then? He shall not be confounded! His Lord will sustain him under every tribulation! At last death will come to us. They will wipe the cold sweat from our brows and we shall gasp for breathbut even then we shall not be confounded!

We may not be able to shout, victory! We may be too weak for triumphant hymnsbut with our last breath we will lisp the precious name! They that watch us shall know by our serenity that a Christian does not die, but only melts away into everlasting life! O Beloved, we shall never be confounded, even amid the grandeurs of eternity! We shall pass into the next state and after a while the trumpet shall sound and these bodies shall riseand we shall stand amidst the countless throng on that august Day for which all other days were made! While other men who have other foundations to rest upon shall cry to the rocks to hide them, we shall stand calmly and quietly, adoring our Lord, the Judge!

It will be a solemn day, even for us! We shall not be able to see the rocks splitting and stars falling and creation, itself, passing away without deep solemnityyet assuredly the words of our hymn are true

*Bold shall I stand in that great Day,   
For who anything to my charge shall lay? While through His blood absolved I am   
From sins tremendous curse and shame?*

We will tell the Father in that Day that we have rested on the salvation which He appointed! That we have confided in His own dear Son and that we believed that the blood of Jesus did make atonement for our sin. We shall not find that He disowns His promise! Oh, if that Foundation could fail us, how ashamed and confounded should we be! I do not know, but I sometimes seem to think that if the Gospel could possibly be a mistake, we should have the consolation of being able to say, Great God, it was through love of You and trust in You that we fell into this errorand we should at least have as good a plea as the self-righteous can offer! But it shall not be so! Our Foundation cannot fail us! We shall not be confounded! The two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie are our strong consolation!

Now I close by saying that the reason of our knowing that we can never be confounded is just thisbecause the testimony we have received is true. It is Gods testimonythere cannot be a lie in that. Next, the Person on whom we lean is truethere can be no falsehood in Christ Jesus, nor failure in Him. The Savior in whom we trust is almighty! He cannot possibly be defeated, or too heavily loaded. The declarations of the Word of God in which we trust are Infallible and Immutablethey cannot be altered one jot or tittle. The Father of Lights is without variableness and Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

No Believer in Christ can ever be confoundedmark this wordtill the

Godhead itself shall be defiled! I put it strongly. Until God the Father can break His word, He cannot destroy a soul that believes in His Son! And if He were to break His Word, (the mere supposition borders on blasphemy), then He would no longer be God, since truth is essential to Deity. Until Christ Himself shall fail, He cannot refuse to save one that trusts in Him! And if He were to fail it would prove that He was not Omnipotent and could not, therefore, be God! And if the Spirit of God, which has worked us to the same thing, even to this day, were, after all, to deny His own witness and suffer the new life which is in us to die out, then He is not the Almighty, indwelling Quickener and Comforter of former days!

No, Beloved, everything hangs upon the Divine fidelity! If Believers are lost, God loses more than they do, for He loses His honor! He loses His Character for truthfulness and the Glory of His name is tarnished! If I am a sheep and I am lost, I am certainly a great loserbut then I am not my own, but belong to the Great Shepherdand He has lost me and so is also a loser. If I am a member of Christs body and I am lost, I am certainly a great loser, but my Head is a loser, too, for henceforth His body is incomplete. The Church is the fullness of Christ, the fullness of Him that fills all in all and, I venture to say it, Jesus Christ were not a perfect Christ if He lost the very least and meanest of those who put their trust in Him! It would be Hells boast against Him to all eternity that He could not keep His own!

If the devil could get a Believer in Hell, what a noise he would make about him! Jesus of Nazareth! Here is one of Your own! One who trusted in You and yet he is in Hell! You kept the strong because they kept themselves, but You could not keep the weak and, therefore, here is one lost lost forever. How would hellish malice exult if such an occasion for scorn were given! But it shall never be! Because Jesus lives, we also shall live and shall not be confounded! Let us rest in our Lords faithfulness and accept the pledges of His eternal affection

*His honor is engaged to save   
The meanest of His sheep!   
All that His heavenly Father gave,   
His hands securely keep.   
Nor death nor Hell shall ever remove   
His favorites from His breast   
In the dear bosom of His love   
They must forever rest.*

Amen and amen!  
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #2137 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

CHRIST PRECIOUS TO BELIEVERS   
NO. 2137

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, MARCH 30, 1890, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Unto you therefore which believe He is precious. 1 Peter 2:7.

HERE we have no far-fetched statementit belongs to everyday life. Those now present who believe can verify it on the spot! As Believers they can tell us whether the Lord Jesus is precious to them or not. We are not now about to consider an abstruse doctrine or lose ourselves in a profound mystery of the faith. We have before us an assertion which even a babe in Christ may put to the test. Yes, you who but last week confessed your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ can tell in your own souls whether He is precious to you or not! If you can personally verify this sentence it says a great deal for yourself. You need never raise the question as to whether you have the faith of Gods elect and are true Believers in Jesusif Christ is precious to you that question is answered once and for all by this statement which covers the whole groundUnto you therefore which believe He is precious.

The converse of the statement is equally trueyou who find Christ precious have true faith in Him. It is important, while looking at these words of the Apostle Peter, that we should lay our hands upon our hearts and askDo I know what this means? Is Jesus more to me than gold or any other thing that can be desired? Can I truly say

*Yes, You are precious to my soul,   
My transport and my trust:   
Jewels to You are gaudy toys,   
And gold is sordid dust?*

If you can testify this, then you have proved your own possession of saving faith. Dear Friends, if we can verify this statement it is not only satisfactory to ourselves but it is glorifying to our Lord!

Certain men are best respected where they are least known. Many a character needs distance to lend enchantment to the view, but our Lord is most precious to those who are best acquainted with Him. Those who are actually trusting Him and thus putting Him to the test are those who have the highest opinion of Him. If you would have the best estimate of the Lord Jesus, we refer you to those who have had transactions with Him on the largest scaleto those who cast all their care upon Him for time and eternity. Their proof of Him is so satisfactory that He is more and more esteemed every day. He is far more precious to them than when they first heard of Him and every thought of Him makes Him dearer to their hearts. What a glorious Friend is He who is most precious to those who receive most from Him! Usually men feel sadness at an increase of obligation, but in this case the more we are His debtors the more we rejoice to be so. Thousands here, this morning, can say, I believe in Him and He is precious to me beyond all compare.

O my unbelieving Hearer, is there no weight in this testimony? If those that believe in Christ uniformly declare that He becomes more and more delightful to them, should it not persuade you to trust Him? If large numbers of Christians were met with who turned round, after a few years, and confessed that they had been deceived and that, when the novelty was worn off there was really nothing precious about the Lord Jesus, then unbelievers would be justified in their unbelief! But if it is not soif it is the very reversewhat shall I say to you who will not consider the claims of Jesus? Why do you continue to refuse a Savior to whom so many bear witness?

I can truly say our witness is not forcedit is joyfully spontaneous and we are glad to bear it on all occasions and in any company. If we do so unanimouslyand I am sure we doyou ought to be convinced of the truth of our statement! And if your judgment were not perverted by sin you would be convinced so that you would resolve to believe in Jesus even as we believe. Do you despise our testimonythe testimony, in many instances, of your own father and mother and friends? Surely, you are not so ungenerous as to call us all liars or fools! I pray you, therefore, give practical weight to the evidence by believing in Jesus and He will be to you as precious as He is to us! This is but common sense! May God give you Grace enough to follow the dictates of ordinary prudence, for these would certainly lead you to do what others have found to be so great a blessing to them.

Coming at once to the text, we shall consider what Christ is to His people. According to our text He is precious. Secondly, consider what it is in them which makes them so greatly value their LordUnto you therefore which believe He is precious. It is their faith which apprehends the preciousness of Christand without it Jesus would never be precious in their eyes. Thirdly, consider what they receive from Him. This thought arises out of another translation of the text, more strictly accurate than the one we useUnto you therefore which believe He is honor. The Lord Jesus sheds honor and glory upon those who believe in Him. May that honor be ours! Oh, for the aid of the Holy Spirit in this promising meditation!

I. First, consider WHAT CHRIST IS TO HIS PEOPLE. We read in our own version, Unto you therefore which believe He is precious, yet the word is not an adjective, but a noun. Hence the Revised Version translates the text, For you therefore which believe is the preciousness. His very Self is preciousness itself! He is the essence, the substance, the sum of all preciousness! Every Believer will subscribe to this. Many things are more or less precious, but the Lord Jesus is preciousness itself, outsoaring all degrees of comparison!

How do Believers show that Christ is thus precious to them? They do so by trusting everything to Him. Every Believer places his hope solely upon the work of Jesus. With regard to the past, the present and the future, he finds rest in Christ. The Lord Jesus is the case into which we have put all our treasures and we prize Him accordingly. All our affection flows toward Him as all our hope flows from Him. Within His sacred name and Person all our expectation is contained. He is all our salvation and all our desire. Despite the homely proverb, we have put all our eggs into this one basketall our supplies are in this one ship. We have no reservewe have deposited with our Lord everything which concerns us and we have no secondary trust wherewith to supplement His power or love. We have committed to Him our all and we know that He is able to keep that which we have committed to Him till that day.

As the Advocate who alone pleads the causes of our soul before the living God, our Lord is most precious to us. Our implicit faith in Him proves our high estimate of Him. To Believers the Lord Jesus is evidently very precious because they would give up all that they have sooner than lose Him. Martyrs and confessors have actually given up all for Jesus times without numberhistory bears this witness abundantly. Tens of thousands have renounced property, liberty and life sooner than deny Christ! To this day we have among us those who dare to go forth into the fever country for His names sakenot counting their lives dear unto them that they might spread abroad His Gospel!

I hope that we, also, could part with everything sooner than separate from our Lord. We would, like the holy children, if the choice lay between apostasy and the fiery furnace, reply, We are not careful to answer you in this matter. Let all things go, but we must hold fast our Lord. Brothers and Sisters, could you give up your Savior? Very dear to you are your children, your spouse and your friendsbut if it really came to the point to give these up or the Lord JesusI am sure you would not hesitate. It is a desirable thing to be esteemed and respected by ones fellowsbut when it comes to thisthat for the Truth of Gods sake one must be an outcast and become the butt of enmity, there must be no question. Popularity and friendship must at once be sacrificed. Believer, you would far sooner take up your cross and go with Jesus than take up your crown and go away from Him. Is it not so?

We must not speak too confidently and declare that we would never deny Him, but yet He knows all things and He knows that we love Him so truly that for His sake we would suffer the loss of all things and count them but dung, that we might win Christ and be found in Him. This proves that our Lord is precious, since all else may go to the bottom so long as we can keep our hold on our Well-Beloved. Saints also find their all in Him. He is not one delight, but all manner of delights to them! All that they can need, or wish, or conceive, they find in Him. To the Believer, Christ is All. Our desires go not beyond the landmarks of His allsufficiency. When saints have outward goods they enjoy Jesus in them and when outward goods are gonethey find them in Him. That which to a man is all things, is, in the most emphatic sense, preciousand Christ is that to every believing soul.

So precious is Jesus to Believers that they cannot speak well enough of Him. Could you, at your very best, exalt the Lord Jesus so gloriously as to satisfy yourself? I make free confession that I never preached a sermon about my Lord which came anywhere near my ideal of His merits. I am

always dissatisfied when I have done my very best. I have often wished that I could rush back to the pulpit and try to preach Him better, but I am kept back from such an attempt by the fear that probably I might fail even more conspicuously. He is so glorious as to be Glory itself! Who can describe the sun? He is so sweet in our apprehension that we cannot convey that apprehension to another by such feeble expressions as words. Our thoughts of the Lord Jesus Christ are far, far below His worthbut even those thoughts we cannot communicate to anotherfor they break the backs of words.

Language staggers under the weight of holy emotion which comes upon us in connection with the Lord Jesus! We can never say enough of Gods unspeakable Gift! On any other subject there is danger of exaggeration, but it is impossible here. If you find honey, it is well to eat cautiously of it, for it may pall upon you. But when you find Christ, take all in you can and pray for an enlarged capacity, for He will never grow too sweet. When you begin to talk of what you have tasted and handled concerning Jesus, speak with an open mouth and give your tongue unbounded liberty. You need now no bridle for your lips! Rather let a live coal from off the altar burn every bond and set you free to speak at large of Him who is still as far beyond you as the heavens are above the earth!

Saints show that in their estimation Christ is precious for they can never do enough for Him. It is not all talkthey are glad, also, to labor for Him who died for them. Though they grow weary in His work, they never grow weary of it. Have we not heard them sigh for a thousand tongues that they might sing the dear Redeemers praises as they should be sung? Do they not often wish that they had 10,000 hands, yes, 10,000 bodies, that they might be in a thousand places at once seeking to glorify their Well-Beloved? If they could have their utmost wish as to His Glory and lay down all at His feet, even then they would be dissatisfied and feel themselves to be infinite debtors to their loving Lord! Oh, that we could crown Him with infinite glory! Oh, that we could set Him on a gloriously high throne among men, where every soul could see Him, love Him and adore Him!

What great things saints have tried to do for Christ! Yet never one of them has expressed any satisfaction with what he has doneall have mourned over their shortcomings and wished that they could devise a tribute more equal to His worth. Saints show how precious Christ is to them in that He is their Heaven. Have you ever heard them, when dying, talk about their joy in the prospect of being with Christ? They have not so much rejoiced because they were escaping the woes of this mortal life, nor even because they would rest from their toils, but because they would behold the Lord! Often have we seen the eyes sparkle as the dying Believer said, I shall see the King in His beauty before many hours have passed.

When saints quit the world their last thought is that they shall be with their Redeemerand when they enter Heaven, their first thought is to behold His Glory! To Believers Jesus is Heaven. The Lamb is the light, the life, the substance of heavenly bliss

*Not all the harps above   
Could make a heavenly place,   
If God His residence remove,   
Or but conceal His face.*

We long to be with Christ! Many of us could say with David, Although my house is not so with God; yet He has made with me an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire. Christ is to us the Covenant and in Him we find the foundation of our first hope and the top stone of our highest joy. Is He not, indeed, precious to us?

If you are not satisfied with these proofs that Christ is precious to Believers, I would invite my dear Brothers and Sisters to add another themselves. Let every one of us do something fresh by which to prove the Believers love to Christ! Let us not be satisfied with proof already given. Let us invent a new love-token! Let us sing unto the Lord a new song! Let not this cold world dare to doubt that unto Believers Christ is precious! Let us force the scoffers to believe that we are in earnest!

In thinking Christ to be precious, the saints are forming a just estimate of Him. He is precious. For a thing to be rightly called, precious, it should have three qualitiesit should be rare; it should have an intrinsic value of its own and it should possess useful and important properties. All those three things meet in our adorable Lord and make Him precious to discerning minds. As for raritytalk not of the rarity of gold or of gemsHe is the only one! He is absolutely unique. Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid. He is the one Sacrifice for sin. Not the infinite God nor all the wealth of Heaven could supply another like He. As God and Man, He alone combines the two natures in one Person. There is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus. If we can never find another like He, after searching all the ages through, we may well call Him precious!

It is also most clear that He is intrinsically valuablewho shall estimate His worth? I should darken counsel by words without knowledge if I were to attempt in detail to tell you what He is. Only dwell on the simple fact that while He is God over all and has thus the fullness of the Godhead, He is also Man, true Man of the substance of His mother, and so has all the adaptation of perfect manhood. Consider how great this Man was. Not even Heaven itself can be compared with Christ Jesus! He is incomparably, immeasurably, inconceivably precious! As for useful qualities, where else shall we find such a variety of uses in one place? He is eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, feet to the lame, healing to the sick, freedom to the slave, joy to the mourner and life to the dead!

Think of His life and how it gives life to the Believer! Think of His death and how it redeems from Hell all those who trust in Him! Think of His resurrection and how it justifies Believersand of His second coming and how it delights our hearts! Think of our Lord in all His offices, as Prophet, Priest and King! Think of Him in all His relationships as Husband, Brother, Friend! Think of Him under all the types and figures with which Scripture delights to set Him forth! Think of Him in all positions and conditions!

Think of Him as you will and as you canin every one of these He has a blessed use for the supply of some terrible need which afflicts His redeemed! He is set for the removal of your condemnation, the pardon of your sin, the justification of your person, the changing of your nature, the presentation of your offerings, the preservation of your graces, the perfecting of your holiness and for all other good and necessary purposes. All good things meet in Him and meet in Him in profusion, even to superabundance! Why, He is precious, indeed!

The saints form their estimate of Him upon Scriptural principles . They are not so fanatical as to be carried away by mere passion. They can be brought to the Bible and they can give a reason for their estimate. The text puts it, Unto you therefore which believe He is precious. We have a, therefore, for our valuation of Christwe have reckoned and calculated and have reason on our side! Though we count him to be the chief among 10,000 and altogether lovely, we can justify our highest estimate of our dear Lord and Savior.

Observe the run of the context. Our Lord Jesus is very precious to us as a living Stone. As a Foundation He is firm as a stone. But, in addition, He has life and this life He communicates so that we also become living stones and are joined to Him in living, loving, lasting union. A Stone alive and imparting life to other stones which are built upon it, is, indeed, a precious thing in a spiritual house which is to be inhabited of God! This gives a character to the whole structure. Our Lord is, in fact, the Source of all the life which fits the Church to be a temple for the living God. We see that Christ in the Church is the center and crown of itHe is as precious to it as the head is to the body. Without Christ we are useless stones over which men stumble and dead stones without feeling or power. But in Him, being quickened with a heavenly life, we are built together into a habitation of God through the Spirit. Solomons temple was a mere thing of earth as compared with the spiritual house which God constructs out of those who are made alive by contact with the living Stone.

I may add that our Lord is all the more precious to us because He was disallowed, indeed, of men. Never is Christ dearer to the Believer than when he sees Him to be despised and rejected of men. We do not follow the fashion. We know not the broad road and its crowds and hence the Lord Jesus is immeasurably glorious to us when we see that the world knew Him not. Did they call the Master of the house, Beelzebub? Then the more heartily we salute Him as Lord and God! Did they charge Him with drunkenness, madness and with being a friend of publicans and sinners? We bow at His feet with all the lowlier reverence and love! Did they spit upon Him? Did they scourge Him? Did they blindfold Him and then mock Him? Ah, then He is to our souls all the worthier of adoration! Crown the Crucified! As the sun at noonday is He when nailed to the Cross and reviled by the ribald crowd!

Now is He glorious in our eyes, while scribes and Pharisees make jests around Him and He dies in agony. Worship Him, all you glorified ones! We feel as if worship fit for Him upon the Throne did not reach the height He deserved when we see Him on the accursed tree. Here would our reverence sink lower than ever and our praise would rise above angelic adoration! Precious is our Lord Christ as we see Him going up to the Cross bearing our sins in His own body! Precious is He when forsaken of God and discharging all our debt by His dread sacrifice! Unto you that believe He is all the more precious because He is still disallowed of men.

He becomes inconceivably precious to us when we read the next words and view Him as chosen of God. God has chosen the Man Christ Jesus to be our Savior. Upon whom else could the Divine election have fallen? But He says, I have laid help upon One that is mighty; I have exalted One chosen out of the people. The choice of Jehovah must be Divinely wise. Infinitely prudent is the choice of Him whom He has exalted to be a Prince and a Savior. O glorious Christ, chosen of Godwell may You be chosen of us! If Your Fathers heart is set on You, well may ours be! To us You are precious!

Note well that the Apostle calls Him, precious, that is, precious to God. We feel abundantly justified in our high esteem of our Lord since He is so dear to the Father. He never looks with such delight on any as He does upon His own Son. Three times He spoke it out in words: This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. The Father finds full rest in His Only-Begotten. God finds in Him union and communion, as in One brought up with Him who was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hands. The Father finds infinite delight in His Well-Beloved Son and shall not we be directed by His wisdom to do the same? Since God accounts Him elect and precious, we, too, will choose Him and reckon Him to be most precious to our hearts.

Moreover, we prize our Lord Jesus as our Foundation. Jehovah says, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone. This Foundation is not of our inventing, but of Gods laying. What a privilege to have a Foundation of the Lords own laying! It is and must be the best, the surest, the most abiding, the most precious Foundation! We value, in a building, a sound basis and therefore we count our Lord most precious because nothing that rests upon Him can fail or fall.

Thus have I shown you that we run on good lines when Christ is precious to us. We are not here acting upon our own independent judgment, nor following a freak of fancy. If Christ is precious to us, we have God Himself at the back of our judgment and we are sure we do not err. Besides, we have this witness of the Spirit, that since we are pleased with Jesus, the Father is pleased with us! The Father is not only well pleased with Christ, but well pleased in Christ, and therefore He is well pleased with all who are in Him. He is so sweet that He sweetens all who come to God by Him. Precious Christ! Precious Christ!

II. Secondly, consider WHAT IT IS IN THE SAINTS WHICH MAKES THEM PRIZE CHRIST AT THIS RATE. It is their faith. Unto you therefore which believe He is precious. To carnal sense and reason Jesus is far from precious. To human wisdom Christ is not precioussee how men tug and labor to get rid of His Deity and to trample on His precious blood! What labored learning is brought forth to drain Inspiration out of His Bible and steal satisfaction out of His blood! But Unto you therefore which

believe He is precious. Faith calls Him precious when others esteem him a root out of a dry ground.

Note well that to faith the promises concerning Christ are made. If you will read Psalm 118, to which Peter refers, you will find that the Psalmist who rejoiced to see Him made the headstone of the corner was a Believer, for he says, I will praise You, for You have heard me and have become my salvation. The whole Psalm runs in that way. As for the passage quoted from Isaiah 28:16, it finishes thus, He that believes shall not make haste or, shall not be confounded. In both cases the preciousness of Christ is connected in the Scriptures with a believing people. The Bible never expects that without faith men will glorify Christ. For, dear Brothers and Sisters, it is by faith that the value of Christ is perceived.

You cannot see Christ by mere reason, for the natural man is blind to the things of the Spirit. You may study the evangelists, themselves, but you will never get to see the real Christ who is precious to Believers except by a personal act of faith in Him. The Holy Spirit has removed the scales from the eyes of the man who believes. If you trust the Savior as a sinner must trust Him, you know more of Him by that act of faith than all the schools could have taught you. An ounce of faith is better than a ton of learning! Better be Christs patient than a Doctor of Divinityfor His cure will teach you more than all your studies. More is to be learned in the closet by penitent faith than in the university by persevering research. If we look to Him whom God has lifted up, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, we shall know more of Him than if we closed our eyes and spent a century in meditation.

By faith, again, the Lord Jesus is appropriated . In possession lies much of preciousness. Is the KohiNoor a precious thing to me? Well, it is precious in itself, but I cannot say that it is precious to me for I do not even know where it is, nor do I give it more thought than if it were a bit of glass. When a thing belongs to you, it has a value to you and you make a full estimate of it. Now no man possesses Christ unless he believes in Him. O Unbeliever, you have nothing to do with Jesus if you will not trust in Him! Though He is a priceless gift, He is nothing to you if you do not rest in Him! What have you to do to speak about Him? You are without Christ if you are without faith. Faith is the hand that grasps Him, the mouth that feeds upon Him and therefore by faith He is precious.

By faith the Lord Jesus is more and more tasted and proved and become more and more precious. In proportion as we taste our Lord, He will rise in our esteem. If you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, He is precious to you. And if you have more than tasted and have gone on to feed upon Him, you have found Him to be marrow and fatness to your souland He is more precious than ever to you. The more afflictions a Believer endures, the more does he discover the sustaining power of Christ and therefore the more precious Christ becomes to him. You that have been caught in a storm at sea and have seen Him come to you walking on the water and have heard Him rebuke the winds and the wavesyou prize Him beyond all price! In the great deeps of tribulation we find many a pearl of the knowledge of Christ. To us our Lord is as gold tried in the fire. Our knowledge is neither theoretical nor traditionalwe have seen Him ourselves and He is precious to us.

Our sense of Christs preciousness, as I have said before, is a proof of our possessing the faith of Gods electand this ought to be a great comfort to any of you who are in the habit of looking within. If you enquire within yourselves, Is my faith worked in my soul by the Holy Spirit? you may have a sure test. Does it magnify Christ? If it makes Christ inexpressibly dear to you it is the faith of Gods elect. May God grant you to have more of it! Christ becomes growingly precious to us as our faith grows. If you have faith in Christ but do not exercise it everyday He will not be very precious to you. But if your faith keeps her eyes fixed on Him, she will more and more clearly perceive His beauties. If your soul is driven to Jesus again and againif your faith anchors in Him continuallythen He will be, indeed, more and more precious to you.

Everything depends upon faith. If you doubt Christ, He has gone down fifty per cent in yours esteem. Every doubt is a Christ crucifier. Every time you give way to skepticism and critical questioning you lose a sip of sweetness. The dog that barks loses the bone and the Christian that disputes loses spiritual food. In proportion as you believe with a faith which is childlike, clear, simple, strong, unbrokenin that proportion will Christ be dearer and dearer to you! I recommend you keep the door of your mind on the chain in these daysfor those tramps and vagrants called doubts are prowling about in every quarterand they may knock at your door with vile intent. The first thing they say, when they are at a good mans door, is, I am an honest doubt. That which so loudly calls itself honest has good need to fabricate for itself a character.

The most honest doubt is a great thiefthe most of doubts are as dishonest as common housebreakers. Keep Doubt out of the soul or you will make small progress in the discovery of the preciousness of Christ. Never entertain a thought that is derogatory to Christs Person, or to His atoning sacrifice. Reckon that opinion to be your enemy which is the enemy of the Cross of Christ. Do not suffer your faith to diminish even in the least degree. Believe in Christ heartily and unsuspectingly! If you have a doubt as to whether you are a saintyou can have no question that you are a sinnercome to Christ as a sinner and put your trust in Him as your Savior! It is wonderful how a renewed confidence in Christs saving Grace will bring back all your joy and delight in Him, and sometimes do it at once.

Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadab. When I was dull and dead, all of a sudden I touched His garment by faith and my life was renewed in me, even to leaping and rejoicing! God grant you, dear Brothers and Sisters, by faith, to know the preciousness of Christfor only to you that believe is He precious! To you that doubt, to you that mistrust, to you that suspect, to you that live in the land of hesitation He is without form or comelinessbut to you that believe without doubt He is precious beyond all price.

III. Now I come to the last point. Briefly consider WHAT BELIEVERS RECEIVE FROM HIM. Take the exact translationUnto you that believe

He is honor. Honor? Can honor ever belong to a sinner like I? Worthless, base, only fit to be cast awaycan I have honor? Listen! Since You were precious in My sight, You have been honorable and I have loved You: therefore will I give men for You and people for Your life.

A woman had been a harlot, but she believed in Jesus and she was so honorable that she was allowed to wash His feet with tears and wipe them with the hairs of her head! Thus was she a handmaid in the courts of our God. A man had been a thiefbut he believed while dying and lo, he was the first person that Jesus received when He came into His kingdomhe was so honorable! The Lord changes the rank when He forgives the sin. You are dishonorable no longer if you believe in Jesus! You are honorable before God now that He has become your salvation! Yesterday you fed the swinetoday you are joyfully welcomed to your Fathers house! Listen to that music and dancingit is all for you! See the fatted calf killed and roasting at the fireit is for you! For you the shoes upon your feet and the ring that decks your finger. Your Father gives Himself to you by those fond kisses which He lavishes upon you. Oh yes, Christ is honor to His peopleHis redemption makes that precious which seemed to have no value before.

Further, let me notice that it is a high honor to be associated with the Lord Jesus. When a valiant man has achieved a great victory everybody likes to claim some connection with him. The few persons still alive who were at the battle of Waterloo are proud of the fact. And no wonder! Though only a drummer boy at the time, the old man is proud to tell that he was there when his countrymen broke the tyrants power. Men even carry to the extreme of folly any slight connection with the greatlike the man who boasted that the king had spoken to him, when it turned out that all His Majesty said was, Get out of the way!

We have real honor in being associated with our Lord Christ in any capacity. It is an honor to have washed the feet of His servants, or to have given a cup of cold water to one of His disciples. Simple trust and grateful service make a link more precious than gold. Did men laugh at you for Christs sake? That honors you with Him! Did you suffer reproach for Christs Truth? It is wellthus are you bound up in the bundle of life with Him whom you love! The day shall come when it shall be thought to be the highest honor that ever was, to have been denounced us a bigot and cast out as a troublemaker for the sake of Christ and His Gospel. How pleased was John the Baptist to be connected with Jesus though he said of Him, the lace of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose!

How glad was Paul to be subservient to His Lord! He calls Himself Christs bond-servant. We read it servant in our softened version, but Paul was charmed to feel that he had been bought with Christs blood and was therefore as much His

property as a man thought a slave to be when he had paid his price. Oh to be as the dust of our Lords feet! Even this were honor! To be His menial servant is better than to rule all of Russia! Some of us bless the Lord that we are associated with His old-fashioned Cross, His time-worn Truth, His despised Atonement, His antiquated Bible. I proclaim I bind this as a chaplet about my brow! Jesus, the Substitute, is my honor and the Doctrines of Grace are my glory!

Again, it is a great honor to be built on Him as a sure foundation. If you read the passage in Isaiah 28 you will see that those who made lies their refuge were trod down, but not those who rested on the sure Foundationfor of them it is written, He that believes shall not make haste. Because he had built upon Christ, the builder enjoyed an honorable rest. I do not know how I should feel if I had had to think of a way of salvation for myselfbut I find it happy work to accept what God has clearly revealed in His Word.

A minister once said to me, It must be very easy for you to preach. I said, Do you think so? I do not look at it as a light affair. Yes, he said, it is easy, because you hold a fixed and definite set of Truths upon which you dwell from year to year. I did not see how this made it easy to preach, but I did see how it made my heart easy and I said, Yes, that is true. I keep to one fixed line of Truth. That is not my case, said heI revise my creed from week to week. It is with me constant change and progress. I did not say much but I thought the more. If the foundation is constantly being altered, the building will be rather shaky. Surely, if the basis is not settled, we shall, in our work, show a good deal of jerry-building!

It is a precious thing to my heart to feel sure about the Truths of God the surely-revealed facts of Scripture. Having once made Christ my Foundation, I shall take a leaf out of the book of the Puritans of Massachusetts. I have heard that in their early days their counselors agreed that the State of Massachusetts should be governed by the Laws of God, till they had time to make better ones. So will I rest on Christ alone till I can find a better resting place! When we find that God has laid another Foundation, we will look at it. When we discover a Foundation more suitable for sinners than the sinners Savior, we will consider itbut not till then.

Beloved, it is an honor to believe the doctrines taught by Christ and His Apostles. It is an honor to be on the same lines of Truth as the Holy Spirit. It is an honor to believe what the lips of Jesus taught. I had sooner be a fool with Christ than a wise man with the philosophers. The day shall come when he that cleaves most to the Gospel of God shall be the most honored man. It is an honor to do as Christ bade us in His precepts. Holiness is the truest royalty. It is never a disgrace to any man to be baptized into His name or to come to His Table and break bread in remembrance of Him. The Virgins advice is soundWhatever He says to you, do it. Obedience to Jesus is no discredit to any man. It is an honor to follow the Lamb where ever He goes. Take this as a sure wordsin is disgrace, but holiness is honor!

It will be our great honor to see our Lord glorified . That 118th Psalm depicts the exultation of the saints in the day when Christ shall appear in His Glory. See how it runs. I will praise You: for You have heard me and have become my salvation. The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lords doing; it is marvelous in our eyes! This is the day which the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. It is a very jubilant Psalm. All the adversaries of the Believer have been destroyed like swarms of bees and burned up like heaps of

thornsbut the Believer is safe and morehe is glorified as he sees his despised and rejected Lord made Head over all things to His Church!

What an honor to have been with Him in His humiliation! How glorious to rehearse the story! The Lord laid Christ as the Foundation though the heathen raged. The walls have risen despite the foe. The corner stone is in its place, though the builders refused it. Glory! Glory! He whom we love has come to His own although the kings stood up and the rulers took counsel together against Him! Now, it is no more, Crucify Him! Crucify Him! but, Crown Him! Crown Him! Now He is no more the servant of servants, but King of kings and Lord of lords. Hallelujah! Like bursts of great artillery the praises of men and angels break forth again and again for Him!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! He must reign! He must reign! The Father wills it and reign He shallall enemies being put under His feet. In that day, to you who believe, He will be an honor! You shall be His honored attendants when He mounts the Throne! Surely the angels will set great store by every one of you that believed in Christ in the day of His scorningthey will carry you as trophies through the golden streets! Here is a man that believed in Jesus when the world despised Him! Though he was poor and obscure, he dared to own his Lord and stand up for His Truth. Happy man to have been able to give such a proof of loyalty!

He was a common soldier in the barracks and he was the butt of many a coarse jokebut he believed in Jesus! Honor to him! She was a humble workwoman and all the girls in the warehouse ridiculed her for being a Christian. Honor to her! Honor to all who bore dishonor for Christ! Before you go away I would beg you to consider how you stand in this matter. Do you believe in Jesus? If you do believe, be afraid of nothing! Come forward and confess that sacred name! Proclaim that you are a follower of the Lamb and then, in the day when He distributes crowns and thrones, He will have a crown and a throne for you! You, at the Resurrection, shall wake up in Him to glory and immortality!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON1 Peter 2.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK786, 817, 819.   
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CHRIST PRECIOUS TO BELIEVERS   
NO. 242

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 13, 1859, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

Unto you therefore which believe He is precious. 1 Peter 2:7.

THIS text calls to my remembrance the opening of my ministry. It is about eight years since as a lad of sixteen, I stood up for the first time in my life to preach the Gospel in a cottage to a handful of poor people who had come together for worship. I felt my own inability to preach, but I ventured to take this text, Unto you therefore which believe He is precious. I do not think I could have said anything upon any other text, but Christ was precious to my soul and I was in the flush of my youthful love and I could not be silent when a precious Jesus was the subject. I had but just escaped from the bondage of Egypt, I had not forgotten the broken fetter. Still did I remember those flames which seemed to burn about my path and that devouring gulf which opened its mouth as if ready to devour me.

With all these things fresh in my youthful heart, I could speak of His preciousness who had been my Savior and had plucked me as a brand from the burning and set me upon a rock and put a new song in my mouth and established my goings. And now, at this time what shall I say? What has God worked? How has the little one become a thousand and the small one a great people? And what shall I say concerning this text, but that if the Lord Jesus was precious then, He is as precious now? And if I could declare then, that Jesus was the object of my souls desire, that for Him I hoped to live and for Him I would be prepared to die, can I not say, God being my witness, that he is more precious to me this day than ever He was? In the remembrance of His unparalleled mercy towards the chief of sinners, I must anew devote myself to Him and afresh surrender my heart to Him who is Lord and King.

This remark is uttered by way of introduction, it may seem egotistical, but that I cannot help. I must give glory to God in the midst of the great congregation and pay my vows to the Lord now in the midst of all His saints, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.

My text states a positive fact, namely, that Christ is precious to Believers. This shall be the first part of our discourse. Then in the second we will try to answer the question, why is Jesus Christ so precious to His believing people? And we will conclude by declaring the test whereby you may try yourselves whether you are Believers or not. For if you are Believers in Christ, then Christ is precious to you and if you think little of Him, then rest assured you have not a true and saving faith in Him. I. First, this is a positive fact, that UNTO BELIEVERS JESUS CHRIST

IS PRECIOUS. In Himself He is of inestimable preciousness, for He is very God of very God. He is moreover, perfect Man without sin. The precious gopher wood of His humanity is overlaid with the pure gold of His Divinity. He is a mine of jewels and a mountain of gems. He is altogether lovely, but, alas, this blind world sees not His beauty. The painted harlotries of that witch, Madam Bubble, the world can see and all men wonder after her. This life, its joy, its lust, its gains, its honorsthese have beauty in the eyes of the unregenerate man, but in Christ he sees nothing which he can admire. He hears His name as a common word and looks upon His Cross as a thing in which he has no interest, neglects His Gospel, despises His Word and, perhaps, vents fierce spite upon His people.

But not so the Believer. The man who has been brought to know that Christ is the only foundation upon which the soul can build its eternal homehe who has been taught that Jesus Christ is the First and the Last, the Alpha and the Omega, the Author and the Finisher of faith thinks not lightly of Christ. He calls Him all his salvation and all his desire. The only glorious and lovely One. Now, this is a fact which has been proved in all ages of the world. Look at the beginning of Christs appearance upon earth. No, we might go farther back and mark how Christ was precious in prospect to those who lived before His incarnation. But, I say, since He has come into the world, what abundant proofs have we that He is precious to His people! There were men found who were not unwilling to part with houses and lands and wife and children and country and reputation and honor and wealth, no, with life itself, for Christs sake. Such was the charm that Christ had for ancient Christians, that if they must renounce their patrimony and their earthly wealth for His sake, they did it cheerfully and without a murmur. No, they could say, that what things were gain they counted but loss for Christs sake and did esteem them but as dross and dung if they could win Christ and be found in Him.

We talk lightly of these things, but these were no mean sacrifices. For a man to leave the partner of his bosom, to be despised by her who ought to honor him, to be spit upon by his own children, to be driven out by his countrymen and have his name mentioned as a hissing and a reproach and a bywordthis is no easy matter to bear. And yet the Christians in the first ages took up this Cross and not only carried it patiently, but carried it joyfullyrejoicing in tribulations, if those tribulations fell upon them for Christs sake and the Gospel. No, more than thisSatan has been permitted to put forth his hand and touch Christs people, not only in their goods and in their families, but in their bone and in their flesh.

And mark how Christs disciples have reckoned nothing to be a loss, so that they might win Christ. Stretched upon the rack, their strained nerves have only made them sing the louder, as though they were harp strings, only put in tune when they were drawn out to their extreme length. They have been tortured with hot irons and with the pincers. Their backs have been plowed with scourges, but when have you found any of the true followers of Christ flinch in the hour of pain? They have borne all this and challenged their persecutors to do more and invent fresh arts and devices, fresh cruelties and try them. Christ was so precious that all the pain of the body could not make them deny Him and when at last they have been taken forth to a shameful deathlet the axe and the block, let the cross of crucifixion, let the spear, let the fire and the stake, let the wild horse and the desert testify that the Believer has always been a man who would suffer all this and vastly morebut who would never renounce his confidence in Christ.

Look at Polycarp before the lions, when he is brought into the midst of the assembly and it is demanded of him that he will deny his God. Thousands of savage eyes look down upon him and there he stands, a feeble man, alone in the arena, but he tells them that he has known his Lord these many years and He never did him a displeasure and he will not deny Him at the last. To the lions! they cry, To the lions! and the lions rush upon him and he is speedily devoured. But all this he would have borne at the mouths of a thousand lions, if he had a thousand lives, rather than he would have thought anything amiss against the Majesty of Jesus of Nazareth. The whole history of the ancient Church of Christ proves that Jesus has been an object of His peoples highest veneration. That they set nothing in rivalry with Him, but cheerfully and readily, without a murmur, or a thought, gave up all for Jesus Christ and rejoiced to do so.

And this is just as true today as it was then. If tomorrow the stake could be set in Smithfield, Christian people are prepared to be fuel for the flame. If once more the block were fixed on Tower Hill and the axe were brought forth from its hiding place, the heads of Christs people would be cheerfully given, if they might but crown the head of Jesus and vindicate His cause. Those who declare that the ancient velour of the Church is departed know not what they say. The professing Church may have lost its masculine vigor. The professors of this day may be but effeminate dwarfs, the offspring of glorious fathersbut the true Church, the elect out of the professing Church, the remnant whom God has chosenare as much in love with Jesus as His saints of yore and are as ready to suffer and to die.

We challenge Hell and its incarnate representative, old Rome herself. Let her build her dungeons, let her revive her inquisitions, let her once more get power in the State to cut and mangle and burn. We are still able to possess our souls in patience. We sometimes feel it were a good thing if persecuting days should come again, to try the Church once more and drive away her chaff and make her like a goodly heap of wheat, all pure and clean. The rotten branches of the forest may tremble at the hurricane, for they shall be swept away, but those that have sap within them tremble not. Our roots are intertwisted with the Rock of Ages and the sap of Christ flows within us and we are branches of the Living Vine and nothing shall sever us from Him. We know that persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword, shall divide us from the love of Christ for in all these things, by Gods grace, we shall be as the Church has been, more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

Does anyone think that I exaggerate? Mark, thenif what I have said is not true, then Christ has no Church at all for the Church that is not prepared to suffer and bleed and die for Christ, is not Christs Church. For what does He say? He that loves father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that takes not his cross and follows after Me, is not worthy of Me (Matt. 5:37-38). Albeit that Christ may not put us fully to the test, yet, if we are true, we must be ready for the ordeal. And if we are sincere, though we may tremble at the thought of it, we shall not tremble in the endurance of it. Many a man who says in his heart, I have not a martyrs faith, has really that noble virtue. And let him but once come to the push and the world shall see the grace that has been hidden, rising like a giant from his slumbers. The faith which endures the relaxing of the worlds sunshine, would endure the cutting frost of the worlds persecution. We need not fear, if we are true today, we shall be true always.

This is not mere fiction. Many are the proofs that Christ is still precious. Shall I tell you of the silent sufferers for Christ, who at this day suffer a martyrdom of which we hear not, but which is true and real? How many a young girl there is who follows Christ in the midst of an ungodly familyher father upbraids her, laughs at her, makes a scoff of her holiness and pierces her through the heart with his sarcasm! Her brothers and her sisters call her Puritan, Methodist, and the like, and she is annoyed day by day with what the Apostle calls, Trial of cruel mockings. But she bears all this and though the tear is sometimes forced by it from her eye, yet though she should weep blood she would resist unto blood, striving against sin.

These sufferers are unrecorded, they are not put into a Book of Martyrs. We have no Fox to write their martyrologies, they have not the fleshcontenting knowledge that they shall be publicly honored they suffer alone and unheard of, still praying for those who laugh at thembowing themselves before God on their knees in agony, not on account of the persecution, but in agony of soul for the persecutors themselves, that they may be saved. How many there are of such young men in workshops, employed in large establishments, who bend their knee at night by the bedside, in a large room where there are many scoffers. Some of us have known this in our youthful days and have had to endure it. But Christ is precious to the silent sufferings of His people. These unhonored martyrdoms prove that His Church has not ceased to love Him, nor to esteem Him precious.

How many there are, toohow many thousands of unseen and unknown laborers for Christ, whose names cannot be here declared. They toil from morning till night all through the week and the Sabbath Day should be a day of rest to them. But they work more on the Sabbath-Day than on any other day. They are visiting the beds of the sick. Their feet are weary and nature says rest, but they go into the lowest dens and haunts of the city to speak to the ignorant and endeavor to spread the name and honor of Jesus where it has not been known. There are many such who are working hard for Christ, though the Church scarcely knows of it. And how many, too, there are who prove that they love Christ by the continual liberality of their offerings. Many are the poor people I have discovered, who have denied themselves of this and that, because they would serve Christs cause. And many there are, tooevery now and then we find them outin the middle ranks of society, who give a hundred times as much to the cause of Christ as many of the rich and wealthy.

And if you knew to what little trials they are put, to what shifts they are driven in order to serve Christ, you would say, The man that can, proves clearly that Christ is precious to him. And mark this, the reason why the Church is not more laborious, not more generous in its gifts to the offertory of the Savior, is just thisbecause the Church of the day is not the Church of Christ in its mass and bulk. There is a Church of Christ within it, but the visible Church, as it stands before you, is not to be considered the Church of Christ. We must pass it through the fire and bring the third part through the flame. For this is the day when the dross is mingled with gold. How has the much fine gold become dim. How has the glory departed. Zion is under a cloud. But mark, though you see it not, there is a Church, a hidden Churchan unmoving center amidst the growing of professionthere is a life within this outward fungus of a growing Christianity. There is a life that is within and to that hidden host, that chosen company, Christ is preciousthey are proving it every day by their patient sufferings, by their laborious efforts, by their constant offerings to the Church of Christ. Unto you therefore which believe He is precious.

I will tell you one thing that provesproves without a doubt, that Christ is still precious to His people and it is thissend one of Christs people to hear the most noted preacher of the age, whoever that may be. He preaches a very learned sermon, very fine and magnificent, but there is not a word about Christ in that sermon. Suppose that to be the case and the Christian man will go out and say, I did not care a farthing for that mans discourse. Why? Because they have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him. I heard nothing about Christ. Send that man on the Sabbath morning to hear some hedge and ditch preachersomeone who cuts the kings English about ever so badly, but who preaches Jesus Christyou will see the tears rolling down that mans face and when he comes out he will say, I do not like that mans bad grammar. I do not like the many mistakes he has made, but oh, it has done my heart good, for he spoke about Christ.

That, after all, is the main thing for the Christian. He wants to hear about his Lord and if he hears Him magnified he will overlook a hundred faults. In fact, you will find that Christians are all agreed, that the best sermon is that which is fullest of Christ. They never like to hear a sermon unless there are something of Christ in it. A Welsh minister who was preaching last Sabbath at the Chapel of my dear Brother, Jonathan George, was saying that Christ was the sum and substance of the Gospel and he broke out into this storyA young man had been preaching in the presence of a venerable Divine and after he had done he went to the old minister and said, What do you think of my sermon? A very poor sermon indeed, said he. A poor sermon? said the young man, it took me

a long time to study it. Yes, no doubt of it. Why, did you not think my explanation of the text a very good one? Oh yes, said the old preacher, very good indeed. Well, then, why do you say it is a poor sermon? Didnt you think the metaphors were appropriate and the arguments conclusive? Yes, they were very good as far as that goes, but still it was a very poor sermon. Will you tell me why you think it a poor sermon? Because, said he, there was no Christ in it. Well, said the young man, Christ was not in the text. We are not to be preaching Christ always, we must preach what is in the text.

So the old man said, Dont you know, young Man, that from every town and every village and every little hamlet in England, wherever it may be, there is a road to London? Yes, said the young man. Ah, said the old Divine and so from every text in Scripture, there is a road to the metropolis of the Scriptures, that is Christ. And, my dear Brother, your business is when you get to a text, to say, Now what is the road to Christ? and then preach a sermon running along the road towards the great metropolisChrist. And, said he I have never yet found a text that had not got a road to Christ in it and if I ever do find one that has not a road to Christ in it, I will make one. I will go over hedge and ditch but I would get at my Master, for the sermon cannot do any good unless there is a savor of Christ in it. Now since you say amen to that and declare that what you want to hear is Jesus Christ, the text is provedUnto you therefore which believe He is precious.

But if you want to try this again and prove it, go and see some of our sick and dying friends. Go and talk to them about the Reform Bill and they will look you in the face and say, Oh, I am going from this time state. It is a very small matter to me whether the Reform Bill will be carried or not. You will not find them much interested in that matter. Well, then, sit down and talk to them about the weather and how the crops are getting onWell, it is a good prospect for wheat this year. They will say, Ah, my harvest is ripening in Glory. Introduce the most interesting topic you can and a Believer, who is lying on the verge of eternity, will find nothing precious in it.

But sit down by the bedside of this man and he may be very near gone, almost unconscious and begin to talk about Jesusmention that precious soul-reviving, soul-strengthening name, Jesus, and you will see his eye glisten and the blanched cheek will be flushed once moreAh, he will say, Precious Jesus, that is the name which calms my fears and bids my sorrows cease. You will see that you have given the man a strong tonic and that his whole frame is braced up for the moment. Even when he dies, the thought of Jesus Christ and the prospect of seeing Him shall make him living in the midst of death, strong in the midst of weakness and fearless in the midst of trembling. And this proves, by the experience of Gods people, that with those who believe in Him, Christ is and ever must be a precious Christ.   
II. The second thing is, WHY IS CHRIST PRECIOUS TO THE BELIEVER? I observeand I shall run over those particulars very briefly, though they would be worthy of a long, long sermonJesus Christ is precious to the Believer because He is intrinsically precious. But here let me take you through an exercise in grammarhere is an adjective, let us go through it. He is precious positively. He is more precious than anything comparatively. He is most precious of all things and most precious even if all things were rolled into one and put into competition with Him. He is thus precious superlatively. Now, there are few things you can thus deal with. You say a man is a good man, he is good positively and you say he is a great deal better than many other people. He is good comparativelybut you can never truly say to any man that he is good superlatively, because there he would still be found short of perfection. But Christ is good positively, comparatively and superlatively.

Is he not good positively? Election is a good thing. To be chosen of God and precious. But we are elect in Christ Jesus. Adoption is a good thing to be adopted into the family of God is a good thingah, but we are adopted in Christ Jesus and made joint-heirs with Him. Pardon is a good thingwho will not say so?yes, but we are pardoned through the precious blood of Jesus. Justificationis not that a noble thing, to be robed about with a perfect righteousness?yes, but we are justified in Jesus. To be preservedis not that a precious thing?yes. But we are preserved in Christ Jesus and kept by His power even to the end.

Perfectionwho shall say that this is not precious? Well, but we are perfect in Christ Jesus. Resurrection, is not that glorious? We are risen with Him. To ascend up on high, is not that precious? But he has raised us up and made us sit together with Him in heavenly places in Jesus Christso that Christ must be good positively, for He is all the best things in one. And if all these are good, surely He must be good in whom and by whom and to whom and through whom are all these precious things.

But Christ is good comparatively. Bring anything here and compare with Him. One of the brightest jewels we can have is liberty. If I am not free, let me die. Put the halter to my neck but put not the fetter to my wrista free man I must be while I live. Will not the patriot say that he would give his blood to buy liberty and think it a cheap price? Yes, but put liberty side by side with Christ and I would wear the fetter for Christ and rejoice in the chain. The Apostle Paul himself could say, I would that you were altogether such I am,and he might add, except these bonds, but though he excepted bonds for others, he did not except them for himself for he rejoiced in the chain and counted it a mark of honor.

Besides liberty, what a precious thing is life! Skin for skin, yes, all that a man has will he give for his life. But let a Christiana true Christian, once have the choice between life and ChristNo, says he, I can die, but I cannot deny. I can burn, but I cannot turn. I confess Christ and perish in the flame. But I cannot deny Christ, even though you exalt me to a throne. There would be no choice between the two. And then whatever earthly good there may be in comparison with Christ, the Believers testimony goes to prove that Christ is precious comparatively, for there is

nothing that can be matched with Christ.

And then to go higher stillChrist is good superlatively. The superlative of all things is Heaven and if it could be possible to put Christ in competition with Heaven, the Christian would not stop a moment in his choice. He would sooner be on earth with Christ than be in Heaven without Him. No, I do not know whether he would not go almost as far as Rutherford, who said, Lord, I would sooner be in Hell with You than in Heaven without You. For if I were in Heaven without You it would be a Hell to me. And if I were in Hell with You it would be a Heaven to me. We may put it so and every Christian will subscribe to it. Now, come you messengers of the world and take on your shoulders all its treasures. Caesar, pour out your gold in one glittering pile. Caesar, lay down your honors here in one gaudy heap. Here, Tiberius, bring all the joys of Capris lust and vice.

Solomon, bring here all the treasures of wisdom. Alexander, bring all your triumphs. Napoleon, bring your wide-spread empire and your fame, put them all here, all that earth calls good. And now come, You bleeding Lamb of God, You marred and matchless Savior, come here and tread these beneath Your feet, for what are all these compared with You? I pour contempt on them all. Now am I dead to all the world and all the world is dead to me. The whole realm of nature is small in comparison with You, as a drop in the bucket when compared with a boundless ocean. Jesus Christ, then, is precious superlatively.

2. What more can we say? Still to answer this question againwhy is Christ precious to the Believer more than to any other man? What is it the Believers want that makes Christ precious to him? That is one answer. We have been having a small shower of rain lately and I dare say there are very few of you who felt grateful for itsince it gave you a little wetting coming here. But suppose that shower of rain could have fallen on the desert of Arabia, what a precious thing it would have been. Yes, every raindrop would have been worth a pearl. And as for the shower, though it had rained gold dust, the rich deposit would not have been comparable to the flood when it descended from on high. But what is the reason that water is so precious there? Simply because it is so rare.

Suppose I am in Englandthere is abundance of water and I cannot sell itwater is so common and therefore so cheap. But put a man in the desert and let the water-skin be dried up, let him come to the well wherein he expected to find water and it has failed himcan you not conceive that that small drop of water might be worth a kings ransom? Nothat a man might hoard it up and conceal it from all his comrades, because on that small drop of water depended his life? The way to prize water is to value it with a tongue like a firebrand and with a mouth like an oven. Then can I estimate its value when I know its want.

So with Christ. The worldling does not care for Christ because he has never hungered and thirsted after Him. But the Christian is athirst for Christ. He is in a dry and thirsty land where no water is and his heart and his flesh pant after God, yes, for the living God. And as the thirsty soul dying, cries out, water, water, water, so the Christian cries out Christ, Christ, Christ! This is the one thing needful for me and if I have it not, this thirst must destroy me.

Hark, too, that the Believer may be found in many aspects and you will always find that his needs will endear Christ to him. Here is a man about to be tried for his life. Before he had committed the wrong, he used to say, Lawyers, attorneys, pleaders, away with them, what is the good of them? Now he has got into prison he thinks very differently. He says, I wish I could get a good special pleader to plead my cause. And he runs over the roll to see the best man to plead for him. At last he says, Here is a man, if he could plead my cause I might hope to escape, but I have no money with which to engage him. And he says to his wifeWife, we must sell our house. Or, We must get money somehow, for I am on trial for my life and I must have an advocate.

And what will not a woman do to get an advocate for her husband? Why, she will pledge the last rag she has to get one. Now, does not the Believer feel himself to be in just such a position? He is a poor sinner on trial for his life and he wants an Advocate. And every time he looks on Christ pleading his cause before the Fathers Throne, he says, O what a precious Christ He is to a poor sin-destroyed sinner, for He pleads his cause before the Throne.

But suppose another case. That of a man drawn for a soldier. In such times men always look out for substitutes. I remember when the ballot was coming for the militia, how every man joined a substitute club in order that if he were drawn he might not go himself. Now suppose a man had been drawn, how valuable would a substitute have been? No man in his senses likes to be food for powderhe would rather a man without brains go and do such work as that, but as for him he estimates himself at too high a price. But suppose he is not only drawn for a soldier, but condemned to die. See yon poor wretch coming up the gallows stairs, someone whispers to him, What would you give for a substitute now? What would you give for someone to come and bear this punishment? See his eyes roll madness at the thought. A substitute, says he, I could not buy one for the whole world. Who would be a substitute for me, to swing into eternity amidst the yelling of a crowd?

But supposeand we are only supposing what has actually occurred suppose this man saw not only the gallows and the drop, but Hell fire before him and it were said to him, You must burn in that forever unless you find a Substitutewould not that be a precious one? Now, mark that is just our position. The Christian feels that Hell is before him if it were not that he has a glorious Substitute. Jesus came forward and said, I will bear that punishment, pour Hell on Me, My Father let Me drink damnation dry. And He did it. He endured all those pains, or an equivalent for them. He suffered in the rebels place. And now, through Him, the Substitute, we are absolved and free. Oh, must not He be a precious Christ?

But think of Christ again and then think of the Believers wants. I will try and run over a number of them. The Believer is a silly sheep. What a precious thing is a shepherd and how precious are green pastures and still waters. The Believer is like a desolate woman. What a precious thing is a husband who shall provide for her and shall console and cherish her. The Believer is a pilgrim and the hot sun beats on him. What a precious thing is the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. The Believer is a bond- slave by nature. What a precious thing is the trump of jubilee and the ransom price that sets him free. The Believer, by nature, is a sinking, drowning man. How precious to him is that plank of Free Grace, the Cross of Christ, on which he puts his poor trembling hand and secures glory. But what more shall I say? Time would fail me to tell of all the wants of the Believer and of the all-abounding and ever-flowing streams of love that flow from Christ, the fountain that fills the Believer to the brim. O say, you children of God, is He not while you are in these lowlands of want and suffering, inconceivably, unutterably, superlatively precious to you?

3. But once more. Look at the Believer not only in his wants, but in his highest earthly state. The Believer is a man that was once blind and now sees. And what a precious thing is light to a man that sees. If I, as a Believer, have an eye, how much I need the sun to shine. If I have no light my eye becomes a torture and I might as well have been blind. And when Christ gives sight to the blind He makes His people a seeing people. It is then that they find what a precious thing is the sight and how pleasant a thing it is for a man to behold the sun. The Believer is a man that is quickened. A dead corpse wants no clothing, for it feels no cold. Let a man once be quickened and he finds himself naked and wants clothing. From the very fact that the Christian is a quickened man, he values the robe of righteousness that is put about him. Christ touches His peoples ears and opens them. But it were better for man to be deaf than to hear forever doleful groans and hissings. But such must he have been, ever hearing it if it were not for Christ playing sweet music to him every day and pouring streams of melody into his ears through His promises. Yes, I say, the very newborn powers of the Christian would be very channels for misery if it were not for Christ. Even in his highest estate the Christian must feel that Christ is necessary unto him and then he must conclude that Christ is precious to him.

But Believer, how precious is Christ to you in the hour of conviction of sin, when He says, Your sins which are many, are all forgiven you? How precious to you in the hour of sickness, when He comes to you and says, I will make all your bed in your sickness? How precious to you in the day of trial, when He says, All things work together for your good? How precious when friends are buried for He says, I am the resurrection and the life? How precious in your gray old age, even in old age I am with you and to hoary hairs will I carry you? How precious in the lone chamber of death, for I will fear no evil, You are with me, Your rod and Your staff comfort me ?

And last of all, how precious will Christ be when we see Him as He is? All we know of Christ here is as nothing compared with what we shall know hereafter. Believer, when you see Christs face, now, you only see it through a veilChrist is so glorious, that like Moses, He is compelled to put a veil upon His face for His poor people while they are here are so feeble that they could not behold Him face to face. And if He is lovely here, when He is marred and spit upon, how lovely must He be when He is adored and worshipped? If He is precious on His Cross, how much more precious when He sits on His Throne! If I can weep before Him and love Him and live to Him, when I see Him as the despised Man of Nazareth, oh, how shall my spirit be knit to Him, how shall my heart be absorbed with love to Him when I see His face and behold His crown of glory, when I mark the harpings of the never-ceasing harpers who harp His praise?

Wait awhile, Christian. If He is precious to the Believer now, when faith is turned to sight He will be more precious still. Go out of this hall and cry, O Lord Jesus, I must love You, I must serve You better, I must live for You! I must be ready to die for You

*You are precious to my soul,   
My transport and my trust.*

This brings me to concludeand here I want your solemn and earnest attention while each one for himself shall answer this questionmy Hearer, is Christ precious to you? My young Brothers and Sisters, you of the same age as myself, is Jesus precious to you in your youth? How shall a young person cleanse his way? On His footsteps. You men and women of middle age, is Christ precious to you? Remember that this world is but a dream and if you have not something more satisfactory than that, you will die disappointed even though you succeed beyond your highest wishes. And you gray-headed men who are going tottering to your graveswhose life is like a candle-snuff, almost expiring, like a lamp whose oil is spentis Christ precious to you, you with the bald head and with the hoary lock, is Jesus precious to your soul? Remember, on your answer to this question depends your condition. You believe, if He is precious to you, but if He is not precious, then you are not Believers and you are condemned already because you believe not on the Son of God.

Now, which is it? Oh, methinks some of you feel as if you could spring from your seats and say, Yes, He is precious to me, I cannot deny it. Once there was a good minister who was catechizing his class and he said to the young people, The question which I am about to ask is such that I want none of you to answer but those who can answer from your heart. The congregation was gathered together and he put this question to them concerning ChristSuppose Christ was here and should say, Do you love Me? what would be your reply? He looked around and glanced upon all the young men and the young women and said, Jesus speaks to you the first time and says, Do you love Me? He speaks a second time and he says, Do you love Me?

There was a solemn pause and no one answered. And the congregation looked at the class and at last the minister said once more, Jesus speaks by me a third time and says, Do you love Me? Up rose a young

woman, who could keep her seat no longer and, bursting into tears, said, Yes, Lord, You know all things, You know that I love you! Now, how many are there here who could say that? Could not you now, if this were the timealthough you might be bashful in the midst of so manycould you not, if Christ asked you the questioncould you not boldly say, though in the midst of enemiesYes, Lord, You know all things, You know that I love you?

Well, if you can give such an answer as that, go home and pray that others may be brought to love Him, for you yourselves are saved. But if you are compelled to be silent to such a question as that, O may God lead you to seek Christmay you, too, be driven to the Crossmay you there see His dear bleeding wounds, may you behold His open sideand falling at His feet, may you say, I trust You, I rely upon You, I depend upon You, and Ye will say, I have saved You. And then will you spring to your feet and say, Lord I love You, because You have first loved me. May such be the end of this sermon and to God be all the glory.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #3014 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A SERMON FROM A SICK PREACHER   
NO. 3014

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1906.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, IN THE YEAR 1869.

Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious.   
1 Peter 2:7.

[Not only was this the first text from which Mr. Spurgeon preached, but it was his theme on many subsequent occasions. Two of these discourses bear the same titleCHRIST PRECIOUS TO BELIEVERS although one of them is No. 242, Volume 5 in the New Park Street Pulpit and the other is No. 2137, Volume 36 in the Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.Read/download

the entire sermons, free of charge at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

MY Brothers and Sisters, I am quite out of order for addressing you tonight. I feel extremely unwell, excessively heavy and exceedingly depressed, and yet I could not deny myself the pleasure of trying to say a few words to you. I have taken a text upon which I think I could preach in my sleep and I believe that if I were dying, and were graciously led into the old track, I could, with my last expiring breath, pour out a heartfelt of utterance upon the delightful verse which I have selected. It happens to be the passage from which I first essayed to speak in public when I was but a boy of sixteen years of age and I am sure it contains the marrow of what I have always taught in the pulpit from that day until now. The words are in the Second Chapter of the First Epistle of Peter, and the seventh verseTherefore, to you who believe, He is precious.

We might find ample room and verge enough if we were to enlarge upon the preciousness of Christ in His Person as God and perfect Man, His preciousness to His Father, His preciousness to the Holy Spirit, His preciousness to angels and glorified men. We might next speak of Him in the preciousness of His work, showing His preciousness as the Mediator of the New Covenant and at the Incarnate Messenger of that Covenant on earth, His preciousness as working out a perfect righteousness and as rendering a complete expiation. We might dwell upon His preciousness in all His offices, whether as Prophet, Priest, or King, and in all His relationships as Friend, Brother, as Bridegroom. Indeed, we have before us a subject as inexhaustible as the river of God, and as bright as the sapphire Throne! If we should endeavor to show how precious the WellBeloved is in all respects, we would need eternity in which to complete the task

*Precious is the name of Jesus, Who can half its worth unfold? Far beyond angelic praises   
Sweetly sung to harps of gold. Precious when to Calvary groaning, He sustained the cursed tree.*

*Precious when His death atoning   
Made an end of sin for me.   
Precious when the bloody scourges   
Caused the sacred drops to roll.   
Precious when of wrath the surges   
Overwhelmed His holy soul!   
Precious in His death victorious,   
He the host of Hell overthrows,   
In His Resurrection glorious,   
Victor crowned over all His foes.   
Precious, Lord! Beyond expressing,   
Are Your beauties all Divine!   
Glory, honor, power and blessing   
Be henceforth forever Thine.*

The wording of the text binds our thoughts to one point. Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious. It is not so much how precious He is, as how precious He is to you! If you are a Believer, the text affirms that Jesus Christ is, without any adverb to limit the extent of the descriptive word, precious to you!

I. We shall, first, talk awhile upon the Truth of God that JESUS CHRIST IS NOW PRECIOUS TO BELIEVERS.   
Notice, attentively, how personally precious Jesus is. There are two persons in the text. Therefore, to you who believe, HE is precious. You and He. You are a real person and you feel that you are such. To yourself, you must always be the most real of existences. You do not think of yourself as a person of whom you have read in history, or heard of in discourse, or seen from a window years ago. You have, (to use an ugly word, since I do not know any substitute for it), realized yourself you are quite clear about your own existence. Now, in the same way, I pray you strive to realize the other Person! Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious. Jesus exists just as really as you do and you must not regard Him as a personage who was here 1,869 years ago, or one of whom you have heard, and whom you like to think of as a poetical conceptionbut there is a real Christ now existing in spirit, existing herein real flesh and blood now standing at the right hand of the Father! And between Him and you, if you are a Believer, there exists a bond of unity which, though invisible, is nevertheless most matter-of-fact and positive. You believe in Him. He loves you. You love Him in return and He sheds abroad in your heart a sense of His love. You two are bound together tightly and firmly. There is neither myth, nor dream either in Him or in your union to Him. He is and you areand He is in very deed most precious to you.   
Notice, too, that while the text gleams with this vividness of Personality to which the most of professors are blind, it is weighted with a most solid positivenessTherefore, to you who believe, He is precious. It does not speak as though He might be or might not be, but He is precious. There are some things about myself as a Christian which are frequently matters of question. I may gravely question whether I am growing in Grace and under such a doubt I may search my heart to see whether I love my Lord better, or whether I have more fully conquered my sins. But one thing I do not question, namely, that being a Believer in Him, Jesus Christ is unutterably precious to my soul! If you doubt your faith, you may doubt whether Christ is precious to you, but if your faith is certain, the preciousness of Christ to your heart is quite as certain. He is precious. If the new life is in you, you are as sure to love the Savior as fish love the stream, or the birds the air, or as brave men love liberty, or as all men love their lives! Tolerate no questions here! Allow no debate upon this vital point of your religion! Jesus must be precious to you. Cleanse your eyes if any dust has dimmed your sight of Jesus preciousness and be not satisfied till, in the language of the spouse, you can say, My Beloved is the chief among ten thousand. Yes, He is altogether lovely.   
Mark, further, the absoluteness of the textTherefore, to you who believe, He is precious. It is not written how precious He is. The text does not attempt, by any form of computation, to measure the price which the regenerate soul sets upon her bosoms Lord. There is no hint that He is moderately precious. It does not even say positively or comparatively precious. I infer, therefore, that I may, if I choose, insert the word, superlatively. And, certainly, if I did so, there would be no exaggeration, for more dear than light to the eyes, or life to the body, is Jesus to the sanctified heart! Each saint can truthfully sing *Yes, You are precious to my soul,   
My transport and my trust!   
Jewels to You are gaudy toys   
And gold is sordid dust.*   
Since no sparkling gems or precious metals, no royal regalia, or caskets of rare jewels can ever equal the value of Jesus, the comparison is vain. We therefore place Him by Himself, alone, and say that He is absolutely precious to Believers. Gold is precious, but the diamond is more so and, in comparison with the diamond, the gold is of small account. The diamond is precious, but give a man a bagful of diamonds of the first water and put him down in a desert, or let him be out on the wild waste of oceanhe would give all his diamonds for a draught of pure water to drink, or a crust of bread to eatso that, in certain cases, even the excellent crystal would lose its value. In fact, mineral substances are merely arbitrary signs of value, they have but little worth in themselves. Gold in itself is less useful than iron and a diamond of little more account than a piece of glass. They have no absolute intrinsic value which would remain the same under all contingencies. But Christ is absolutely precious! That is to say, nothing can ever match Him, much less excel Him, and He is precious under all circumstances! There never can arrive a time when we shall be compelled to confess His lack of value, or lower our estimate of Him. He is infinitely precious! O my Soul, do you esteem Him so? My Heart, are you sure of this, that unto you He is precious beyond compare? Positively precious? Comparatively precious, though Heaven itself were compared? Superlatively precious beyond all things that can be dreamed of, or imagined? Is He to you essential preciousness, the very standard of all value? Thus it should be, for the text means no lessTherefore, to you who believe, He is precious.   
The thought which I desire to bring out into fullest relief is this, that Jesus Christ is, today, continually precious to His people. The moment a soul believes in Jesus, his sins are forgiven. Well, then, the precious blood that washes all sin away, is not that done with? Oh, no! Unto you that believe, though you have believed to the saving of your soul, He is still precious, for your guilt will return to your conscience and you will yet sin, being still in the body, but there is a fountain still filled with blood and thus unto you, experimentally, the cleansing Atonement is as precious as when you first relied upon its expiating power! No, Jesus is more precious to you, now, than when first you were washed in His blood and were made white as snow, for you know your own needs more fully, have proved more often the adaptation of His saving Grace and have received a thousand more gifts at His blessed hands! I fear that some Christians imagine that after believing, all is done, but my Lord Jesus Christ is no old Almanac, used up and of no further service! He is not like the medicine which I took months ago, which then healed me of my disease, so that now I can afford to put the rest of it on the shelf and laugh at itoh, no! He is still my Divine Medicine! I still need Him and I still have Him. If I believe in Him, I feel I need Him more than I ever did and He is dearer to me than ever He was. If I needed Him before, as a poor guilty sinner, I need Him just as much as a poor needy saint, hanging upon His daily bounty, deriving life perpetually from His life, peace from the virtue of His precious blood and joy from the flowing out of His love to me! Instead of Christs losing value to the Believer, the pith of the text is thisthat you, Believer, when you get Christ and get what Christ brings to you, instead of esteeming Him as though He were an empty vessel out of which you had drained the last drop, prize Him more highly than you ever did before! He is not a gold mine worked out and exhausted, a field reaped of its harvest, or a vineyard where the grape gleaning is doneHe still has the dew of His youth, the fullness of His strength, the infinity of His wealth, the perfection of His power!

II. Now, Beloved, just for a minute or two, let us think how CHRIST IS PRECIOUS TO YOU TODAY.   
He is precious to you today because His blood, even now, this day, is the only thing which keeps you from being a condemned sinner, exposed to the wrath of God. There has been enough sin upon your soul, my Brother, my Sister, this very day, to cast you into Hell if your Surety had not stood between you and Gods Justice. You have been into no sinful company today. You have been in your Sunday school class and I have been in the pulpit, but ah, my pulpit sins would have damned me, today, if it had not been for that precious blood! And your Sunday school sins would have shut you up in Hell if that dear Mediator had not stood between you and God! So, you see, it is not merely the first day in which you believe in which He is precious to you, but right on, still, as long as you are a sinner, the Intercessor stands and pleads for you, evermore putting your sin away, being yesterday, today and forever, your Savior, your Shield, and your Defense and, therefore, evermore supremely precious!  
Remember, too, He is precious because the only righteousness you have is still His perfect righteousness. That which pleads with God for you is not what you are, but what HE is! You are accepted at this moment, but you are only accepted in the Beloved. You are not justified because you feel in a sweet frame of mind, or because your heart rejoices in the name of God. Oh, no! Your acceptance is all in your great Surety and if it could be possible that He and the entire system of His Grace could be withdrawn and Covenant engagements abrogated, you would be as unacceptable as even lost spirits are and, like they, forever driven from the face and favor of God! Is He not, then, as your accepted Substitute, at this hour most precious to you?   
Moreover, Beloved, Jesus Christ is precious to you at this moment as much as ever He was, because from henceforth it is His example which you strive to imitate. So far as He is an example to His people, His Character has always been most admirable in your esteemand this day you delight to know that in His life, Gods Law appears   
*Drawn out in living characters.*   
You aspire to be like Him nowyou expect to be perfectly like Him in the day of His appearing. Now, because He shows you what you shall be and because in Him lies the power to make you what you shall be, is He not, therefore, daily precious to you? In proportion as you fight with sin. In proportion as you seek for holiness with inward longing and sublime partingsin that proportion will Jesus Christ, the Paragon of all perfection, be precious in your esteem! Beloved, you are to be crucified with Him! Your flesh, with its corruptions and lusts, must die upon His Cross as He died. Is He not precious when you believe that it will be by virtue of His death that sin will die in you? You are to rise in Him! No, I trust you have already risen in Him into newness of life. I hope you are panting more and more after the resurrection life, that you may no longer regard the dead things of this world, but live for eternal things, as those whose life is hid with Christ in God. If so, I know you will prize a risen Savior and your appreciation of Him will increase as you drink more deeply into the fellowship of the risen life. Forget not, Beloved, that our Redeemer has ascended, and in that ascension every saint has his share. I do not say that you all enjoy your share yet, but, in proportion as you do so, you will reckon Christ to be precious, for He has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places. Our conversation is in Heaven from where we also look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose Second Advent is to be the perfection of our spiritual life, the unveiling of the hidden beauties and manifestations of the sons of God! Just in proportion as you enter into your royal heritage and live in it, and believe in itin this proportion Jesus Christ will be precious to you.  
Beloved, let me tell you a secret. To many of you there is as much in Christ undiscovered as you have already enjoyed. Your faith has only yet grasped Christ as saving you from going down to the PitChrist is precious to you so farbut if your faith could even now comprehend the fact that you are one with Christ, members of His body, of His flesh and of His bonesthat you are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, ah, then, how doubly precious would Jesus be! As surely as your faith grasps more, becomes more capacious and appropriating, Christ will grow in preciousness to you! I am persuaded that there is a meaning in these words which none of Gods saints have yet been able to discover, a deep mysterious preciousness of Jesus only to be known by a close and intimate acquaintance with Him such as falls to the lot of few. Therefore, to you who believejust in proportion as you believethe larger, the stronger, the deeper, the purer, the more sublime, the more full-grown your faith, the more Jesus Christ is precious to you. Ask, then, for more faith, that Jesus may be more precious to you! And God grant it to you, for His names sake!   
III. Thus much on that point. Now a few words on another. BECAUSE JESUS IS PRECIOUS TO BELIEVERS, HE EFFICACIOUSLY OPERATES UPON THEM. The preciousness of Christ is, as it were, the leverage of Christ in lifting up His saints to holiness and righteousness!   
Let me show you this. The man who trusts Christ values Christ. That which I value, I hold fast. Hence our valuing Christ helps us to abide steadfast in times of temptation. The world says to a Christian, Follow me and I will enrich you. No, says the Christian, You cannot enrich me. I have Christ and I am rich enough. Follow me, says the world, and I will bless you. I will give you the delights of the flesh. No, says the heart, you cannot bless me, for these things are accursed and would bring me sorrow, not pleasure. Jesus Christ is my pleasure and to love Him and to do His will is my joy. Do you not see that the greater your value of Christ, the greater your strength against temptation? Although the devil may tempt you with this and that, yet Jesus Christ, being more precious than all else, you say, Get you behind me, Satan. You cannot tempt me while Christ is dear to my spirit. Oh, may you set a very high value upon Christ, that thus you may be kept firm in the day of temptation!   
Notice further this valuing of Christ helps the Believer to make sacrifices. Sacrifice-making contributes a large part of any high character. He who never makes a sacrifice in his religion may shrewdly suspect that it is not worth more than his own practical valuation of it. When a man has a very important document about him, on which depends his title to his estates, if a thief should try to take it from him, he will allow the thief to tear away his garments, to rob him of anything he has except his treasure! That he takes care to hold fast as long as he can. Indian messengers, men entrusted with jewels, have been known to swallow them to preserve them from robbersand to allow themselves to be stripped naked of every rag they worebut they would not lose the jewel with which their prince had entrusted them. So the Christian will say to the world, Take away my fortune. Take away my livelihood. take away my good name, if you will, O lying world! But, despite all, I will retain my Savior, for He is precious! Skin for skin, yes, all that a man has will he give for Christand he never will or can give Christ up if Christ is precious to him.   
See, then, that believing in Jesus makes Him precious and His being precious helps us to make sacrifices most cheerfully for His dear sake.   
Moreover, Brothers and Sisters, this valuing of Christ makes us jealous against sin. What, I say, does Jesus Christ deign to live under my roof? Then, while He lives in my heart, I will give no roosting place to any foul bird of sin that might begin hooting in His ear! No, you enemies of Christ, begone, begone, begone! My Beloved shall have the best chamber of my spirit undefiled by your filthy feet. We are afraid lest we should do anything to grieve the heavenly Lover of our souls. This makes us keep our garments white and pick our steps through this miry world. Hence, a right valuing of Christ promotes directly the highest degree of sanctification. He who loves the Redeemer best, purifies himself most, even as His Lord is pure.   
Besides, Beloved, high valuing of Christ helps the Christian in the selection of his associates in life. If I hold my Divine Lord to be precious, how can I have fellowship with those who do not esteem Him? You will not find a man of refined habits and cultured spirit happy among the lowest and most illiterate. Birds of a feather flock together. Workers and traders unite in companies according to their occupations. Lovers of Christ rejoice in lovers of Christ and they delight to meet together, for they can talk to each other of things in which they are agreed. I would recommend you to choose the church of which you would be a member and the pastor whom you would hear by this one thingby how much of Christ there is in that church and how much of the savor of Christ there is in that ministry! It is an evil thing for a child of God to be enchanted by mere rhetoric. As well might you choose a table to feast at merely on account of the knives and forks, or the polish of its mahogany! You require food for the soul and there is nothing that will long feed a true heart but Jesus Christ who is the meat and the drink of His people. Love to Christ soon makes a Christian discontented with mere oratory. He cannot be satisfied even with the best doctrine apart from Jesus. They have taken away my Lord, he says, and I know not where they have laid Him. I must hear about Jesus and if that silver bell does not ring, then all the rest may chime as they may, but my ear is at unrest until I hear that celestial sound!   
Thus, a lofty estimate of Christ will be seen, if I had time to track it, to operate through the entire history of a Christian!

Little need is there more fully to particularize, but we must not fail to remark that a sense of the Redeemers preciousness makes the Christian useful, for that which is much on the heart will soon creep up to the tongueand the testimony of the heart is a notable method of spreading the Gospel. If you love Christ much, you will speak about Him. Your restrained speech will almost choke you. Your soul will be hot within you while you are silent, till, at last, like a fire in your bones which cannot be concealed any longer, it will break out and you will say to others, My Beloved is the fairest and noblest of all beloveds! Oh, that you all knew Him and loved Him as I do! If you see Him, His face is brighter than the sun in its strength! If you hear Him, His voice is sweeter than the chorus of Heaven! If you draw near to Him, His garments smell of myrrh, aloes and cassia! And if you trust Him, you will find Him to be faithfulness and truth itself. The words may be broken, the sentences may not flow with rhythmical harmony, but he who really loves Christ must speak it out somehow or other! Thus, proclaiming with a burning heart the things which he has made touching the King, others will hear the good news and they will ask, Who is this Precious One? And they will, by Gods good Spirit, be led to seek Him and find Him! So the Christian valuing Christ will come to be useful to the souls of men! Indeed, as I have said before, it will exercise an operating power on the entire Christian and render it holiness unto the Lord!   
IV. Christ being thus precious, HIS PRECIOUSNESS BECOMES THE TEST OF OUR CHRISTIANITY.   
I shall not prolong this humble talk, but shall, in conclusion, put a question to you. Beloved Brother or Sister, you know very well that I would be the last person in the world to speak lightly of the value of sound doctrine. I wish we were all far more acquainted with the Scriptures than we are and that the Doctrines of Grace were more clear to our understandings and more imprinted upon our hearts. But there are some people who love a certain set of doctrines so much, that if you differ a hairs breadth, they will denounce you as rotten to the core! They will not associate with any who do say, Shibboleth, and sound the sh very harshly, too! They will cut off and condemn all Gods people who do not precisely agree with them. Now, mark you, it is not written, Unto you that believe a code of doctrines will be precious. That is true, but it is not written so in the text. The text is, Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious. It is better to count Christ precious than it is to count orthodoxy precious! It is not loving a creed, but it is loving Jesus that proves you a Christian! You may become such a bigot that it may be only the laws of the land which keep you from burning those who differ from you, and yet you may have none of the Grace of God in your heart! I love Protestantism, but if there is anything in this world that I have a horror of, it is that political Protestantism which does nothing but sneer and snarl at its fellow citizensbut which is as ignorant as a cow about what Protestantism truly is. The great truths of Protestantismnot merely Protestant ascendancyand the great secret power of those truths, far more than the mere letter of them, is the thing to be prized. You may get it into your head that you are a member of the one only true church. You may wrap yourself about with any quantity of self-conceit, but that does not at all prove you to be a possessor of Grace. It is love to Christ that is the root of the matter. I am very sorry, my dear Brother, if you should hold unsound views on some points, but I love you with all my heart if Jesus is precious to you! I cannot give up Believers Baptism. It is no invention of mine and, therefore, I cannot give up my Masters ordinance. I am sure that it is Scriptural. I cannot give up the Doctrine of Election it seems to me so plainly taught in the Word. But over the head of all doctrines and ordinances, and over everything, my Brother and Sister, I embrace you in my heart if you believe in Jesus and if He is precious to you, for that is the vital point! These are the matters of heart-work that mark a Christiannothing else is so true a test. If you cannot say, Jesus is precious to me, I do not care to what church you belong, or what creed you are ready to die for, you do not know the Truth of God unless the Person of Christ is dear to you!   
This may serve as a test for each one here. My Brother, my Sister, do you believe in Him who is the Son of God and yet was born of the Virgin here on earth? Do you rely alone on Him who, on the Cross, poured out His hearts blood to redeem sinners? Do you depend on Him who now stands with His priestly garments on before the Throne of the Infinite Majesty, pleading for the unjust that they may live through Him? If you do, then answer this questionDo you love Jesus now? Do you love Him with your heart and soul? Would you serve Him? Do you serve Him? Will you serve Him? Will you subscribe your hand to be His servant from this day forth? Do you declare now, if not with lips, yet honestly with your soul, He is precious to me, and I would give up all else sooner than give up Him? Then it is well with you! Be happy and rejoice! Come to His Table and feast with Him at the banquet of love!   
If not, you have not built on the Rock. If you are not loving Christ, I pray you examine yourself and see where you are, for there is but a step between you and Hell. Repent! May God convert you and give you now to put your confidence in Jesus and now to be saved, that He may be glorified in you, for hitherto He has had no glory from you! Unto you that do not believe, Christ is not precious, and you will go your way and despise Him. Oh, that you were made wise by the Holy Spirit and taught to consider things rightly! Then Christ would, indeed, be precious to you. He is the only way for your escape from the wrath to come. He is the only hope for you of ever entering the gates of Heaven. He must be your only Shelter when the world will be all ablaze, as soon it shallwhen the stars shall fall, like withered leaves from the trees, when all creation shall rock and reeland His voice shall resound in earth, and Heaven, and Hell, Awake, you dead, and come to judgment! The only hope of a Savior, in that last tremendous day, must be found in Jesus. Oh, seek Him now while He may be found! Call upon Him now while He is near! Turn not your heels away Him now, lest you turn once and for all to Hell! Come to Him now! Believe in Him now! And He shall have the glory! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: 1 PETER 2.

Verse 1. Therefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies and envies, and all evil speaking. Putting these evil things right away from you, having nothing further to do with any of them. Notice the repetition of the word all. All malice and all guile everything in the shape of deceitand all evil speaking. All these are to be put away by all Believers, as rags are put away in the rag-bucket, or refuse on the dunghill!

2. As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby. Be glad to get simple Truths of Godthe milk of the Word. Even if you can digest the strong meat of the Word, never grow weary of the milk, for it is always good diet even for a full-grown Christian. Do not crave milk and water, but, desire the unadulterated milk of the Word that you may grow thereby. It is not enough for you to be spiritually aliveyou must grow! And especially while you are babes in Grace, your great desire should be that you may grow.

3. If indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. You begin with tasting that the Lord is gracious. You go on to desire the unadulterated milk of the Word and so you grow more and more in Grace.

4. Coming to Him, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. No one figure is sufficient to set forth Christ as He really is. A stone is a Scriptural simile and symbol of Christ, but we have to make the metaphor somewhat incongruous by comparing Him to a living stone.

5. You also, as living stones. It is not lively stones. It is the same word in the original, in both casesa living stone and, living stones. The translators of our Authorized Version have often rendered the same Hebrew or Greek word in a different way, which is a pity, as it is in this instance. You also, as living stones.

5. Are built up a spiritual house. A house that is a living structure from the foundation to the topstone.   
5. An holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. He is a living stone, and you, as living stones, are built upon Himand He and you together make up a living spiritual house. And in order that the house may have suitable tenants and be properly furnished, you also become priests and, as priests, you offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.   
6. Therefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious: and he that believes on Him shall not be confounded. Thus the Apostle quotes from the Prophet Isaiah the ancient prophecy concerning Christ.   
7. Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious: but unto them which are disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner. Here Peter quotes from Psalm 118:22. What reverence these Inspired men had for the Inspired Book! The Spirit of God could have spoken fresh words if He had pleased, but, as if He meant to honor above everything else the Book which He had, Himself, Inspired, He moved Peter to quote the ancient Prophet and Psalmist in confirmation of what He was writing.   
8. And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. These are terrible words, but they are true. I cannot fully explain them. As Archbishop Leighton says, It is easier to get into a depth over this awful Truth of God than it is to get out again. O God, grant that none of us may stumble at Christ! If we do, Christ will not move because we kick at Him, or fall over Him.

9. But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people. These are wonderful epithets that are here heaped upon Believers. May we have the Grace to be able to appropriate them and to expound them in our lives!   
9. That you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. See where you once were, and also see to what you have been called by Gods Graceout of darkness into light. That is not allinto His light. Even that is not allinto His marvelous light. The light of the Gospel is full of wonders. As common light is made up of many colors, so the light of Gods Grace is made up of many marvelous colorsthe colors of all the attributes of God!   
10. Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. What a great change, conversion is! And how great a change conversion works! How wonderful is the effect of regeneration! We had not obtained mercy, but now we have obtained mercy! We were not a people, but now we are the people of God!   
11. Dearly Beloved, I beseech you. Peter puts his hands together and pleads with intense earnestness.   
11. As strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. Those fleshly lusts belong to this present evil world, but you do not belong to ityou are strangers and pilgrims heretherefore feel an absolute alienation towards such things, an utter abhorrence of them! Do not even think of them, much less practice them. Abstain from fleshly lusts, for, while they injure the body, that is not the worst thing that they do, for they war against the soul.   
12, 13. Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lords sake. You are not to be disturbers of the peace. You Christian people are to cultivate the spirit of conciliation wherever you dwell, submitting yourselves, for the Lords sake, even to some things which you do not like.   
13. Whether it be to the king, as supreme. In Peters day, the king was a poor creature and something worse than that. Indeed, I might say of the bulk of the Emperors of Rome, who were the chief kings of that day, that they were monsters of iniquity! Yet the office was to be respected even when the man who occupied it could not be. Much more should it be respected when the occupant is what a true king should be.   
14-16. Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free. Free in yourselves, free in your conscience, free in your mind and heart.   
16. And not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. You possess a freedom which others claim, but do not know. You feel that you are no mans slave, yet you do not use your liberty for evil, or to the injury of others.   
17-19. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endures grief, suffering wrongfully. There is no credit in suffering rightfullythe credit is in patiently enduring suffering which you do not deserve.   
20-21. For what glory is it, if, when you are buffeted for your faults, you take it patiently? But if, when you do well, and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were you called. It is part of a true Christians calling to bear what is put upon him wrongfully.   
21-23. Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not: but committed Himself to Him that judges righteously. This leads Peter to make the following glorious declaration concerning the atoning Sacrifice of Christ.   
24. Who His own Self bore our sins in His own body on the tree. There was a transference of sin from sinners to Christ. This is no fiction. He, His own Self, bore that sin in His own body on the tree.   
24. That we, being dead to sins. Because He died for us and we died in Him.   
24. Should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes you were healed. By His sufferings, you were cured of sin! His death not only removed from you the penalty of sin, but what is far better, it also removed from you the dread disease itself!   
25. For you were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. God grant that this may be true concerning everyone of us, for our Lord Jesus Christs sake! Amen.

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A SERMON AND A REMINISCENCE   
NO. 3112

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1908.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, EARLY IN THE YEAR 1873.

Unto you therefore who believe, He is precious.   
1 Peter 2:7.

[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon this passage, are as follows Sermons #242, Volume 5 CHRIST PRECIOUS TO BELIEVERS; #2137, Volume 36(same title as #242) and #3014, Volume 52A SERMON FROM A SICK PREACHER Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

WHEN one has a head cold, it is a very effectual hindrance to thought. You may do what you will and select what subject you may, but somehow or other the mind has lost its elasticity. I frankly confess that for this reason I selected this text for my discourse. I thought that, perhaps, if the head would not work, the heart might, and that if the thoughts came not, yet the emotions might. Emotions may well be stirred in the preacher, if not in the hearer, by the memories awakened by this passage. For I remember well that, more than 22 years ago, the first sermon that I ever attempted to make was from this text. I had been asked to walk out to the little village of Teversham, some little distance from the town of Cambridge, in which I lived, to accompany a young man whom I supposed to be the preacher for the evening, and on the way I said to him that I trusted God would bless him in his labors. Oh, dear! he said, I never preached in my life. I never thought of doing such a thing! I was asked to walk with you and I sincerely hope that God would bless you in your preaching. No, I said, but I never preached and I dont know that I could do anything of the sort. We walked together till we came to the place, my inmost soul being all in a tremble as to what would happen. When we found the congregation assembled, and no one else there to speak of Jesus, though I was only 16 years of age, as I found that I was expected to preach, I did preach, and this was the text.

If a raw recruit could speak upon anything, surely this theme would suit him. If one were dying, this would be the text. If one were distracted with a thousand cares, this would be the text because its teaching is experimentalits meaning wells up from the inner consciousness and needs neither a clear brain nor an eloquent tongue. To the Believer, it is not a thing which somebody else has taught himit is a matter of fact which he knows within his own soul, that Christ is precious to him and he can bear testimony concerning it although not always such bold testimony as he could wish! I intend to let my heart run over like water from a full cupjust as the thought comes to my heart, it shall be poured out. Let us go, then, at once to our text and speak a little, first, about Believers. Then about their appreciation of Christ. And then about how they show it.

I. ABOUT BELIEVERSUnto you who believe.   
Believers are getting to be rather scarce nowadays. Doubters have the swaythey are the men who claim to possess all the wisdom of the period. There is scarcely a single historical fact but what is now doubted. I fancy that the very existence of the human race must be a matter of question with some persons. I believe some imagine that not even they, themselves, are actually existentcertain ideas of themselves exist, but not themselves! We know not how far the human mind will go in this direction, but surely there must be a limit to doubting. Wonderful is the capacity of faith, but a hundred times more wonderful is the capacity of unbelief. The most credulous persons in the world are unbelievers. He who refuses to swallow the gnat of Scriptural difficulty, usually swallows camels in large quantities of other difficulties of all sorts! The text speaks of Believers and, for my part, I am happy to know that a man is reckoned among Believers of any sort rather than with doubters.   
But the Believers mentioned here are not mere Believers, they are spiritual Believers, Christian Believersthey believe in Christ Jesus. It is only to such that Christ is precious. In the Word of God there are many expressions with regard to believing in Christ. We read of believing in Him, believing upon Him and believing Him. Now, if I understand the Word aright, believing in Him means thisbelieving that He is what He claims to be. As, for instance, that He is the Sent One of God, the Messiahthat He is King in Israel, that He is the Son of God, that He is the Word that was God and Was in the beginning with Godthat He is the Great High Priest making Atonement for our sins, that He is the Head of the Church and so on. That is to believe in Him, to accept Him as being what Gods Word says He is, to believe Gods testimony concerning His Son.  
But believing upon Him goes further than that, for when a man believes upon Jesus, or on Jesus, he trusts Him, he rests himself upon Him for the pardon of his sin. He relies upon the Saviors atoning Sacrifice for eternal life. He rests upon the Saviors immortality for his resurrection. He looks to the Saviors power for everything. He looks to his Redeemer. He leans upon Him, he believes on Him. And this, mark you, is essential to salvation, for we may believe Christ to be God and yet perish! We may believe Christ to be the Great High Priest putting away sin by His atoning Sacrifice and yet perish! The faith that saves is a

trusting faith, a reliant faith, a sacred recumbency, confidence and leaning upon the Lord Jesus Christ! Dear Hearer, do you possess it? Has the Holy Spirit given to you to cast yourself once and for all upon Him whom God has set forth to be a propitiation for sin?   
If you have, surely you will, through Grace, proceed to the third form of faith, you will believe HimHis Person as well as His words. You will believe Him whatever He may say. You will believe Him whatever He may do. You will be persuaded that He is, Himself, the essential Truth of God, according to His own declaration, I am the way, the truth, and the life. And then you will know what Paul meant when he said, I know whom I have believednot in whombut whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him. If you could have asked a true Believer, in Christs day, What is your creed? He would have pointed to His Master. He would not have repeated certain articles of faith, but He would have said, I believe that glorious Man. My trust is in Him! I believe Him! We have seen many books labeled upon their backs, Body of Divinity, but of a truth, Jesus is the only real Body of Divinity. If you want theology, He is the true Theologos, the essential Word of God! It is a grand thing when a man believes Jesus to be what Jesus isa Savior from sinand then believes the Christ to be what Christ isthe Anointed of the Lord and so makes Him to be his Alpha and Omegaall his salvation and all his desire!  
Divide yourselves upon this question as to how far you are Believers, for we cannot assert that Christ is precious to you if you are not Believers. We know He will not be your hearts Monarch if you have no faith. He will be the very reverse! But if you are Believers in and upon Him, He will be precious to you beyond all comparison!   
II. Now let us consider THE BELIEVERS APPRECIATION OF HIS MASTER and observe, first, that every Believer appreciates Christ HimselfHis very PersonUnto you therefore who believe, He is precious. Some think the ordinances, which they call the sacraments, very precious. So they are, but only for His sake. Others reckon the Doctrines to be very precious and always thrust Doctrine into the forefront. We will not deny that every Doctrine is precious, but it owes its value to the fact that Christ is in it. Dry doctrine is nothing better than a sepulcher for a dead Christ to be buried inbut the Doctrine preached in relation to His Person becomes a Throne on which He is exalted! It is a great pity when any of you Christians forget that you have a Savior who is alive and overlook the personality of Christ. Remember that He is a real Man and as a real Man on Calvary He died for you. And as a real Man He is gone into Heaven. He is no ideal personage but an actual Person and the very marrow of Christian experience lies in the realization of the personality of the SaviorUnto you who believe, He is precious. If you make Doctrine the main thing, you are very likely to grow narrowminded. If you make your own experience the main thing, you will become gloomy and censorious of others. If you make ordinances the main thing, you will be apt to grow merely formal. You can never make too much of the living Christ Jesus! Remember that all other things are for His sake. Doctrines and ordinances are the planets, but Christ is the Sun! The stars of Doctrine revolve around Him as their great primal light. Get to love Him best of all. Yes, I know you do if you are truly believing in Him. You love the Doctrines and would not like to give one of them up, but still, the Incarnate God is the sum and substance of your confidence! Christ Jesus, Himself, is precious to you.   
Now, as this appreciation concerns Christ, it may here be remembered that it is, in the case of every Believer, a personal appreciation. As we appreciate Christs Person, so we each in person appreciate Him. We do not pretend to appreciate Christ because others say that they do so. Nor do we run with the multitude, but we judge for ourselves. Unto those that believe in Him, Christ is precious on His own account, from their own personal knowledge of Him. They have not borrowed it. They do not cry, Yes, He is precious, because their dear mother, who has gone to Heaven, used to say so. Her memory helps them, but they have a better reason than that. He is precious to them. Beloved, there is nothing like personal religion. The religion which you inherit, if at the same time it is not yours, personally, is not worth one single penny. You will not be saved by hereditary godliness. If any man should say, My ancestors believed such-and-such, and therefore I do, that would be a reason why we should be Druids, for our ancestors were such. If our religion has come to us as an heirloom, like the family pew, or the family plateand we have merely taken it at secondhand, [See Sermon #2624, Volume 45

SECONDHANDRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

it is of little or no account. You must value Christ because you have tried Him and know Him for yourselffor nothing short of a personal appreciation and a personal appropriation of the Lord Jesus, by faith, to your own case, and in your own heartwill ever bring you to Heaven! Everything short of personal godliness falls short of eternal life. Remember that nobody can be born-again for you. You yourselves must be regenerated. Nobody can renounce the pomp and vanities of the world for you. Sponsorship in religion is the most transparent of frauds. Nobody can love Christ for youyour own heart must beat high with affection towards His dear name! It must be a personal religion if it is to be of any value to you.

As there must be an appreciation of the Person of the Lord Jesus by our own selves, so, let me add, our experience must be the basis of that estimate. Christ is precious to us, this day, because we have proved Him to be precious. What has He done for us? He has delivered us, first, from all the guilt of our past sins. You have not forgotten the day when

*Laden with guilt, and full of fears*   
you crept to the foot of the Cross and looked up and saw Him suffering there for you. And when you believed in Him, the burden fell off your shoulders and you received a liberty unknown before! Christ is very precious to the man who has once felt the Word of the Law on his conscience. I wish that some people who slight Him, had been cast where some of us once layin spiritual wretchedness and deep depression of spirit. Oh, the misery of a tortured conscience! We trembled in anticipation of the flames of Hell when our sins stared us in the face but in an instant, by virtue of the application of the precious bloodfear was gone, guilt disappeared and we were reconciled to God by Christ Jesus! Is He not precious if this has been the case?

Beside this, He has emancipated us from the chains of sin. Before, passions mastered usthe flesh stood at the helm and steered the vessel which way it would. Sometimes a fierce self-will, at another time the baser passions of the flesh ruled us. We could not overcome ourselves! Satan and the flesh were tyrants over us! But now the vices once so dear have become detestable, the chains of sin are broken and we are the Lords free menand though sin strives to get the mastery over us and we have much to mourn overyet that same sword which has slain some sins is close at the throat of others and, by Divine Grace, we know that we shall slay them all before long! There is such a change in the character of some in this place, to my knowledge, that Christ, the Great Transformer, must be very precious to them! Once at the ale-house where sinners congregate. Once frequenting nameless haunts of vice. Once a swearer, once passionate, once dishonest, once a liar, once everything that is evil! But now washed and sanctified, you cannot but prize your Deliverer! Oh, when I meet the reformed drunk and when I gaze into the face of the Magdalene who now rejoices to wash the Saviors feet with her tears, I know that to such He is precious! A renewed character going with pardoned sin, as it always does, endears the Savior to the soul.

And, O Beloved, beside that, He is precious to us because He has changed the whole bent and current of our thoughts. We were once selfish and cared for nobody else. But since the Lord Jesus Christ has saved us, we serve not self, but Christ. We do not now live to hoard money, or to get ourselves honor, or even to save our own souls, for that is completedwe now rise above the groveling love of self and our whole being is devoted to Jesus! He is precious beyond all price, for He has taught us to live for Gods Glory and for the welfare of our fellow men.

He is precious to us by experience because He has helped us in many a dark hour of trial. I shall not tell you tonight how often He has cheered me. If any spirit here is more than ordinarily inclined to despondency, perhaps it is mine, but, ah, the sustaining influences of the Presence of Christ! I can rise even to the seventh Heaven of ecstasy when I do but fully come back to a simple faith in His precious name! Some of us could not live without Jesus Christ. It has come to thisit is Hell here if we do not have Christ with us. I remember slipping the cable of my belief once and being driven out to sea before a furious wind of doubt. At first I reveled in that speedy sailing across a sea of fierce unbelief, but, ah, when I began to see where I was goingand when I stood at the prow of the vessel and marked the dreary cloud-land that lay before meand knew not what rocks might be ahead, I felt a horror of great darkness and cried for deliverance right loudly! And I was glad when the anchor held fast, again, and my dreadful cruise was over. On Christ my soul has a hold as tight as the drowning mans death-grip and I cling with all my might to His everlasting love, His personal love to my poor soul and to the merit of His substitutionary Sacrifice on my behalf! Believe me, He is precious to all whose whole mental thought has come to an anchorage in Him, whose faculties feel that their utmost reach and stretch cannot go beyond being for He is All in All. Yes, the text says, Unto you therefore who believe, He is precious.

Perhaps you imagine that I speak only of the past, as though Jesus had been precious. I meant that, but He is precious nowUnto you therefore who believe, He is precious. When one of those saintly martyrs had been tormented by persecutors, they said to him, What can Christ do for you now? And he replied, He can help me to bear with patience that which you inflict upon me. When the murdered Covenanters head was carried by the dragoon to the poor bereaved wife and he asked her what she thought of her husbands face, now, she said that he never looked bonnier when he lived than he did now that he had given up his life for Christ. Verily, we can say, today, that Christ never looked bonnier than He does tonight, when we think of Him as slain for us! We gladly sing that hymn

*If ever I loved You, my Jesus, tis now.*   
Some people grow less lovely upon close acquaintance, but all lovers of Christ testify that His beauties bear the closest inspection. Those who lie in His bosom the longest love Him bestand those who have served Him 70 years are the most fluent and also the most sincere in singing His praises! Oh, He is a most precious Savior! Young man, do you trust Christ tonight? If you do, He is precious to youbut if He is not precious to you, then you have not believed in Him! May you be led to do so by the power of His Spirit and then Christ will be precious to you indeed!

But I must add that although Christ is precious to us now on account of past experience and present enjoyment, He is precious to us with a dash of expectation. We expect to soon enter the cold shades of death and it will be precious to have the Savior with us then. The question will sometimes come over every thoughtful mind, Shall we, after all, die when we die? Are we like so many mites in a cheese and shall we soon be crushed out of being and cease to be? Oh, dark and dreary thought! But, then, we remember that Jesus Christ arose from the dead and if any historical fact is certain, that is! There may be doubts about whether Caesar was slain by Brutus, or whether Alfred was ever king in England, for there are no evidences one half so positive on those points as those which prove the Resurrection of the Savior! I know not that anybody died as a witness for Caesars death, but many shed their blood joyfully rather than deny that the Christ who was hanged upon the Cross actually rose again from the tomb! In that fact lies our hope of resurrection! A Mana real Man who died on a treehas risen from the dead! And we are one with that glorious Man who was also Godand because He lives, we shall also live! He is precious to us when we think of dying, and that should not be seldom. We shall soon come to it. Those who are strongest and most hale are nearing their last hour, and those who are sickly are nearer still, it may be. Oh, it is sweet to have Christ to live with, for then, let death come when it may, it will be a joyful thing for usand once reconciled to our Maker through His Son, what have we to fear?

III. Lastly, we are to think of HOW BELIEVERS SHOW THEIR APPRECIATION OF CHRIST.   
Some Christians seldom acknowledge that they are such. It is a beggarly business to love Christ in a corner and to be ashamed to acknowledge Him. He was never ashamed to confess Himself the sinners Friend, yet there are sinners who profess to be saved by Him who are ashamed to be known as His followers. Oh, says one, if I were to say that I am a follower of the Crucified and join His Church and people, I would expect to be laughed at. And are you afraid of a fools laughter? Was Christ ashamed to be laughed at for you? Oh, coward, to be ashamed to be ridiculed for Him! Oh, but my friends would make such a hubbub at home. And did not His friends, who should have helped Him, cast Him out and reject Him? Yet He bore it for your sake. O craven spirits who will not take sides with Jesus, take heed as to what will happen to you when He comes, for those who deny Him before men shall be themselves denied before God and the holy angels! This day the royal standard floats in the breezelet all who are on Christs side rally to it, for the hosts on the other side are many and bold. The foes of Jesus insult Him to His face. Some deny His Deity and others thrust a human priest into His place   
*You that are men now serve Him   
Against unnumbered foes!   
Your courage rises with danger   
And strength to strength oppose.*   
If He is precious to you, you will never blush to be called a fool for His sake!   
Those who really judge Jesus to be precious rejoice in possessing Him. I cannot understand those Christians who say, Christ is ours, and yet go fretting and worrying through life. Dear Brother, if Christ is yours, you have no cause for fretting. What, none? asks oneI am very poor. You are not poor! He who can call Christ his own cannot be poor! But I am comfortless. How can that be when the Lord Jesus has given you a Comforter? But I am bereaved. Truly so, but you have not lost your Lord! Come, dear Brother, if a man were to go through the streets of London with twenty thousand pounds in his pocket and when he reached the bank, found that a thief had stolen his cotton pocket handkerchief, I think the reflection that would rise in his mind would be, Thank God I have not lost my money. And the very loss of his handkerchief would only make him the more grateful that he had not lost his treasure. Look on all things you have here as nothing compared with Jesus, and say   
*How can I bereaved be   
Since I cannot part with Thee?*   
If you esteem Christ as you should, you will refuse to give Him up at any costand under any circumstances you will hold to what you believe. You will have to suffer loss, it may be, in social position or in business. Very well, do it gladly and only wish you could suffer more for His dear sake! One might almost envy the martyrs, that they could earn that ruby crown which is not now within our reach. Let us, at any rate, be willing to take such little rebukes and rebuffs as may be given us for Christs sake. If you love Jesus Christ, my Brothers and Sisters, you will be willing to make sacrifices for His cause. I wish this spirit were abroad throughout all the Church, that Christ was really so precious to saints that they consecrated themselves and their substance to Him. We need personal consecration! I have heard that word pronounced purse-and-all consecration, certainly a most excellent pronunciation! He who loves Jesus consecrates to Him all that he has and feels it a delight that he may lay anything at the feet of Him who laid down His life for us!   
Once more, he who really has this high estimate of Jesus will think much of Him. And as the thoughts are sure to run over at the mouth, he will talk much of Him. Do we talk so? If Jesus is precious to you, you will not be able to keep your good news to yourselfyou will be whispering it into your childs ear, you will be telling it to your husband, you will be earnestly imparting it to your friends! Without the charms of eloquence, you will be more than eloquentyour heart will speak and your eyes will flail as you talk of His sweet love! Every Christian here is either a missionary or an impostorremember that you are either trying to spread abroad the Kingdom of Christ, or else you do not love Him at all! It cannot be that there is a high appreciation of Jesus and a totally silent tongue about Him! Of course I do not mean by that, that those who use the pen for Christ are silentthey are not. And those who help others to use the tongue, or spread that which others have written, are doing their part well. But I mean thisthat man who says, I believe in Jesus, but does not think enough of Jesus to ever tell another about Him, by mouth, or pen, or tract is an impostor! You are either doing good, or you are not yourself good. If you know Christ, you are as one who has found honey and you will call others to taste it. You are like the lepers who found the food which the Syrians had cast awayand you will go into Samaria and tell the hungry crowd that you have found Jesusand are anxious that they should find Him too! Be wise in your generation and speak of Him in fitting ways and at fitting timesand so in every place proclaim the fact that Jesus is most precious to your soul!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **1 PETER 2.**

Verse 1. Therefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking. This is what we are to lay aside, to put away from us, to banish altogether. These are the old garments of the flesh which we are to give up to the moths that they may devour them and leave not a fragment of the old rags for us to wear. Laying aside all malice. Has anybody injured you? Are you angry with him because of what he has done to you? Freely forgive the injury and wholly forget it. And all guile. That is everything that is of the nature of craftiness and deception. Be honest, simple, straightforward, transparentthis is a trait of character which well becomes all Christians. And hypocrisies of all sorts. Let us not profess to be what we are not, nor pretend to know what we do not know, or talk of experiences which we have never felt. In fact, let us never be hypocrites in any respect whatever . The God of Truth loves His children to be the embodiments of truth. Hypocrisy He hates with a perfect hatred. And envies. We must lay them all asideall envies of men because they are richer, or more gifted, or more highly esteemed than we are. Let us not envy anybody, for envy eats a mans own heart out and slays him, as Eliphaz said to Job, Envy slays the silly one. And all evil speaking. We are not to be the repeaters of stories to the discredit of others, or to make up or to exaggerate any evil reports concerning anything in their lives. Let us have nothing to do with evil speaking of any kind. Lay all these rags aside. Is any one of them still clinging to you? Let it be laid aside this very hour!

2. As newborn babies, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby. The unadulterated milk of the Word is the best food for those who are, spiritually, newborn babies. Desire this unadulterated milk of the Word not out of an idle curiositybut that you may grow thereby, that you may grow wiser, holier, more earnest, more like your Saviorthat you may grow up into the likeness of Him whose you are, and whom you serve.

3. If you have so tasted that the Lord is gracious. [See Sermons #459, Volume  
8A SERMON FOR MEN OF TASTE and #2168, Volume 36THE TEST OF TASTERead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] If you have spiritually   
tasted this great Truth of God, you have the flavor of it upon your palate so that it makes you long for more of it.   
4. To whom coming. [See Sermon #1334, Volume 23COMINGALWAYS COMING Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] That is,

unto the Lord. And that name Peter evidently gives to Jesus Christ and, therefore, we worship Him and call Him, each one for himself or herself, even as Thomas did, My Lord and my God. To whom coming.

*5.* As unto a living stone, disallowed instead of men, but chosen of God, and precious. Chosen of God. The whole spiritual building is the result of the election, the choice of God. Jesus Christ, the great Foundation and the chief Cornerstone, is chosen of Godand all the living stones that are built upon Him are also chosen of God. The whole fabric is like the foundation upon which it is laidChosen of God, and precious precious to God and precious to us!

5. You also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual horse, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. We hear of certain persons being ordained first deacons and then priests, but all who are truly in Christwhether they are men, or women, or childrenare priests. We are a holy priesthood if we are in

Christ. [See Sermon #1376, Volume 23THE TRUE PRIESTHOOD, TEMPLE AND SACRIFICE Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] All the

sacrifices that can now be offered are spiritual sacrifices which are to be offered, not by a few special persons set apart for that work, but by the whole company of Gods chosen peopleand so they are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

6. Therefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious: and he that believes on Him shall not be   
confounded. [See Sermon #1429, Volume 24FAITHS SURE FOUNDATIONRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Those who believe on Him

are built upon Him. They rest upon Him, they are cemented to Him and, being living stones, they grow into Him and He grows into themthey participate in His life and so the living Temple becomes onethe chosen men and women who are the spiritual Temple in which God dwells upon earth. We need not wonder if, like the chief Cornerstone, we are disallowed of men, but we may rejoice that, like our Lord and Savior, we are chosen of God, and precious.

7. Unto you therefore who believe, He is precious. He is preciousness, He is an honor, He is everything that is glorious to you. You can never think highly enough of Him, or speak well enough concerning Him. All the world beside may disallow Him, but unto you He is precious!

7, 8. But unto those who are disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to those who stumble at the Word, being disobedient whereunto also they were appointed. The ungodly reject Him and regard Him as of no account, but God has made Him the head of the corner. And He has done more than that, He has made Him a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to them, even to those who stumble at the Word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. That is a terrible Truth upon which I am not going to speak just now, but I want you especially to note what an awful thing it is for men to stumble at the Wordto hang themselves upon Christs Cross to turn the heavenly medicine into poisonto make Christ, Himself, who is to others, the Savior of life unto life, to be to them, the Savior of death unto death. Being disobedient. The fault lies with themselves, they willfully disobey the command to believe on Christ. Whereunto also they were appointed. So the Divine Purpose is accomplished, although the guilt and punishment of their disobedience rest upon themselves alone.

9. But you are a chosen generation. There is the contrast between the disobedient and all true Believers. You have the chosen Savior to be the chief Cornerstone upon whom you who are living stones are to be built up into a spiritual house, which is to be the abiding place of the Most High God.

9. A royal priesthood. You are to be like Melchisedec, in whom the two offices of priest and king were combined in one person. More than that, you are to be like your Lord in respect to His royal priesthood. That He should have loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, seems to be an honor which is far too high for us. It appears to bring us almost too near our Lord, yet it is not so, for Peter wrote under Divine Inspiration, You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood.

9. An holy nation, a peculiar people, that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Gods Grace has been bestowed upon you in order that you may show forth His praises. Or, as the marginal reading puts it, His virtues. Note what the Lord has done for youHe has called you out of darkness into light, into His light, into His marvelous light. There are three thoughts there that are beautifully blended into one. What marvelous light that is into which God calls us! Try to measure it by the darkness in which you were! Try to measure it by the deeper darkness into which you were going! Try to measure it by the eternal darkness which would have fallen upon you if you had died in the dark. God has graciously brought you into His marvelous light! [See Sermon #2765, Volume 48

MARVELOUS LIGHTRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

10. Who in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. How the Apostle delights to set forth these contrasts between the past and the present of the Lords chosen people! By remembering what we were, we are made to appreciate and enjoy more what we now are. We may well praise Him who has worked this wondrous change in us. We were not His people, we were sinners of the Gentiles, not the chosen Hebrew race. In times past, we were not worthy to be called a people, but we are now the people of God. We had not obtained mercy, we had not even asked for itsome of us were so blinded by our self-righteousness that we did not know that we needed Gods mercy, or did not want it! But now we have obtained mercy.

11. Dearly Beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. Fleshly lusts always hurt the soul. They do serious injury to the body, for they are contrary to the laws of health. But the main point for you to consider is that they war against the soul. No men or women can ever commit an act of uncleanness of the body without grievously injuring the soul. It leaves a weakness, a defilement, a wound, a scar upon the soulso may God graciously keep us from it altogether!

12. Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that whereas they speak against you as evildoers. This they are sure to do and the more holy your life is, the more they will probably speak against you. Even if you could live like an angel, some would call you a devil! But you are not to be judged by mens judgment, thank God for that, and so live, that whereas they speak against you as evildoers.

12, 13. They may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinances of man for the Lords sake. We are to obey kings, and governors, and magistrates, even when they may not be all that we wish them to be Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lords sake.

13-15. Whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by Him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Ignorance, you see, is a noisy thing. An empty drum makes a loud noise when it is beaten. And empty men, like empty vessels, often make the most sound. How, then, are we to silence this noisy ignorance? By argument? No, for it is not amenable to argument. Ignorance is to be silenced by well doing. Holy living is the best reply to infidel talking!

16. As free. For there are no others under Heaven so free as Gods servants are! As free

16. And not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Not talking about liberty in order to stab at order. Not prating about liberty with the design of enriching yourself by robbing someone else. That is not Gods will, but using your liberty...as the servants of God should use it.   
17. Honor all men. Whoever they may be, be courteous, respectful, kind to all men because they are men. Whatever their circumstances, they are men. Therefore honor all men.

17-19. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endures grief, suffering wrongfully. Not always sticking up for his rights, as an ungodly man says, but feeling that the greatest right in the world is the right to do without your rights! To suffer wrongfully will often glorify God much better than to stand up for what you have a right to be or to have.

20. For what glory is it, if, when you are buffeted for your faults, you shall take it patiently? But if, when you do well, and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. It may be hard to bear, but in that very hardness lies much of the fragrance of it towards God. As spices must be bruised, so must you be pressed and crushed to bring out your sweetness. If you want to be where there is nothing to suffer and no wrong to be endured, you are in the wrong world for that as yet that will be in the world to come!

21. For even hereunto were you called. Called to do right and to suffer for it! Ah me, what a call is that!   
21-23. Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; and when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judges righteously: who in His own Self bore our sins [See Sermons #2790, Volume 48

OUR LORDS SUBSTITUTION, #2887, Volume 50A DIRE DISEASE STRANGELY CURED and #1143, Volume 19DEATH FOR SIN AND DEATH TO SINRead/download the entire sermons, free of

charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes you were healed. For you were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #931 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THREE PRECIOUS THINGS   
NO. 931

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, MAY 8, 1870, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

He is precious.   
1 Peter 2:7.   
Precious promises.   
2 Peter 1:4.   
Precious faith.   
2 Peter 1:1.

THESE three precious things, when put together, present to us a treasure of priceless things, altogether without parallel. When Moses was about to die he pronounced a blessing upon all the tribes, but the benediction which he allotted to the tribe of Joseph was remarkable for containing in it an extraordinary collection of precious things.

In the thirteenth verse of the thirty-third chapter of Deuteronomy, we read, And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of Heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that couches beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth and fullness thereof, and for the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush.

That blessing, large as it is, would, were it not for its last term, fall far short of the three texts which we are about to consider. The blessings here called by Moses precious, were, after all, but temporal mercies. The dews exhaleeven the deep that lies under will one day be dried up. The precious fruits brought forth by the sun will wither. The precious fruit ripened by the moon will rot. There are no chief metals in the ancient mountains, whether they are silver or gold, that are eternal, or that can make a spiritual being rich. There are no precious things of the lasting hills, though they are copper and iron.

And these things are precious in the arts and sciences and employments of men, but will perish in the using. As for the precious things of the earth, are they not earthy? And the fullness thereof, is it not vanity? Were it not that the blessing of the great Lawgiver closed with the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush, it would not have contained a word large enough to satisfy an immortal spirit, or give bliss to the heart of man.

Before you, however, my Brethren, I spread a far choicer store of precious things than Moses strung together in the golden chain of his benediction. We have here three precious things which will outlast sun and moon. Precious things which are all heavenly, spiritual, soul-filling, and satisfactory. Precious things which, if a man has them, they shall make

him rich and bring him no sorrow. Precious things that shall adorn and enrich their owners when all the peculiar treasure of kings shall be dissolved by the last fire.

The three precious things of my text bear a certain relation to one another, which will aid your memories. He is precious, that is, Jesus Christ is precioushere is the priceless gem. Exceeding great and precious promiseshere is the worthy case which holds the gem. Like precious faith, as Paul calls it, like precious faith with the Apostleshere is the blessed hand by which we grasp the case and the gem, too. Mark well, I pray you, the precious pearl, the precious case to hold it, and the precious title-deed that secures it to us, or as I said before, the precious hand which enables us to grasp the unrivalled jewel, and to call it all our own.

I. To begin then with THE PRICELESS GEM, the first, the highest of all precious things. Jesus Christ our Lord is in Himself to Believers most precious. O that I had power to speak of His preciousness as it ought to be spoken of! He is worthy of an angelic speaker to tell out all His worth. He is, first of all, essentially precious. He possesses an intrinsic worth. We worship Him as God. We believe Him to be very God of very God, and though most assuredly Man, and in this respect, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, He is our Brother born for adversities, yet is He co-equal and co-eternal with the Father.

And therefore we can never too reverentially speak of Him, nor set too high a value upon Him. He must be precious who is infinite God. Being, however, God and Man, He becomes remarkably precious to us in His complex Nature. His Manhood was without taint of sin. He came into this world with no corruption. He lived in this world with no transgression. His was immaculate Manhood. What a wonder that God should be willing to veil Himself in human flesh!

What a miracle of miracles that the Infinite should deign to take upon Himself the form of a servant, and be found in fashion as a Man! Viewing our Lord Jesus as God, we should have adored Him at a distanceas perfect Man we should have reverenced His Characterbut when we see Him as God and Man together, we mark that He is the connecting link between our groveling condition and the loftiness of the Most High. And we prize beyond measure the Incarnate God. When we see how by Gods coming down to man, man goes up to God, Immanuel, God with us becomes our peace, and brings us near to God, though before we were afar off.

Brethren, if we consider our Lord in the Character which is peculiar to Himself, and which He prizes most, and to which, indeed, He owes the name Jesus Christ, we shall see Him as the anointed Savior. To every sinner who feels his sin, Christ is precious. To every child of God who is saved, the Savior must forever be fairest among the fair. To every heir of Heaven who has experienced the sweetness of His saving Grace, Christ must appear to be the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely. A world destroyed I see if it had not been for a Savior born. A world forever cast into Hell I see if it had not been for a Savior dying on the Cross. As a Savior, O earth, you as yet know not His preciousness. As a Savior, O Heaven, you cannot reach the full merit of His praise. He is precious, then, if you think of Him as He is, as God and Man, and as a Savior, in which office the two Natures are combined in one.

Brethren, Christ is so precious that He cannot be bought. If a man should give all the substance of his house to purchase an interest in Christ, it would be utterly condemned. Rich men might gather together all their goodly things, yes, India might be exhausted of its wealth, Peru drained of its silver, and California of its goldbut no part nor lot in Christ could be boughteven with sapphires and diamonds. He gives Himself away right freely, according to the riches of His Grace! But He cannot be purchased, for He is so precious that He cannot even be priced.

A whole world can never weigh against Him any more than a single grain of dust would weigh against the universe. There is no measuring line with which to form a unit for calculation, with which to measure Him. He is infinite, and finite judgments will never be able to comprehend His unutterable value. He is Gods unspeakable gift. Heaven itself is nothing as compared with Him, and if a man had to wade breast-deep through a thousand Hells to come to Christ, it were well worth the venture, if at the last he might but say, My Beloved is mine, and I am His.

Jesus is so precious that He cannot be matched. There is none like He is. The fairest of the fair are uncomely and deformed when compared with Him. As Rutherford would say, Black sun, black moon, black stars, but, O bright, infinitely bright Lord Jesus. He is the express image of His Fathers Person, and the brightness of His Fathers Glory. You shall find none that can be likened unto Him if you ransack time and space. Miss Him as your Savior, and you have lost the only salvation possible. Gain Him, and you will want no other, for He is made of God unto you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, and all your souls can want.

Yes, He Himself is all. If Heaven and earth were sold, you could not match Christ in any market if you gave the price of Heaven and earth for His like. If you search eternity, and ransack immensity, there shall never be found one fit to be second to Him, He is so precious. Precious, Brethren, He is to us, because He cannot be lost. All the precious things in this world can be lost. Our jewels may be stolen, our house may be broken into by a thief, and the safe may be taken away. But Christ is such a jewel that even Satan himself can never rob the soul of him when once it has Him.

My heart evermore rejoices in that precious Truth of God. Let Jesus Christ be once mine as the gift of GodI am safe, forthe gifts and calling of God are without repentance. The Lord never repents of what He has done. He never plays fast and loose, or takes back a benefit which He has once bestowed. Is not Jesus a priceless, precious jewel, since He cannot be lost?!

And what is equally as delightful to remember, He cannot be destroyed. Even the diamond can be dissolved, bring but sufficient heat to bear upon it. Focus upon it the full rays of the sun, and the sparkling crystal dissolves into a little gas. But though men have tried to focus all the heat of persecution upon the Christian, they have never been able to separate

him from the love of Christ. And though earth and Hell have stirred up their malice, and the furnace has been heated seven times hotter. Though the child of God has been tossed into it, and apparently deserted to the fury of his enemiesyet never in a single case has the precious gem of Christ Jesus in the heart been destroyednor the Believers interest in it.

Jesus and His servants have lived together, according to the glorious promise, Because I live, you shall live also. See the preciousness, then, of Christ, the intrinsic preciousness, the essential preciousness of Christ, because He cannot be bought, He cannot be priced, He cannot be matched, He cannot be lost, He cannot be destroyed. Happy and rich beyond expression are they who can truly say, Unto us Christ is precious.

This, however, does but touch a very small corner of the field, for our Lord is precious from the service which He renders to us. Who shall tell all the benefit which Jesus confers on a Believer? As we cannot comprehend so wide a subject in a single discourse, I will give you but a bare outline. There are four precious things which Jesus is to a Believerlife, light, love, liberty. I will defy all mankind to find four more precious things than thesebut they are all in Christ.

First, life. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. As the Father raises up the dead, and quickens them, even so the Son quickens whom He will. What a precious thing is life! The poor mariners wife rushes down to the beach in the storm, and see, the waves at last have washed up her lost beloved, the father of the babe which is hanging at her breast. He is dead. The ungenerous sea has made a wife a widow. Oh, what would she not give, if she had it, to restore life once more to that well-beloved form!

But life is a benefit her prayers and tears cannot obtain. Herein is Jesus glorified, for He gives life to those who are spiritually dead, and if any of you are weeping today over an unconverted husband, a child who is dead in trespasses and sins, a sister or a brother unsaved, Jesus can come to you and give life to your dear ones in answer to your prayers. He is Himself the Resurrection and the Life. Moreover, He is the sole nutriment of all spiritual life.

Yonder shipwrecked man has constructed a raft, and far out on the wild expanse of pitiless waters he has floated wearily day after day sighing for a friendly sail or for sight of land. What would he not give for a little water, for water has become the essential of his life. His tongue is like a firebrand, and his mouth is as an oven. He himself all dried and parched, sighs and cries to Heaven, hoping that perhaps a merciful shower may drop refreshment upon him.

Now, Jesus Christ is the Water of Life and the Bread of Life to such as live unto God. It is absolutely necessary for the continuance of their spiritual life that they should live upon Him. And as they do live upon Him, their thirst is quenched, their hunger is removed, and their spirit rejoices with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. Life and the food that sustains life are among the most precious things man can possess, and these are for your souls stored up in Jesus, For the bread of God is He which comes down from Heaven, and gives life unto the world.

Next to life in preciousness is light. What would not they have given in Egypt during those three days when the thick darkness was over all the land, even darkness that might be felt, if they could but have had light back again? It must have been a sad plight for Paul, and for his fellows at sea, when, for three days and nights neither sun, nor moon, nor stars appeared. They could not tell whether there might not be a rock ahead, or a quicksand upon which the vessel would be broken. Oh, for light! How glad they must have been, at last when the black tempest passed away, and once again they could look round on the horizon and know their whereabouts.

Light! Oh, how precious would it be to you, if you were confined in one of those prisons which we have seen at Venice below the waters level deep down, with winding passages, where even a refracted ray of light could never reach the prisonerwhere he sat alone and felt for the wall, but could see nothing. Truly as Solomon says, the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun. Now, the soul has no light, no true light, no heavenly light but what Jesus brings. When a spirit is once made to feel its guilt, it is shut up in prison until Christ brings it light in the darkness of its dismay.

There is no hope to a convicted spirit till Jesus shows His atoning blood. There is no clear knowledge of the way of salvation till Christ brings the Light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in His own face. You who love Him know what brightness He has given to youwhat light has irradiated your once dark spirit since you have known Him, and how your heart has laughed for very joy because He has turned again your captivity, and given you to rejoice in the light of His countenance. Yes, He is precious because He raises us from the dead and gives us light.

I said that another precious thing which Jesus brings is love. There are hard hearts that think nothing of lovebut methinks those who are as they should be, count love to be the dearest of treasures. I had infinitely rather be beloved of my fellow men than own a pyramid of treasure! He is a rich man who has a tender wife and dear affectionate childrenand is surrounded by a select circle of true and faithful friends. Men die full often for want of love. It is wretched work to isolate ourselves and float like icebergs all alone, melting amid a desolate sea. A man will love a dog, or a bird sooner than be loveless. Captives have been known to fall in love with rats, and even spiders on the wall have been the objects of their affectiona little flower that could not speak, has been the prisoners wellbeloved friend.

We must have something to love. Oh, and what wealth of love Jesus brings into the heart when He enters it! You feel, then, that you have One to love whom you can love as much as ever you will, and yet it will not be idolatry. You have One to love who never can betray you, One whom you may trust, and yet never be unwise for having told to Him the secrets of your soul. You have in Jesus Christ One whom you may admire as you love, who will still be above you though you seek to rise to Him, and yet not proudly above you, for He will stoop down to all your lowliness and be

as your own brother and your own friend. Oh, the joy of having Christ to go to!

All other friends will sometimes be unfriendly, and the best of them must part with you at your decease, or you with them when they depart out of this world unto the Father. But your Lord will never, never leave you. He will abide with you, and death shall only draw Him nearerfor then you shall see His face, and His name shall be in your forehead. And you shall be with Him where He is, to behold His Glory forever and ever. If you want love, you large-hearted ones, Christ is just the gem for such a case as your heart is! If you want a channel adown which the mighty streams of your pent-up affections may safely rush with vehemence in impetuous torrents, Christ shall be the fittest riverbed for your soul, and you shall find it joy and blessedness to love Him with all your might!

But I added that there was a fourth preciousness in Christgiving life, light, loveHe gave also liberty. Oh, that magic word liberty! It makes men start to their feet. It is the word that made William Tell a hero, and the Bruce of Bannockburn more than a king. The thought of liberty makes men count jeopardy of life a small hazard if their country may be rid of a tyrant. May God be praised that great strides have been made and grand advances within these last few years, until even once priest-burdened Spain bears across her Sierras the trumpet notes of liberty, and her sons are free!

The highest liberty is that which emancipates the soul from sin. The grandest liberty is that which sets free the heart from fear, which leaves the soul without a dread, and enables the spirit to walk even in Gods Presence without alarmthe liberty which delivers us from the felons dread, and bids us demand who shall lay anything to the charge of Gods elect. It is God that justifies, who is he that condemns, since Christ has died and risen again? What room is there for fear for the man who has been set free by the precious blood of Jesus? The liberty of the children of Godthe liberty to pray, the liberty to talk with God as a man talks with his friend, the liberty to grasp the promisesthe liberty to lay hold of God Himself, and say that the Divine attributes are all our own. This is what Christ has given us, and is He not therefore precious, most precious?

One word more before we leave our meditation on the precious gem. We have said that Christ is precious for His intrinsic work, precious for the service He renders. And we must now add, He is assuredly precious, actually so, from the place which He holds and ever must hold in Believers hearts. Go and stand at St. Bartholomews Hospital at Smithfield and you will see in the wall the tablet which is erected to the memory of heroic men whose ashes there testified years ago that they loved Christ better than property, better than children, better than life itself, and accounted it their joy to die that they might hold unsullied their testimony to the Divinity, to the Sovereignty, to the Truthfulness, to the Salvation of Jesus Christ!

Ah, there were brave days in those black periods! Brave days when great hearts proclaimed by dying how dear Christ was to them. When a certain martyr was led out to die, they made his wife kneel down by the way. With a long line of his own dear children, eleven of them, like a descending set of steps, they were compelled, by his enemies, to pray their father and husband, by the love he bare to them not to die. He looked on them with tears, and said, I love you as a man, and God knows I would do anything to live, and succor you, and enjoy your sweet society, my Dear Ones. But I cannot give up Christ, and he turned away to die.

It is so still, my Brethren, for if we are not called to die for Christ, yet I hope we could if we were called to do so. For at this moment nothing thrills us like Christs name, nothing makes us so happy as to see His cause prosper. I have often asked, when I have looked upon you before me by the thousands year after year, and know that my speech has nothing in it remarkable, why it is that you gather so continually? Many others have asked the secret why this house is always thronged. The true answer is that I preach Jesus Christ to you, and it is written, I, if I am lifted up, will draw all men unto Me.

I have no other theme, and I thank God I want no other. It is not worn out, and never will be. Though I should stand here by the space of the next six thousand years, I believe the house would still be filled if the testimony were the same. Despite Londons sin, nothing strikes Londons heart like the name of Jesus Christ. You may preach what you will of your learning and your philosophy. And you may talk pretty things concerning God out of Christ, but you will never stir the souls of men as the preaching of the Son of God has done and will do. In the Cross of Christ I glory, towering over the wrecks of time, and as long as we can make it still prominent in our ministry, we are sure that an enthusiastic response will be given in regenerate hearts, for unto those who believe He is precious still. So I must leave that point. There is the gemhappy are they that see it, happier they that have it.

II. The second head is PRECIOUS PROMISES, or, THE CASE IN WHICH THE JEWEL IS CONTAINED. Exceeding great and precious promises. All that the early saints had before Christs coming was the promise of His appearing, and the mere promise of His coming was very precious to them. We are favored both with Christ and the promises, which are yes and amen in Him. They had the case, but it was locked up and they could not plainly perceive the jewelwe have the opened case and the jewel in all its glory.

The utmost wealth of Heaven now lies at our feet. The fullness of the Lord is ours. Why are the promises precious? For the same three reasons that Christ was precious. Precious for their intrinsic worth, for they are Divine, the sacred utterances of God Himself. These are not the Words of man, but of God. I would burn my Bible tomorrow if I thought so meanly of it as some do. For they doubt its Inspiration, or fritter down its Inspiration till it means little or nothing. To me every Word here written is the Infallible deliverance of the Most High God, not to be questioned but believed.

Not because of its reasonableness, but because it has the stamp of Divine authority. Every promise of this Sacred Book is Gods own promise spoken through His Prophets and Apostles, but yet spoken by Himself.

The signet of Heaven seals every promise. You will never know the sweetness of a promise till it is Gods promise to you. They are precious promises because they are Divine. If they were the poetic effusions of elevated genius, where great men of old spoke but their own minds in happy hopefulness, they would be to us but as brass and iron.

But inasmuch as these reveal to us the mind of God, they are more precious than all the treasures of the mine. No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls, for their price is above rubies. The least promise of God is too rich to be valued with the gold of Ophir, the precious onyx or the sapphire. Being Divine, the promises are innumerable. No promise of God ever changes. Forever, O Lord, Your Word is settled in Heaven, His Truth endures to all generations. Has He said, and shall He not do it? Has He commanded, and shall it not stand fast?

The Lord has not spoken in secret in the dark places of the earth, He has not said to the seed of Jacob, Seek you My face in vain. The Lord has never called back a promise yet, but He has said, Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Word shall never pass away. His promises are precious because they tell of exceeding great and precious things. We have promises in the Bible which time would fail us to repeat, which for breadth and length are immeasurable. They deal with every great thing which the soul can wantpromises of pardoned sin, promises of sanctification, of teaching, of guidance, of upholding, of ennobling, of progress, of consolation, of perfection.

In this blessed Book you have promises of the daily bread of earth, and of the Bread of Life from Heaven. Promises for time, promises for eternitypromises for yourselves, and promises for your children. All these are like the leaves of the tree, and Jesus is the goodly cluster. Or, if you will, the apple of gold hidden among the foliage of promise. You have so many promises that all the conditions and positions of the Believer are met. I sometimes liken the promises to the smiths great bunch of keys which he brings when you have lost the key of your chest, and cannot unlock it. He feels pretty sure that out of all the keys upon the ring someone or other will fit, and he tries them with patient industry.

At lastyesthat is it, he has loosed the bolt, and you can get at your treasures. There is always a promise in the volume of Inspiration suitable to your present case. Make the Lords Testimonies your delight and your counselors, and they will befriend you at every turn. Search the Scriptures and you shall meet with a passage which will be so applicable to you as to appear even to have been written after your trouble had occurred! So exactly will it apply that you will be compelled to marvel at the wonderful tenderness and suitableness of it. As if the armor maker had measured you from head to foot, so exactly shall the armor of the promise befit you!

The promises are precious in themselves, from their suitability to us, from their coming from God, from their being Immutable, from their being sure of performance, and from their containing wrapped up within themselves all that the children of God can ever need. The promises are precious, in the second place, because of their service to us. What will not the promises do for us? They will comfort us in distress. Give a child of God a Divine promise, let him be able to appropriate it to himself, and you cannot make his house dark, or his heart dark!

A promise believed in is a sun in the soul, and a song in the heart, marrow to the bones, and rejoicing to the spirit. He that has the promises, has Heaven and earth as his heritage. He shall ride on the high places of the earth. He shall suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock. The eternal God is his refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. He shall dwell in safety alone, his fountain shall be upon a land of corn and winealso his heavens shall drop down dew.

The promises of God not only comfort the Believer in adversity, but they strengthen him in service. Let the worker who is serving God, but desponds under a sense of personal weakness, receive such a cheering word as this, Certainly I will be with youwhy, he flees from no labor, the promise makes him daring. Fear you not, for I am with you; be not dismayed; for I am your God: I will strengthen you; yes, I will help you; yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of My righteousness. Who will be afraid after that? Difficulties vanish, impossibilities do not exist when the Lord is enlisted on our side.

The promises serve us in another admirable respect, for they elevate the soul. The man who has none of Gods promises to enrich him may accumulate gold and silver, but he is earth-bound with his possessions. His soul tries to content herself with corn, and wine, and oil. But these things are only satisfying to our animal nature. Too often men grovel and hoard all the more as they increase in wealth. But he who grasps a promise is upliftedhis mind rises to the Hand from which every good and perfect gift is pouredand walking by faith in the promise of an unseen God, he is elevated in judgment and in taste, and becomes a better and a nobler man.

The promises, let me say, while they elevate the life, greatly cheer and gild with glory the deathbed. Ah, how delightful it is to die with a promise on the lips, feeling it in the heart! It may be in a very lonely cottage, and the stars may come and look through the tiles. And the hangings of the bed may be very ragged. And all the surroundings may be poverty strickenbut he who can lie there and say, I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God he that can rejoice in the promise of the Resurrection, and of the life to come, dies grandly!

His bed is changed into a throne! His little room, despite its poverty, becomes a palace chamber, and the child of God, who seemed so poor before, is perceived to be a peer of Heavens own blood royal, who is soon about to take possession of his heritage, appointed from before the foundation of the world. Yes, the promises have been very precious to us in their influence upon our minds. And I am sure I can say they are precious because of their dearness to our souls at this very day. There are passages of Scripture which are carved on our hearts. You all possess some little secret treasures of some kind or other at home, treasures which bring

before your minds heart-moving memories.

I have seen a mother go to the secret drawer to look at a certain little pair of wool shoeswith these in her hands, she would sit down and weep for the hours together. Ah, there were little feet that wore those shoes once, and they are laid all stiff and motionless in the lap of earth. I have seen a certain friend look at a ringa little plain gold ring which he wears on his fingerand as he looked at it he has wept. There was a dear hand once upon which that ring was fondly placed in happier days.

Yes, and just in that way some of the promises of God have been so rich to us, and so connected with family memories and with personal trials and personal mercies, that they are unutterably precious. A poor old Christian woman was accustomed to make marginal notes in her Bible, and she placed against one text a T and a P. The minister asked her what that meant, and she said, It meant Tried and Proved, for I tried that promise on such-and-such an occasion, and found it true. But, my dear Sister, said he, I see up and down these pages, whenever there is a choice verse a great P put against it. What does it mean? That means

precious, Sir, for I have found it precious, and have therefore set my seal to it.

We, too, have our Bible spiritually, if not literally marked after the same fashion, and often does the letter P appear against exceeding great and precious promises of God which have been sweet in our experience. We hope to die with a promise on our lips, and enter into Heaven to enjoy their full fruition.

I have now shown you that the jewel is of the first water, without a flaw, with none to match it, and that the case is of superior workmanship, worthy of the gem it holds. We must now turn to the third thing.

III. Faith IS THE PRECIOUS HAND which grasps the case and holds the gem. As time has gone, I shall not enlarge upon this third head, but shall briefly observe that faith is a most precious Grace because it opens and reveals the treasure hid in the promises. Until a man has faith he does not see the value of the promises. Tush, says he, the Bible is a dry book. Till a man has the faith of Gods elect, he thinks very little of Christ. He may confess that he is a good example and a wise teacher, but, he does not say with Thomas, My Lord and my God.

Faith is to our souls what our eyes are to our bodies. Without eyes light would not be valuedwithout faith Christ is not dear. Without a mouth food would not nourishfaith is our mouth, and without faith Christ does not nourish us. A man might have a plank close to him when sinking but it would be of no service to him until he could lay hold of itfaith is the hand that lays hold, and thus it becomes precious. Faith first reveals to us what there is in Christ and in the Word, and then it appropriates the whole. A soldier might be in the midst of a city where there was much spoil, but if his hands were cut off, how could he take to himself the booty?

Faith puts out its hands, and says, This is mine, and that is mine. And what is more, faith carries right with it as well as might. Faith not only says, I will take it, but faith says, I have a right to take it, for God has made over to faith by a covenant deed, Christ and all the Inspired promises, too. If you have faith, your faith is the guarantee that the gem and the case are both rightfully yours. A mere piece of parchment, whatever is written on it, cannot be of any very great value in itself. And yet there are persons who would give large sums of money to recover lost documents, because upon the possession of those documents rests their claim to great estates.

Now, faith in itself is like a title-deed, signed, and sealed, and ratified, and on the possession of faith hangs your evidence of right to Christ and to the Covenant of Grace. Therefore faith becomes a very precious Grace. It sees Christ. It grasps Christ. It claims Christ by right, and by faith it holds to what it claims. Faith says of the Well-Beloved, I hold Him, and I will not let Him go. It gets such a grip of Christ, that neither life nor death can unhand it.

Faith is precious, let me say, because it is rare. Notional faith is common, but the faith of Gods elect is the work of the Holy Spirit, and is not vouchsafed to all. They are favored men, indeed, who exercise real faith. But, alas, Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, and few there are that find it. Wherever it is possessed, it is most enriching. True faith is like Midas, of whom it was fabled that his touch turned everything to gold. But faith has a safer joy than he, for his privilege became a punishment for when he touched his meat it turned to gold, and he could not eat. And when he put the cup to his lips, the fable says the wine itself turned into gold, and so he must needs die.

But faith has the power to enrich us, and add no sorrow. Faith touches trials and they become mercies. Faith touches affliction and she glories in them. Faith touches losses and they turn to gains. There is nothing that faith deals with but what is transmuted into good. Who would not wish to have this precious faith? Best of all, wherever faith is, it saves the soul. There never was a soul that believed in Christ Jesusthat rested on the merit of His precious bloodthat was, or could be, cast into Hell. Sooner might the eternal pillars of Divine Truth begin to quiver, and the Throne of the Infinite Sovereignty be shaken from its place, than that Believers in Jesus be cast away. Has he not said itI give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand? Do you believe in Christ? Then you are saved.

I have spoken so far of these three precious things. Just these few words by way of closing. Precious as these things are, they are yours, Christian. You have the precious faith. Then the precious promises are all yours, and our precious Christ is yours. How do you mean to live? With these precious things about you, do you intend to live like a beggar? I mean will you be sinful, low, groveling, worldly? Oh, rise to your rank, and as you are so ennobled, walk as becomes saints! Is Jesus Christ precious to you? Then serve Him with your best, give Him your precious things, give Him your lives, give Him your substance, give Him all that you have do not give the Redeemer your odds and ends, such as you can afford to give without knowing it. Say, He died to give me Himself. I will give Him

myself in return   
*And if I might make some reserve,   
And duty did not call,   
I love my God with zeal so great,   
That I must give Him all.*

Go and live like those who are rich to all the intents of bliss, and let your cheerful, your godly, your self-denying example be a protest to the unbelieving sons of men that you know the preciousness of Christ. Alas, for you who are unconverted. What shall I say to you? I am afraid I may preach up Christ a long time before you will believe me. It needs that the arm of God be revealed, before you will see these mysteries. The most of men remind us of the old story in Strabo, of the musician who thought himself very wonderfully gifted with power to create melody.

Before his audience he was pouring forth his notes, and as he thoughtholding them all spell bound. But just then the market bell, with its vile tinkle was heard, and all his admirers except one person left himfor they could not afford to lose the chance of the market. The musician turned to his solitary listener, and complimented him upon having a soul above mere merchandise, and an ear which could appreciate music, so that he was not drawn away by the tinkling of a market bell. Master, said the man, I am hard of hearing, did you say the market bell had rung? Yes. Then I must be off, or I shall be too late. And away went the last man, unrestrained by the bonds of harmony.

So when we preach up Jesus Christ, there will be some who will listen to us, and we perhaps think, Now we shall surely win them, but ah, tomorrows market bellI will not say market belltomorrows bell of sin, and bell of iniquity! The bell that rings to frivolities, and rings to transgressionsthey will go after that. Anything that pleases the flesh will secure them. It may be there is one who has heard with unusual attention, and we begin to say, This man has a nobler spirit. But then, perhaps, he has not yet felt the force of temptation, and when he feels it he will go, too.

What urgent need there is for the Spirit of God to illuminate the dark judgments of the sons of men. May He do so. May He begin with you, dear Hearer, if up to now you have been blind. May He give you faith, and the promises, and Christ Jesus. It is my hearts deepest wish. The Lord grant it to you all, for Jesus sake. Amen.

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1224 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

JESUS, THE STUMBLING STONE OF UNBELIEVERS   
NO. 1224

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which are disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,   
and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient.   
1 Peter 2:7, 8.

So it always is where Jesus comesHe divides the company into Believers and unbelieversthe obedient and the disobedient. But why are unbelievers, here, called disobedient? Is faith a matter of law and because a man does not believe, does he therefore disobey? How can it be otherwise? Is it not a natural duty for every man to believe that which is true? Let the very least among us judge in so simple a matter! It so happens that in the very form and sound of the words in the original tongue, to believe and to obey are much the same and, certainly, to disbelieve and to disobey are things of very near relationship. To disbelieve is in its very essence disobeying, for he who disbelieves the Word of the King is disloyal at heart.

If I doubt the veracity of God I have assailed His authority and if, when He sets forth His Son to be a Propitiation for sin, I refuse to accept Him, disobedience is included in that rejection. As it were difficult to tell by which form of sin our father, Adam, fell, for all sins were wrapped up in the taking of the forbidden fruit, so unbelief contains within itself the eggs of all sins possible to men. Moreover, unbelief of Gods Word is the root of all other sin. A man who does not believe his God is a man who casts off the Law of God. He has already rejected Gods Gospelwhy should he respect the Law?

If the silken cords of love are broken asunder, how much less is the man likely to bear the bonds of law? Now, inasmuch as it is painfully certain that a very large proportion of these who hear the Gospel are unbelieving and disobedient, it becomes important to consider, What is the result of this disobedience? This disobedience leads them into violent opposition. What effect does their opposition produce? The text tells us the result of human opposition upon Christ Himself, and, secondly upon the persons who offer it.

I. Let us consider, in the first place, then, THE RESULT OF THE UNBELIEF AND THE OPPOSITION OF MEN AGAINST THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. We are told that, as far as He is concerned, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the cornerin one word, it has not affected Him at all! The opposition of mankind has, by no means, and in no degree, lessened the Glory which God has put upon His dear Son. The builders rejected the stone with disdainIt shall not be

built, they said, in the temple of our hope.

But, God has said, It shall be the top stone, and the top stone it is, and shall be, despite all the opposition of earth or Hell. The rage of puny man shall no more defeat the Lord than the anger of a gnat can affect the sun! Human opposition shall no more thwart the Divine will than a sere leaf cast into Niagara can block the water flow. He that stumbles upon this stone shall be broken, but the stone itself will not be injured. Observe how the Lord Jesus has been rejected of man and yet His cause has stood against all opposition.

First came the Jew. He had the pride of race to maintain. Were not the Jews the chosen people of God? Was not Israel set apart by the Most High? Jesus comes preaching the Gospel to every creature. He sends His disciples even to the Gentiles and, therefore, the Jews will not have Him. They have been looking for a temporal prince. Jesus does not come with the magnificence they expectedHe is a root out of a dry ground, without form or comelinessthey see nothing of Solomons splendor in the poor scion of the dried-up stock of David. Therefore, Away with Him! Let Him be crucified!

But the opposition of His countrymen did not defeat the cause of Christ. If rejected in Palestine, His Word was received in Greece. It triumphed in Rome, it passed onward to Spain, it found a dwelling place in Britain and at this day it lights up the face of the earth! The persecution of the Apostles at Jerusalem hastened the spread of the Gospel, for they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word, so that Jewish enmity was overruled for good and the foolish builders were made subservient to the uplifting of the rejected headstone!

Next arose the philosopher to be the Gospels foe. Different schools of thought held sway over the more cultivated minds of the period and no sooner did Paul begin to preach where these philosophies were known than they called him a babbler. They heard what he had to say and condemned him as a fool. This resurrection from the dead, this doctrine of an Incarnate God who suffered for human sinit was too simple for them, too plain to fit in with their subtle philosophies. But though philosophy made terrible inroads, for a while, on the Church of God in the form of the Gnostic heresy, did it really impede the chariot wheels of Christ? Did it conquer the faith?

Oh no, my Brethren, for at this day where are these philosophies? Who now believes in the Stoics? Who would care to be called an Epicurean? These philosophies have passed awaythe stone cut out of the mountain without hands has broken them in pieces! The stone from the sling of Christ has struck the heathen philosophy in the forehead. We see its corpse lying headless in many an ancient book, while the Son of David goes forth conquering and to conquer. After those days there came against the Church of God the determined opposition of the secular power. The imperial authorities saw danger in Christianity. These peasants and boors and mechanics set up a new religion, a religion which spoke of another king, one Jesus.

They met together on the first day of the week and sang hymns in His honor as to God. Moreover, they refused to keep the holy days of the gods, nor would they worship the images of the emperors, either departed or living. Everybody else paid homage to these imperial demons except these Christian people, so the secular power said, We will put them down. Let them be dragged before the judgement seat. Let them be imprisoned, let them be stripped of their goods and if that does not drive them out of this new doctrine, let us try the rack and such like torturesand if that does not end them let them die! Why cannot men worship the gods of their fathers?

Thus they tried to stamp out the faith of Jesus, crowding their prisons, flooding their theatres with blood and wearying the executioners. All that cruelty could do was done! But, my Brothers and Sisters, what was the result? The more the Christians were oppressed, the more they multiplied! The scattering of the coals increased the conflagration. The tribunals of judgement became pulpits from which Christianity was preached and men who stood burning at the stake commanded mighty audiences, among which they proclaimed Jesus Christ as king! The martyrs courage made men enquire, Is there not something here, the like of which we have never seen before? And it was not long before imperial legions bowed before the Cross of Christ and the Galilean had won the day.

Since that period the Church has been attacked in various modes. The Arian heresy assaulted the Deity of Christ, but the Church of God delivered herself from the accursed thing, as Paul shook the viper into the fire. Then came popery, the antichrist, and counterfeit of His Sacrifice. Now they set up the cross of ivory, hung round with gems, to mimic the King of kings on His Cross of shame. They thrust before us the crucifix of mans making instead of Jesus, Himself, upon the tree. Now we are asked to worship saints and relics and images, and I know not what else, and a man is lifted into the throne of the Infallible God!

Some timid minds fear that Jesus Christ, as a stone rejected, will be cast out of sight, while high over all, the Vicar of Christ at Rome shall be made the head of the corner, but the Lord will not allow it. Brethren, have faith in God and think not so! The differing modes of Popery, Roman and Anglican, shall pass away as all things else have done that withstood the Cross and cause of Jesus Christ! Even as a moments foam dissolves into the wave that bears it and is gone forever, so shall all these disappear! Jesus Christs holy Gospel and Himself, the Savior, shall yet be set on high as a rock defying the billows!

What a day that was when Luthers rough protest broke the silence of the dark ages! When the clear teaching of Calvin followed and the bold notes of Zwingle were heard and a thousand voices shouted in chorus! What a day was that when the nations awoke from their long sleep to lie no longer under priestly domination, resolute to be free! Cannot God, who sent one Reformation, send another? Be of good courage, for brighter days are on the way! There shall come yet greater awakenings! The Lord, the avenger of His Church, shall yet arise and the stone which the builders disallowed, the same shall be the head stone of the corner!

By prophetic vision I see gathering another opposition which will be as difficult to cope with as any that has gone before. I see mustering within the ranks of the Church of God men who say they hate all creeds, meaning that they despise all Truth. They are they who would gladly be ministers among us and yet tread under foot all that we hold sacred, not teaching, at first, the fullness of their infidelity, but little by little gathering courage to vent their unbelief and heresies! Credophobia is maddening many! They appear to fear lest they should believe anything and to hope that there is something good to be found in atheism, or devil worship indeed, in all religions except the only true one.

We lift our earnest protest, but if it should be lost amidst the general popular clamor, and if the nations should be drunk, again, with the wine of this fornication and turn aside to error, what matters it to the ultimate success of the eternal cause? Yet has Jehovah set His king upon His holy hill of Zion and yet shall the ancient decree be fulfilled! The Throne of Christ shall stand and the Covenant sealed with blood shall be sure to all the chosen seed! Let us have comfort, for despite all that can be done by men or devils, not one elect soul shall be lost, not one soul redeemed by blood shall be snatched out of the Redeemers hand!

Christ shall not lose so much as a grain of glory neither in earth nor in Heaven. His peoples earnest contention for the faith shall honor Him. Their patient suffering shall give Him praiseHeaven shall be the sweeter rest to them and the brighter place of Glory to them when He shall return with them from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, travailing in the greatness of His strength, having trod the winepress and overcome His foes. Then shall His rest be glorious and His joy complete! Thus much, then, upon the effect of human opposition. The stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner.

II. A far more painful subject must now occupy our attention, namely, THE CONSEQUENCE OF THIS OPPOSITION TO THE OPPOSERS. Let us dwell with great solemnity upon one or two points. When men stumble at the plan of salvation by Christs sacrificial work, what is it that they stumble at? The reply must be a somewhat wide one, but it cannot possibly comprehend all the reasons for mans wicked opposition to his best Friend. Some stumble at the Person of Christ. Jesus, they will admit, was a good Man, but they cannot accept Him as co-equal and co-eternal with the Father.

Oh, my Hearer, if you would be saved, stumble not at this, for who but a God could save you? And how could the Justice of God have been satisfied unless One of Infinite Nature had become the Propitiation for sin? My soul falls gratefully back upon the doctrine of the Deity of Christ for her deepest comfort, and I pray that none of you may reject it, for be assured that apart from it there is no true ground of peace for the conscience. Some stumble at His work. Many cannot see how Jesus Christ is become the Propitiation for human guilt and, we fear, the reason why they cannot see must lie in that Word of our Lord, You believe not because you are not of My sheep.

We fell, my Brothers and Sisters, not personally, but in another. It was our first father, Adam, who first ruined us, not we, ourselves. Perhaps it was because we so fell that it was possible for us to be restored. As we fell in another, there was a loophole for mercy, for the Lord, having dealt with us under one federal head, could justly deal with us under another federal head! And thus fallen in another, we now rise in Another! As by the offense of one, the condemnation came upon all men, so by the righteousness of One does the forgiveness come to as many as believe in Him.

The Doctrine of Substitution or representation begins at the fountain of human history and runs through its whole course. I beseech you, do not quibble with it! It is rich balm and comfort to us who have received it. It has turned our Hell to Heaven. The Spirit, by its means, has renewed our nature and has made us other than we wereand today we have no hope apart from the vicarious Sacrifice of Emmanuel. Oh that you who are objectors would accept that which today you stumble at! Some stumble at Christs teaching and what is it they stumble at in that? Sometimes it is because it is too holyChrist is too PuritanicalHe cuts off our pleasures. But it is not so. He denies us no pleasure which is not sinful. He multiplies our joys! The things which He denies to us are only joyous in appearance, while His commands are real bliss.

Still, say some, His teachings are too severe. Yet from others I hear the opposite accusation, for when we preach Free Grace, objectors cry, You encourage men in sin! There is little chance of pleasing the sons of men, for what gratifies some, offends others. But truly, there is no just reason on either ground to stumble at the Gospel, for though it does place good works where they should be placed, as gifts of the Spirit and not as things of merit, yet it is a Gospel according to holiness, as those know who have proved its power. We have found some object to the teachings of Christ because they are too humbling. He destroys self-confidence and He presents salvation to none but those who are lost. This lays us too low, says one.

Yet I have heard from the opposite corner of the house an objection to the Gospel because it makes men proud, for some say, How dare you speak of being certain that you are saved? That is a boastful speech and ill befits a lowly sinner. Friend, do not stumble at the blessed Truth of God, for Believers are certainly saved and may know itand yet be all the humbler for the knowledge. You are humbled, it is true, by Christ, and laid lowbut He exalts you in due timeand when He exalts you, by His Grace, there is no fear of boasting, for boasting is excluded by Grace.

Still, I have known others object that the Gospel is too mysterious they cannot understand it, they say. While again, from the other corner of the compass, I have heard the objection that it is too plain! This being saved by simply believing in Christ is too plain for many and too hard for others. Beloved, do not quibble at it for either reason. What if there are mysteries in it? Can you expect to comprehend all that God knows? Be teachable as a child and the Gospel will be sweet to you. We have known some who have stumbled at Christ on account of His people and, truly, they have some excuse.

They have said, Look at Christs followers, see their imperfections and hypocrisies! But why judge the Master by His servants? I could weep while I confess how much there is of truth in your accusations, but let me beseech youlay the fault at our door, not at our Mastersfor there is

nothing in His teaching that encourages our sinning, and none can be more severe towards hypocrisy than is Christ Jesus our Lord! This stumbling at His people is, however, frequently founded on another reason. The lovers of the Gospel, it is said, are generally very poor and unfashionable. To unite with them is to lose caste.

Now that is true and it always has been so. From the first day until now, the Gospel has flourished most where there has been least care for fashion and honor among men. But, I know, if you are men, this will be a small concern with you. Only those who are not men, but mimics of men, care for these small matters. You, if your manhood is as it should be, will feel that to follow the Truth of God barefooted through the mire is better than to ride with the lie in all her pomp. Besides, taking the great ones of the earth as a class, is their society so specially desirable? Are the rich so very virtuous? Are the great so peculiarly good? I think not.

We have noble exceptions. There are a few who wear the coronet and yet will wear a crown in Heaven, but taking them as a class, the honorable among men are no better than they should be. No order of men have more to answer for, than kings and princes. At their will human blood has flowed like water and nations have been consumed by famine and pestilence as the result of their wars. Why, then, account their favor to be so precious a thing? We can turn the tables upon those who sneer at Christs servants for their lowness of rank, for before the eyes of God, the great ones are the most evil of all when they become leaders in iniquity. Now, if these are your objections, I pray God to give you Grace to play the man and bear joyfully the reproach of Christ.

What does this stumbling at Christ cost the ungodly ? I answer, it costs them a great deal. Those who make Him a rock of stumbling are great losers by it in this life. Opposition to Jesus is, to many men, a kicking against the pricks. When the Eastern farmer drives his bullock and it moves amiss, he goads it. And if the bullock is not broken in, it kicks against the goad as soon as it is prickedand the consequence is, it drives the goad into itself more deeplyand if it then kicks violently, the goad pierces and wounds it still more. It is so with rebellious men. Their persecutions hurt themselvesthey cannot really injure our Lord.

The hammer said, I will break the anvil, and the anvil did not answer, but stayed in its place, while the hammer smote it day after day. Month after month, year after year, the anvil patiently received the blows, but after awhile the hammer broke, and though it did not say so, for it was too quiet to speak, the anvil might have said, I have broken hundreds of hammers before, and I shall break hundreds more by patient endurance. It is so with Christ and His Church, and His Gospelthe persecutor may smite, and smite, and smitethe true Christian makes no reply, but patiently bears, and in the long run that patient endurance will break the persecutor down.

What anger it costs ungodly men to oppose Christ! Some of them cannot let Him alone! They will rage and fume. Concerning Jesus it is true that you must either love or hate HimHe cannot long be indifferent to youand therefore inward conflicts come to opposers. I remember an ungodly man who was a raving hater of Christ. A Bible was brought into his house, he seized it and destroyed it in his wrath. He did not know that when his daughter went to bed her eyes were wet with tears at what her father had done and that the next night there was a New Testament under her head. When by-and-by he found out that she attended the House of God, there were great threats and I do not know what, of blustering.

But it was done, all the same for that, and his anger was patiently borne. Well, he thought, she is a foolish girl, it will end there, but very soon another daughter became pious and then he was furious. He took his wife into his counsels, to help him, but by her quivering manner she betrayed that she did not like his proceedings. And after awhile he found out that she, when he was away, had snuck into the little Meeting House, too, and that she was feeling with her daughters the value of eternal things. Well, at least he had a boy left! The women were always fools, he said, but his boy, he hoped, would show more sense, and not be deluded. Like his father, he would never fall into superstition, would he?

He would see about it and question him. What was his surprise to find the boy speak up like a man, and say, Yes, Father, I believe as my sisters do, and I go to the House of God whenever I can, and I mean to do so. To his surprise, he found all his house inclined to hear the Gospel and most of them believers in it! It did him no good to be in a passion about it, but he used to rave horribly, and I fear he thereby shortened his days. But the thing went on in spite of all he didthe servants of the house also joined the people at the meeting, and his laborers went in the same way. God intended to bless the family and the enemy was powerless to prevent it, though it cost him much anger and wrath.

Ah, what it costs some men when they come to die! In the days when persecution was more public than it is now, many persons were guilty of being informers against the Puritans, or the Quakers. These traitors deaths were, in many cases, appalling, not because of any peculiar pains they endured, but because how their persecuting innocent neighbors came up to their memory in their last moments. And some of them could not rest for crying out and making acknowledgment of the injustice that they had done to good men in hunting them into prisons for worshipping God.

If any of you do not believe in Jesus and will not be saved by Him yourselves, I would recommend you to let Him and His people alone, for if you oppose Him, you will be the losers, He will not. Your opposition is utterly futile! Like a snake biting a file you will only break your own teeth. You cannot hurt the Church, nor hurt the Word of God. Perhaps your very opposition is one cog in the wheel to urge it on. If the things are of God, it is in vain that you fight against them. Be as wise as Hamans wife when she warned her husband that if Mordecai was of the seed of the Jews, before whom he had begun to fall, it was no use to take up the cudgels against him. This warning was proven to be true when Haman was hung upon the gallows fifty cubits high! To oppose the royal Seed of Heaven is of no use whatever, but assures ruin to those who engage in it.

Now, suppose a man says, I am not going to believe that Jesus Christ came into this world and died for the guilty, neither will I have Him for my

Savior! I will run the risks. Well, remember, if you do it, it is at your own cost. Do it if you dare. Many years ago a captain was sent out in one of the Government ships, the Thetis, to discover a shoal, a rock, or some other obstruction said to exist in the Mediterranean Sea. The captain was an old salt who knew little about navigation as a science, and cared less for rules, books, theories and so on. He always sneered at scientific works. Though he sailed near the spot, he did not discover the rock and came back.

But one of his officers was persuaded that, nevertheless, there was something in the report. So, sometime after, when he had become, himself, a first officer in another vessel, he sailed near the spot and discovered it. It was marked on the charts of the Admiralty and he received a considerable reward for having made the discovery. The old captain cursed and swore at these newfangled fellows who could find what he could not! He would not believe the shoal was thereone thing he would dothey might call him a liar if he did not drive the Thetis right over the spot where the rock was marked and so prove it to be all nonsense.

He had an opportunity, sometime later, when he was out upon a cruise. He sailed close to the spot marked on the chart, and thinking he had passed over it, he cried out to those who were standing round, with many expressions of blasphemy, that he had proved these whippersnappers to be fools and liars! Just as he uttered his boast there came a crash, the ship was on the rock, and in a few minutes she was sinking. By the good Providence of God all on board escaped except the captain. He was in such a desperate state of mind that when last he was seen he was on deck in his shirt sleeves rushing about as if he had gone mad! You see, his firm belief that there was no rock there did not alter the casehe was wrecked for his obstinacy.

There are a great many who say, Oh, I do not believe it, I shall not bother my head about it. Well, you are warned! You are warned, remember that! There is a way of salvation by Jesus Christ, the Incarnate God, and we implore you to accept it. If you do not, this rock of unbelief will be your eternal shipwreck. I pray God that every one of us may bow before Christ and accept Him as our King. He will shortly come to be our Judge! Oh, let us worship Him as our Mediator! Look to Him! Look to Him on His Cross, for you must soon look to Him on His Throne. Look to His wounds! Behold the atoning blood! Look to Him and find salvation!

Whether you look to Him now, or not, you will have to look to Him in that day when Heaven and earth shall rock and reel, the trumpet shall sound, the dead shall rise and you among them! Then the books shall be opened and the sentence of eternal wrath shall be uttered against the disobedient and unbelieving! God save us all for Jesus sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON1 Peter 2.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK118, 2, 961. Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.  
Sermon #3258 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

STUMBLING AT THE WORD   
NO. 3258

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 13, 1911.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON.   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, MARCH 6, 1864.

And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient.   
1 Peter 2:8.

YONDER is a wreck after a terrible tempest. That is all that remains of a once fine vessel and on the wreck, lashed to the mast, I see a number of mariners clinging, almost frost-bitten with the cold and drenched through and through with brine. But there goes the lifeboat, so I trust they will soon all be rescued from their perilous position. I am absolutely certain of one thing with regard to all those who are clinging to that poor wreck of a shipthat there is not a man among them who will raise any objection to being saved! No, whatever may have been their previous position in life, or their habits, or tastes, or anything elsethey will all be equally glad to welcome the friendly lifeboat and to be taken on board the vessel of mercy. Yet is it not a strange thing, dear Friends, that when poor humanity has become a total wreck and poor souls are clinging to the sinking ship with hopes that must certainly be disappointedand when Jesus Christ appears within hail, willing and able to save unto the uttermostthere are multitudes who raise all sorts of objections to being saved by Him? He is not the sort of Savior they would like to have, or His way of saving sinners is not the one that they approve! And there are all manner of difficulties which they invent, which they imagine to be evidences of their wisdom, but which are really only proofs of their folly and vanity. They prefer to be lost rather than to be saved by such a Savior in such a way as He has ordained!

Men in a dungeon do not take exception to the man who breaks open their prison and sets them free! Men who are dying do not generally object to the physician who is seeking to save their lives. A man who is condemned to death does not quarrel with the king who gives him a free pardon! There is nothing which shows the strange infatuation of sin more than thisthat a man quarrels with his best Friend, puts away from him the plan of salvation which God has made with Infinite Wisdom and will not come to Christ that he may have life! I want, as the Holy Spirit shall help me, to plead with all those in this assembly to whom Christ, Himself, has hitherto been a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense those who still stumble at the Word, being disobedient.

I shall try, first, to plead with you against your objections. Then I will endeavor to plead with you for Christ. And after that I will plead with Gods people for you and ask them to plead with God on your behalf.

I. First, then, let me PLEAD WITH YOU AGAINST YOUR OBJECTIONS. What is it that makes you think so little of Christ, or that makes you think so badly of Christ? Shall I take the words out of your mouth? It may be that one reason of your quarrel is that Christs commands seem

to you to be so strict . He will have you pluck out your right eye and cut off your right arm if they would prevent you from entering into life. He lays the axe to the root of the tree and not only condemns your overt acts of sin, but tells you that a look or a word is sufficient to condemn you! He would have you turn at once from all those pleasant but seductive things which will ruin your soul unless you forsake them. You do not like such strictness as thisif you could be permitted to keep some of your sinsif now and then you might be allowed some sinful indulgence and yet be saved, you would be quite content. But to give up allto be separated at once from the world and from mammon is more than you can endure!

But my dear Hearer, is this objection of yours founded upon the belief that Christ denies you anything that is really good and pleasant? Is it a good thing for a man to even occasionally do that which his Maker condemns? Does not God desire your happiness and would He deny you anything which would be for your highest enjoyment? No, Sirs, He is too good to do that! His very name is LOVE! Why, if sin were for your eternal welfare, He would not only permit you to indulge in it, but He would command you to commit it! But knowing it to be a deadly poison, He forbids you to touch it. More fatal than an adders sting is sin! More terrible than the conflagration which first devours the peasants cottage and then wraps a whole city in its fiery embrace! And God, in commanding you to forsake it, and Christ, in entreating you too leave it, do but consult your real welfare and lasting happiness!

After all, what is the gratification which you derive from sin that it should make you quarrel with Christ for taking it from you? How much sorrow does it bring you afterwards? What pleasant fruit have you had from sin up till now? Are you a happy man or a happy woman? If you have so long sought the pleasures of sin and have been in no wise the better for them, why do you still pursue such a profitless counsel? Can it be worthwhile to sin yourselves into Hell? Can there be any supposable pleasure that can ever compensate you for everlasting pain? If so, then choose the pleasures of sin for a season, but rest assured that for all these things, God will bring you into judgment! But if, on the other hand, it is a wise decision to think more of eternity than you do of time, I pray you not be angry with my Master because He is willing to cure you of your fatal diseases, to pluck from your hands the poisoned cup and to kill the venomous reptiles that would destroy you! Surely you can see abundant reason why you should drop your objection that Christs commands are too strictmay the Holy Spirit enable you to drop it forever!

Perhaps, however, you say that you do not so much object to the strictness of Christs commands as to the severity of His threats. Well, I freely admit that my loving Master did say some of the sternest things that ever fell from mortal lips! None of His servants have ever uttered more terrible warnings than He did concerning the worm that never dies and the fire that cannot be quenched. But why are you angry with Him for speaking thus? Is it not the duty of an honest and sincere friend to give warning of impending danger? Are you such fools as to wish to be flattered with lies concerning your immortal souls and their eternal interests? Do you want men to come to you in soft raiment and to use dulcet notes to charm you to the Pit? Your own hearts will flatter you quite enough without my Master doing it! It is His great love that moves Him to speak what you call harsh wordsHe foresees the ruin that awaits you if you continue in your present course of sinso be not angry with Him because of His faithfulness! It pained Him more to say those words than it can ever pain you to hear them. He never uttered a threat without first feeling its force in His own heart. If you could have looked into His tearful eyes. If you could have gazed upon His sympathetic Countenance as He pleaded with men, you would have seen and heard ineffable love speaking in every word that He uttered! O Sinners, quarrel not with Christ for warning you of a Hell from which He would gladly preserve you! Be angry with yourselves, rather, for choosing the path to destruction! Be vexed and wrathful with your own sins for dragging you down to ruin! But oh, be not angry with the loving Savior for telling you, once and for all, that you cannot escape if you neglect this great salvation! Let your objection to the severity of His threats drop foreverthat very severity ought to make you fly to Himnot drive you from Him!

Possibly there is one here who says, I do not like the spirituality of Christs teaching. If He would tell me to take the sacrament, if He would bid me go to such-and-such a church so many times a day, I would do it. But He tells me that all these things count for nothing unless I worship God in spirit and in truth. He tells me that I must be born-again and that the Holy Spirit must dwell within me or else I am none of His. Now Sir, all this kind of teaching is too difficult for me to graspit is a sort of invisible, impalpable thing that I can neither see with my eyes nor touch with my handsand this causes me to stumble at the Word. But Sinner, such talk as that is utterly unreasonable! If you will but think seriously for even a minute or two, you must see that no drops of water, no priestly incantations, no cups of wine, no loaves of bread, not even your own prayers can take away your sin!

*No outward forms can make you clean,   
The leprosy lies deep within.*

You know that it is a spiritual disease from which you are suffering, so why should you be angry because the Great Physician prescribes a spiritual remedy for you? Suppose that in Christs teaching there are some things hard to be understood? They are well worth understanding and it is quite possible for you to understand all that is necessary to make you wise unto salvation! Some very simple-minded persons have comprehended the meaning of the Gospel message and have been saved! Many a man who never went to school has gone to Heaven! And he who is willing to understand the Gospel can understand it. Besides, the Holy Spirit is waiting and willing to instruct all who desire to be taught. It was He who inspired the Apostle James to write, If any of you lack wisdom, let Him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally and upbraids not. And it shall be given him. And the Lord Jesus Christ said to His disciples, If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him? It is your own fault if you remain in the darkness of ignorance when the Spirit is ready to illuminate you and to guide you into all the Truth of God! May He graciously shine into your hearts, now, and then you will welcome the spirituality of Christs teaching instead of stumbling at it!

I hardly imagine that there is one here who will raise the objection that the Gospel is too simple. Yet we do sometimes get people here who seem to think themselves much too important or too learned to listen to our simple story of the crucified Christ of Calvary! They want something more philosophical, something that ordinary people cannot comprehend, something that they can monopolize and keep to themselves. The Gospel is too simple for such as these who regard themselves as the elite of society and, sometimes, those who have neither rank nor education get similar whims into their heads! They do not like to be told that they must come to Christ as guilty sinners needing to be washed in His blood and as helpless sinners needing to receive everything from Him. No, many of you want to do something, or to be somethingyou want to learn something mysteriousand that simple message, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be savedthat plain, understandable Gospel, He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, is too easy, too ABC-like, too childish for you! Now, Sirs, why do you talk thus foolishly? Suppose the Gospel had been of such a philosophical character that it could only have been understood by those who had high intellectual powerswhat would have been the use of it to nine persons out of ten? Suppose it had consisted of some very inexplicable Revelationhow would any of the poor and the simple-minded have been saved? We thank God that the way of salvation is so plain that the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. The Gospel is so simple that many who have had but feeble intellects, have been able to understand it, and have been saved by it. I bless God that the Gospel we have to preach is the Gospel for the illiterate, the Gospel for the poorand that we can still say, as our Master didthe poor have the Gospel preached to them. And that many of them have, through that Gospel, become rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom which God has promised to them that love Him. Do not quarrel with my Master because of the simplicity of the Gospel, lest your pride should hang you on a gallows as high as Hamans.

A more common objection, however, which is raised against Christ is on account of the Doctrine that He teaches. Some do not like the Doctrine of Election, others do not like the Doctrine of Final Perseverance. Some kick at one thing and some at another, but one Doctrine at which many stumble is the Doctrine of the Substitutionary Sacrifice of Christ. They cannot see how it is possible for Christ to be a Substitute for sinners. They cannot understand how God can punish Christ in the place of men and that men shall be saved because Christ died in their place. Well now, suppose I was in a burning building and a man brought to the house, a fire-escape of a very unusual shape, but one that he assured me had been the means of saving thousands of lives? Do you think that I would object to trust myself to it because it was such a peculiar shape? Of course I would not be so foolish! Then why are sinners so foolish as to object to the shape of the fire-escape which God has designed to rescue them from everlasting burning? What could be better than the Divine plan of Substitution? God must punish sinHe could not be God unless He didit is a necessity of His Nature that He should hate sin with an infinite hatred and He must punish it! Yet, as He had loved His people with an everlasting love, how could He better show His love to them and His hatred of sin than by giving up His well-beloved Son to die instead of themmaking Him who knew no sin, to be sin for them, that they might be made the righteousness of God in Him? This seems to me to be the most beautiful thing I ever heard of and it delights my soul to preach it! There is something so fresh about the Gospel that if I were to preach it every day in the week, I do not think I would grow weary of telling it over and over again! See what wisdom and love are here combined so that we have a just God and yet a Saviorsin punished and yet love magnified! Mercy free to go about her gracious errandsand yet the faithfulness of God glorified to the highest degree! To my mind, the most glorious work that God ever performed was when God Incarnate died that sinners might live! You surely cannot object to that Doctrine of Substitution! If you do and if you persist in that objection, let me tell you that you will perishfor he who rejects the Savior who died upon the Cross brings eternal ruin to his soul.

There are many who raise objections to Christ because of the character of His people. They say that there are so few of themand that they are such a poor lotand they are not, all of them, what they should be. So, Sirs, you object to go to Heaven because you think there are so few going there? But if you go to Hell, it will be no relief to you to know that many are sharing the agony with you! It seems to me to be wisdom to be saved even if I were the only oneand eternal folly to be damned even though everyone else should be lost with me! So do not raise any objection because of the number of the saved. And as to their being poor, what of that? Would it not be better to go to Heaven side by side with a poor old almshouse woman, or a chimney-sweep, or a pauper from the workhouse, than to go to Hell with a lord, a duke, or a millionaire? I can always find the best of company among the Lords poor people. I am glad to be associated with all of you in your various works of faith and labors of loveand I have often learned more about Christ from the poor than from the rich. Besides, if Jesus Christ was willing to be reckoned among the poor, there is no man who needs to be ashamed of his poverty unless it is brought on by his own sin! I will not say more upon that point, for I can scarcely imagine that I have any simpletons in this congregation who are foolish enough to raise such an objection as this.

Some, however, object to Christ because if they take up with Him, they will have to break off their friendship with others. One of them says, If I become a Christian, everybody will laugh at me! Well, who minds being laughed at when he is in the right? But all my old companions will forsake me. It will be a good thing for you if they do unless they also will join you in following Christ! But when I go to the workshop or the market, they will point me out as a Christian. I hope they will, or I hope you will be such an out-and-out Christian that they will not need to point you out! I trust that your life will be of such a character that wherever you go, men will be compelled to say, Yes, that man is a Christian. Why should you need, as it were, to sneak into Heaven by some back way where nobody could see you? There is nothing in Christ of which you have any need to be ashamed! So I hope you will have the Grace to say, I will take my stand with Christ. If He is despised, I will be despised. If He is spit upon, I will be spit upon. If He bears the Cross, I will bear a cross. I am not ashamed of Him and I pray that He may not have reason to be ashamed of me.

Now, though I hope some of your objections have been removed, I feel that the great objection with which we began, still remainsthat is, you stumble at Christs Word because He bids you repent and turn from your sins. There are some of you of whom I almost begin to despairyou continue to come where the Gospel is preached, but sometimes you sing the song of the drunk, or you join the ranks of the profane, or indulge in other sins that I need not name! Yet you would not like to give up the hope that you still cherish that someday you will be converted. O Sirs, I implore you to delay no longer! Christ and your sins will never agree, so come to Christ and leave your sins! However stern may be the conflict, draw the sword and fling away the scabbardlet it be war to the death with sin for Christs sake and your souls sake! May the Spirit of God, who alone can separate you from your sin, proclaim the divorce this very hourthat you may be saved now and saved forever!

II. Having pleaded with you against your objections, I pray now for power from on high that I may PLEAD WITH YOU FOR CHRIST.   
I have tried to show you that you have no reason to object to Christ. I want, now, just for a minute or two, to remind you that you have many reasons for yielding to Him. First of all, let me ask, How is it that you are still alive? If stern justice had dealt with you without the interposition of mercy, you would not now have been living upon the earth. You remember that long and serious illness from which you scarcely expected to recover? Yet here you are in robust health and strengthwhy were you so wonderfully restored? You recollect that time when you were in the river and you gave up all hope of being rescued? Yet you were saved as if by a miraclewhy was that? You have had many marvelous escapes from accidents in which others have been killedwhy were you spared? It may be, Soldier, that the bullets whistled close by your ear, yet you came back from the war unscathed. It may be, Sailor, that your ship was almost gone, or possibly she was a total wreckand only you escaped to tell the talewhy was that? Well, let this great mercy that you are still alive move you to repent of your sins and trust in Christ as your Savior! As He has been your Preserver, may He also be your Redeemer, your Lord, your All-in-All!   
Then let me further ask, How is it that you are in a place where the Gospel is being preached? Suppose that tonight, instead of a preacher of the Gospel being on this platform, there had come here some stern Prophet, like Moses or Elijah, and that he had turned to you who are out of Christ and had said to you, The day of mercy is over, justice now reigns supreme. Hear, you despisers, and wonder and perish, for God will tear you in pieces and there shall be none to deliver you! What could you have said to delay judgment? But this has not been the case! I have not pronounced a curse upon you! I have not spoken a hard word to you, but I have pleaded with youoh, that the Lord would teach me how to plead with you more earnestly and more effectually to turn to Him, and live! Seek you the Lord while He may be found, call you upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. The fact that there is a proclamation of mercy still made to you ought to cause you to weep tears of penitence for your sin and to move you to turn believingly unto Him who died upon the Cross, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.   
Then, again, should you not run to Jesus when you remember that He tells you that He will hear your prayers? What? Will He hear your prayers and yet will you refuse to pray to Him? He says to you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto menso will you not believe that your sin and your blasphemy shall be forgiven for His sake? Oh, that you really knew Him! But you do not know how full of love and Grace He is. I wish that you could hear His voice saying to you, Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Whenever I repeat my Masters words, I feel vexed with myself because I cannot utter them as they ought to be uttered. I know that He must have spoken them with a majesty of tone and with a melting melody of earnestness that must have put more force in them than I can ever hope to do! He lived for sinners, He died for sinners, He rose again for sinners, He pleads in Heaven for sinners! Ah, how can you refuse to trust Him and love Him and serve Him forever?   
III. Now I close by PLEADING WITH THE PEOPLE OF GOD FOR SINNERS.   
I know that there are in this assembly, not merely hundreds, but thousands who love the Lord Jesus Christ! And it is with them that I am now going to plead. Brothers and Sisters in Christ, while I have been talking to those who stumble at the Word, have you not been reminded of what you used to do? I have been thinking of my own experience, for I, also, stumbled at the Word, being disobedient. And I feel some comfort in preaching to those to whom Christ is a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, by reflecting that He who could save me can also save them! And as Christ has quickened you who were dead in trespasses and sins, you cannot doubt His power to quicken others!   
Probably most of you remember that when you were dead in sin, there were some who prayed for you. My mother and father and many others prayed for me, and I feel that this is one of the many reasons why I should pray for others. Most of you had someone who thus cared for you, so ought you not to care for others in a similar fashion? I feel sure that you do care for othersthere is in your heart an earnest longing to see them brought to the Savior. May I, therefore, urge you to be more earnest than ever in prayer for the salvation of sinners? I rejoice that we are a praying Church, but I am always jealous lest we should lose the spirit of prayer which the Lord has so graciously poured out upon us. Some of us recollect times when we have gripped the Angel of the Covenant and we would not let Him go until He blessed us. Many of you were given to us in answer to these effectual fervent prayersand this makes me the more urgent in pleading with you to pray for others.   
Nor must you be content with praying for them, for others very earnestly sought to bring you to the Savior. And this encourages me in pleading with you to grow more completely devoted to the blessed work of winning souls for Christ. We must all be up and doing for our glorious Lord and Master. Members of this Church, you will be ungrateful for all that the Lord has done for us in the past if you slacken your efforts in the future! In your homes, in your workshops, in your mission-rooms, in your street preaching, in your tract-distribution, in your Bible classes, in your Sunday schoolswherever you areanywhere and everywhere seek after souls as diligently as the hunter seeks his prey! There are many reasons why you should be earnest in bringing sinners to the Savior. The terrible doom of the lost is reason enough by itself, but you can find abundant reasons in the back streets and alleys of this great city and in the sin that abounds in the splendor of the West End as much as in the squalor at the East End.   
Do you need arguments for soul-winning? Look up to Heaven and ask yourself how sinners can ever reach those harps of gold and learn that everlasting song unless they have someone to tell them of Jesus who is mighty to save. But the best argument of all is to be found in the wounds of Jesus! You want to honor Him. You desire to put many crowns upon His head and this you can best do by winning souls for Him! These are the spoils that He covets. These are the trophies for which He fights. These are the Jewels that shall be His best adornment. O Christian men and women, if any of you have been negligent of late in your Masters service, may the Holy Spirit make you more diligent! I would like to make a personal appeal to each one of you to consecrate yourselves and your substance more and more to the advancement of the cause and Kingdom of Jesus Christ, your Lord, so that you shall live wholly for Him! To be a true Christian is something higher and nobler than simply sitting in our pews twice on Sunday, or even teaching in a Sunday school or giving away tracts. It is the laying of ones whole self upon the altaroffering your body, soul and spirit as a living sacrifice unto God, which is our reasonable service, so that whether we live or whether we die, we shall be the Lords, and live or die for Him! I plead with you, Christiansand I wish I had more power to do it effectually for the sake of sinners, to stir yourselves up to pray for them and to labor for them that through the mighty working of the Spirit of God, they may no longer stumble at the Word, but may yield themselves to Christ and be saved!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **1 PETER 1:17-25; 2:1-12.**

1 Peter 1:17. And if you call on the Father, who without respect of persons judges according to every mans work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. Not in unbelieving fear, but in that holy carefulness which watches against sin of every kind lest in any way you should spoil your holy work for God.

18, 19. Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ [See Sermon

#621, Volume 11THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRISTRead/download the entire sermon, free of

charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. As your redemption cost so much, prize it highly and do not go back to the sin from which you have been so dearly redeemed! Fear lest you should do so. Remember that heredity has a great power over you the traditions of your fathers will imperceptibly draw you back unless you watch against them. But you have been so gloriously redeemed with the very blood of Christs heart that you must not draw back.

20, 21. Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him Glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Whenever you think of the Glory of your risen Lord, remember what your redemption cost Him and quit all dead workslay aside the grave clothes of care and anxiety and live in newness of life as those who have been redeemed by the risen Savior!

22, 23. Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that you love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born-again[See Sermon #398,

Volume 7THE NEW NATURERead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] See how this love of the brethren is linked on to regeneration. The first time we are born, we are born in sin, and that tends to hate. But when we are born-again, born unto God, our life tends to love. Being born-again

23. Not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever. Peter reminds us, in the 18th verse, that we were not redeemed with corruptible things, but with incorruptible. And he here reminds us that we are born-again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible. Everything about a Christian means his deliverance from corruption and the bringing of him into a state of immortality and incorruption!

24, 25. For all flesh is as grass and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower thereof falls away: but the Word of the Lord endures forever. Everything earthly is corruptible. That which is merely natural has its season of decay, but the children of God have the Word of the Lord abiding in themand that never diesit has no autumn or winter.

20. And this is the word by which the Gospel is preached unto you.   
1 Peter 2:1. Therefore, laying aside all malice. This is one of the old corruptible things, so put it away from you   
1. And all guile. All crafty tricks, all lies, exaggeration, double meanings to your words, and the like   
1. And hypocrisies, and envies. All hatred of those who are either better or better off than you are   
1. And all evil speaking. Thus the tongue expresses what the heart feels. Laying all these evil things aside, you will prove that you have been born-againborn of the incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever.

2. As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby. You are in the family of God, but you are only babes in it. You have to grow to the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus, so desire the sincere (unadulterated) milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby. There is no other way of growing.

3, 4. If so you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Coming to Him, as unto a living stoneSo that the Lord here meant is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is truly a living stone

4. Disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and preciousWhen men disallow Christ, it is a matter of small account to us. As for what they have to say, it is less than nothing and vanity. Like the wild bluster of the winds, let it bluster until it has blown itself out. Christ is disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious

5. You also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Chr  
ist. [See Sermon #1376, Volume 23THE TRUE PRIESTHOOD, TEMPLE AND SACRIFICE Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] See what

Jesus Christ has made of you who believe in Him! By the incorruptible blood and the incorruptible seed, He has brought you into a heavenly priesthood and you are, today, to stand at the spiritual altar and to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Will you not pray, will you not praise, will you not love? These are sacrifices with which God is well pleased!

6, 7. Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious: and he that believes on Him shall not be confounded. Unto you, therefore, who believe, He is precious. [See Sermons

#242, Volume 5CHRIST PRECIOUS TO BELIEVERS and #2137, Volume 37, a Sermon with the same titleRead/download both sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Is He not?  
Then enjoy His preciousness, all of you who truly believe in Him! Precious Christ, precious to all His people, precious to me!

7, 8. But unto them which are disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. When Peter wrote these verses, he must have thought of his own name. He was called a stone or a rockand once he was to his Master a rock of offense when he stumbled at Christs Word, and began even to rebuke his Lord! But he was forgiven and saved, so now he gives a warning to others lest they should still more grievously sin by making Christ, Himself, to be to them a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.

9. But you are a chosen generationHear this, you Believers! Drink in this precious Truth of God! See Gods election, making you to be a people born of the Holy Spirita chosen generation

9. A royal priesthoodThis is a wonderful combination! Kings and priests at the same time! All honors meet on you through Divine Grace! A royal priesthood

9. An holy nation, a peculiar peopleYou have national privileges. God reckons you not as a mob or a herd of men, but as a nation, and a nation with this peculiar hallmark upon you, that you are a holy nation. This is the true token of your nationality that you are holiness unto the Lord. A peculiar people belonging to God alone, marked off from the rest of mankind as peculiarly His! You are not and you are not to be as other men areyou are a peculiar people. Your road is not the broad one where the many goit is the narrow one which the few find. Your happiness is not worldly pleasure, but pleasures at the right hand of God which are forevermore. You are a peculiar people

9. That you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light[See Sermon #2765, Volume 48  
MARVELOUS LIGHTRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] You are to be advertisers of the praises or virtues of Christ, not only to know them and to be glad to know them, but to make them known to others. Beloved, how far are you doing this? I put the question personally to each one of you, for you were chosen by God on purpose that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light

10. Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of GodIn time long past, who ever heard of the Britons, or of the AngloSaxons? We were not a people, but we are now the people of God

10. Which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. We may well leap for joy, we who once had not obtained mercy! We sinned against the Lord, but He was long-suffering, and now we have obtained mercy.

11. Dearly Beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrimsFor you belong not to the corruptible world, you are of an incorruptible raceI beseech you as strangers and pilgrims

11, 12. Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul: having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoersWhich they are sure to do. The better you are, the more will they censure you. This is the only homage that evil can pay to good, to fall foul of it and misrepresent itthat whereas they speak against you as evildoers

12. They may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. God bless to us the reading of His Word.  
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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2765 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

MARVELOUS LIGHT   
NO. 2765

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1902.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 26, 1879.

His marvelous Light.   
1 Peter 2:9.

EVERYTHING about a true Christian is marvelous. He is a marvel to himself and a marvel to all who are around him. Mere professorsmanmade Christianspeople who have made themselves Christians by their own free will apart from the Spirit of God, have nothing marvelous about them. You can make professors of that sort by the score and you can see them dissolve by the score, for what man made, man can unmake! And what is merely natural has its season, like the leaves on the trees and, by-and-by, it withers away because its time to fade has come. But a true Christian is a God-made man, a twice-born man and he is a partaker of the Divine Nature. He is a mass of marvels, for he is dead and yet he is alive! He is one who lives here and yet his life has gone away up yonder. He is one who is a citizen of earth and yet his citizenship is in Heaven. He is a true man, but he is more than a man, for God has lifted him up above the level of other men, given him a life which other men do not possess, revealed to him secrets which others do not know and prepared for him a place into which the ungodly can never enter.

The longer he looks at himself, the more he wonders at Gods Grace and at what Gods Grace has done, is doing and will yet do for him. He is a riddle to himselfan enigma made up of a thousand enigmas. He probably does not fully understand all that has happened in any single day of his lifeand there are certain days in which Gods dealings with him quite stagger him. And though faith sees all things to be plain, yet to mere human reason, things often appear to be in a snarl, and twisted together and he does not know what to make of them.

Everything about a true Christian is marvelous, as angels know, who often desire to look into the things which concern them, and as He knows, who is our Leader and Commanderwho was a Man wondered at and whose faithful followers are all wondered at still, He, Himself is the greatest marvel of all! And among the many marvels that surround us is the marvelous Light of God in which we dwell. Those of us who are now in Christ, lived at one time in the gross darkness of ignorance. I mean even those of us who were brought up in Christian families and knew the letter of the Gospel well. We did not know its inner meaning and we never felt its power. We were in darkness, though, indeed, there was a certain measure of Light which had come to us, which made us responsible for our wrong-doing. Still, our heart remained in gross darkness.

And, by-and-by, this darkness was attended with much misery. There came to us a little Lightjust enough to make our darkness visible. And so we perceived the darkness in which we dwelt and we began to sigh and cry, like prisoners shut up in an underground dungeon, to whom light and fresh air cannot come. Then everything about us seemed to blacken and the gloom around us deepened. We were in the dark as to our apprehensions of the future. We knew that we must die, yet we feared to die. We clung to life, yet, sometimes, we did not desire even life, itself, but said, with Job, My soul chooses strangling and death rather than my life. The prospect of annihilation would have seemed almost like Heaven to us if we could, thereby, have gotten rid of our sinful, sorrowful being, clouded with apprehensions of the wrath of God and of judgments yet to come upon us. I know that I am talking about something which many of you understand! It was a thick Egyptian night in which you were then envelopeda darkness that might be feltand you tried your utmost to escape from it, but you could not, for it was

in you. Your soul was in darkness, the Light within your spirit was quenched and all around you seemed to darken, and darken, and darken, as though an eternal midnight were surely descending upon you!

Well, at that time, it happened to me, and I know that it also happened to some of you as it did to Peter, that the angel of the Lord suddenly smote us on our side and a Light shone into our prison and we arose, scarcely knowing what we were doing. But we girded our garments about us and followed our angelic leader, while the prison gates, which had formerly shut us in, opened before us of their own accord and we found ourselves to be free and in broad daylight, too, although, for a time, we could scarcely realize those blessed facts! We saw what we had never seen before. We enjoyed what we had never even hoped to enjoy! Yes, as in an instant we possessed what we thought must forever be denied to us! We scarcely knew how to contain our joy, but we made our way, as fast as we could, to the house of Christs disciples who had prayed for us. And how we gladdened them as we told them the story of Gods delivering and enlightening Grace, and so showed forth the praises of Him who had called us out of darkness into His marvelous Light! Truly, it was marvelous Light to us at that time. Many day have passed since then with some of us, but it is still marvelous Light and, as we look upon it now, it is not any less marvelous than it was at the very first!

It is of that marvelous Light of God that I am going to speakand as I tell of my own experience of it, I pray God to grant that some of you who have never known its power in your own souls, may be made to rejoice in it.

I. I have already touched upon the first point, of which I want now to speak somewhat more fullythat is, THIS LIGHT APPEARS MARVELOUS BECAUSE OF OUR FORMER DARKNESS.   
Out of darkness, light comes not. Out of our dark nature no marvelous light ever shone. This Light came from above and how marvelous it was! Imagine, if you can, the condition of a man who has lived all his lifetime in a coal mine. Suppose he never had a brighter light than his flickering candle and then, after a while, to be brought up the shaft, and to see the brightness of the sun at mid-day. I can scarcely picture his amazementyou may fancy what it would be like, but you can hardly realize it. Or suppose a still worse case, that of one born blind who had heard of a thing called light, but who could never imagine what it was like till a skillful oculist took away the film that was blinding him and his eyes were opened so that he could perceive the light. It would be very difficult to describe all the emotions of one who had never enjoyed the light before, but, certainly, such a person would be full of wonder and amazement! It would be, indeed, marvelous light to him.

You who have never been converted, who never were regenerated, do not know any more about the Light of God than the man in the coal mine knows about the sun, or that man born blind knows about the light of day! Perhaps you talk a good deal about it and, possibly, you write about it and you form judgments about it. And they are just as wise, and just as accurate as the verdict of blind men would be concerning colors of which they have no conception! You say, sometimes, concerning the Gospel, It is all nonsense! There is no such thing as the Light of the Truth of Godjust because you never saw any, which is a very poor method of argument! I once heard a man say, I have lived in the world 60 years and I never had the apprehension of anything spiritual. When I looked at his face, and especially at his red nose, I thought that what he said was very likely to be true, but I did not, therefore, conclude that there was nothing spiritual because he had not seen it! Any blind man might say, I have lived so many years, and I have never seen the sun, so there is not any, but you would not accept negative evidence of that sort.

So, my dear Friend, whenever you are going to speak about something which you do not know anything about, just keep silent and let somebody else talk who does know. If you never knew what it was to be convertedif you never felt the Divine Life go coursing through your soulif you never had the Divine Light flashing in the midst of the darkness of your spirit, pray speak with bated breath if you speak at all! And when you are going to write one of those famous articles of yours, just say to yourself, Perhaps I had better take some subject that I understand, for this I do not know, as I never had the Light. If you ever had received it, then you might comprehend something of the wondrous change which conversion makes in a man and you would agree with us that the Light of the Gospel is, indeed, marvelous Light!

II. Secondly, we perceive that it is marvelous Light WHEN WE CONSIDER ITS ORIGIN.   
Our text tells us that it is Gods Lightwho has called you out of darkness into His marvelous Light. What is Gods Light? Can you imagine how that Light existed before He made the sun or the moon? Light shone on this world before the sun and the moon were created, for light comes not from them except as God has stored it up in them, or continually supplies it to them. But there is always Light in God. He is the great Light-Creator, yet I never read that the light which God created in the world was called His marvelous light. God made the light, but it was not His Light, even then. There is another Light which is natural to Hima Light of brightness and knowledge, clear and heavenlya Light such as mortal man attains not unto except as the supreme gift of the Grace of God shall visit him. It is this Light which rests upon the people of God. There is a light which lights every man that comes into the world, but Gods marvelous Light comes only to His chosen and gladdens only those whose eyes have learned to look to Jesus and who find their souls confidence and salvation in Him who is the very Light of God.   
Oh, asks someone, can a man have this Light? I do not believe it. Again I tell you, my Friend, that I did not expect you would believe it! He who has never had any experience of it may well doubt its existence. But he who has ever had the Light of God shining into his soul, is as conscious of becoming a new manas conscious of seeing after another fashion than he ever saw beforeas a blind man would be if his eyes were suddenly opened! I know that this world is not to me, now, the world that it once was. All things were then seen, if seen at all, as in a mist so thick that I took the transient to be the eternal and I highly prized trifles while I despised that which was most precious! I put light for darkness and darkness for lightbitter for sweet and sweet for bitterfor my foolish heart was darkened, but I knew it not. But, now, such a change has come to me that all things have become new and, in speaking of my own experience, I am also telling of the experience, not merely of some of you, but of hundreds of you upon whose hearts the Divine Light has come, changing all things around you! They are not what they seem to others, to be, for they are all now seen in the clear white Light of God, Himself, and you know even as you are known.   
III. Thirdly, this is marvelous Light BECAUSE OF ITS EXCELLENCE OVER ALL OTHER LIGHT.  
This Light, which God gives to His people, is far superior to the light which comes of education, or of meditation, or which can be produced by any human effort. When you have gone through a street lighted with electric light, I have no doubt you have smiled to see, side by side with it, the gas lamp with its little yellow attempt at showing that it could not shine. But how bright was the electric light at the side of it! Yet, if it is left to burn at mid-day, how dim it seems compared with the sun! And how the sun must smile at all our attempts to light up this world without him! Well, now, the best light that a man ever gets by his own unaided effort is no better than that of a candle, or, if you will, than flickering gaslight. But the Light of Godthe marvelous Light of God, is the illumination caused by the Holy Spirit shining into the inmost recesses of the soul in full meridian splendor! It is the Light of God, and there is no other light that is like that! He who has but a spark of that Light may not know so much about some things as the worldly-wise man knows, but he is well acquainted with many things to which the other man is an utter stranger!   
Cowper said, as some of you may remember, when contrasting the infidel Voltaire with the poor, godly lace-maker, she   
*Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true, A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew.* Perhaps you smile and think within yourselfThat is not knowing much. Ah, but to know the Bible to be true, to live in that Bible Truth and to have it all round about you, filling the air, filling your own soul, filling earth and Heaven with wondrous things that the spirits eye can seethis is truly marvelous! He who sees even the most of this world has but the same sort of eyes that birds and beasts havebut he who knows his Bible to be true and who realizes the truth of it in his soulhas another set of eyes that can peer into another realm altogether. He sees spiritual things and around him there shines a Light which is, indeed, marvelous!   
IV. Fourthly, this is marvelous Light BECAUSE OF WHAT IT REVEALS, for that man who has the Light of God shining in his soul sees that which is invisible.   
O utterer of paradoxes! cries someone. Yes, but I cannot otherwise express the Truth. This illuminated man sees God, whom ordinary human eyes can never see. He looks back into the ages past and gone and he sees God making all the worlds that ever existed, while those who are reckoned as wise men, but who are without that Light of God, spin ingenious but worthless theories about how those worlds grew! These men have such wonderful theories that it really seems surprising that they do not, themselves, make a few worlds, since they profess to have found out so many ways of making them! But the opened eyes see that the worlds were framed by the word of God, and it sees Gods hand in all the histories of all the centuriesand it even sees Gods hand in the things recorded in the newspaper that most startle us! The man who has his eyes opened sees Heaven and Hell, eternity and everlasting life. He sees themnot with dull optics, like these eyes of ours which, after all, do not really see, for it is the soul behind the eyes that really looks out through that window and perceives what is to be seen. But, in this marvelous Light of God, the soul sees without any optics and without any glassit has flung away its telescope, for it has come so near the object upon which it is gazing that there is no need of any intervening medium! It walks and talks with the angels and, what is far better, it speaks with God Himself! This is indeed marvelous Light which has made us to see things that to ordinary mortal eyes are invisible!

And it is such marvelous Light because it enables us to see them so clearly. To the man who has this Light, God does not appear to be sitting like the heathen Jove is represented, upon a distant Olympus and sleeping while the world is troubled. He who lives in this marvelous Light sees God here, there, everywherewithin him, and about him, he feels the Presence of God! He has an immediate consciousness that God is with him. And, better still, such a man as that sees God to be reconciled by the death of His Son. He sees God to be his Father, for he is made a partaker of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. It is, indeed, marvelous Light to see God that enables us thus!   
A further characteristic of this Light is that it enables us to see right into the heart of things. By this worlds light, you only see that such-andsuch a thing is, you see the appearance it presents. But this Light lets you see into the innermost heart of truth and, what is still better, it brings the Truth of God right into your soul. By this Light, you not only see the Doctrine of Election, but you also know yourself to be elect! You see the great Truth of Redemption and you know yourself to be redeemed! By this Light, you see Regeneration and you feel the pulsing of the Life of God within your spirit and, though mortal eyes have not seen Heaven, neither have the ears of man heard its rapturous harmonies, nor has the true conception of Heaven entered into the heart of man, yet the Spirit of God brings Heaven down to us and raises us up to Heaven so that we sit among the heavenly in Christ Jesus and, our conversation is in Heaven, from where we also look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. All this proves that it is a glorious Light of God, does it not?   
The man who has not this Light, may believe there is a God. Yes, and he believes that there is a Cham of Tartary, but he does not care about him. He believes that there is a Heaven, but it never enters as a factor into his life to operate upon him. He believes that there is such a thing as sin and he says, Oh, yes, yes, yes! We are all sinners, no doubt. But he who has this marvelous Light sees sin so as to tremble at it and to hate it. It is a present thing with him which he abhors! He also sees the atoning blood of Jesus and knows that by it he is cleansed from sin and he rejoices in this as a blessed matter of fact.   
Oh, says someone, that is all fancy! Of course it is only a matter of fancy to you! Did I not tell you so when I began my discourse? To a blind man, a picture by Kaphael or Titian is all fancy. You say to him, How splendidly the colors are laid on there! Do you see that wonderful effect of light and shade? But your wise blind man says, I do not believe a word of it. Of course he does not! We cannot hope that he will do so all the while that he is blind and, in like manner, he who knows nothing of Gods marvelous Light, will ask, Who is he that bears witness concerning this strange thing? Well, Sir, he is one among a great number who have as much right to be believed as you have, for he is as honest a man as you are. Hundreds of usthousands of us can bear witness concerning the phenomena of Divine Gracethe mysteries of the new creation the putting into a man of a new life! And we have as much right to be believed as gentlemen who bear witness about the backbone of a fish and who would feel insulted if we said that they told us lies. We have never examined their fish, but we believe their testimony because we know they have studied the question of which they speak.   
They have never looked into our inner life, but they have as good reason to believe our testimony as we have to believe theirs! And this is our witnessthat there is such a thing as Gods marvelous Light, that the Light of Divine Grace has broken in upon our soul and brought us to see a new Heaven and a new earth, and to live in a new creation altogether, waiting for the time when Christ shall come to take our body, as He has already taken our soul, into that new world and make us perfect with Himself forever!   
V. Fifthly, this Light is marvelous BECAUSE OF WHAT IT PRODUCES.   
I have already shown you its marvelous character in that it reveals a new world to a man, a world he once despisedand it makes him value it and live worthy of it. Thus it produces a great change in that man, for it makes him love the things he once hated and hate the things he once loved. I heard someone say, Take care of Number One, is a capital rule. Self-love is the first law of nature. But, when this marvelous Light breaks in upon a man, that law of nature ceases to operate and he says, No, the first law of my new nature is that I should honor my God, that I should do that which is right, that which is just, that which is true, that which is loving, that which will be like the life of Jesus Christ my Lord. If you carefully watch that man, you will see him beginning to give up many of the pursuits that once delighted him. Perhaps you will say, Poor man, he is denying himself, but he will answer, No, I am not. I could not enjoy those things now. In fact, I hate them. They were very pleasurable to me once but, then, I was a blind man. Now that I can see, they give me no pleasure. Such a man, before his conversion, may have enjoyed a spicy song which had just a little touch of what should not have been in it. But, now, if he hears the sound of it in the street, he is ready to cover his ears, for he cannot bear it. Sing us one of the songs of Zion, he says nowthe very songs that he used to call Methodist cant, Presbyterian hypocrisy, and all sorts of evil names! Now that he has the new life within him, there are new tastes developed.   
If this were the proper time, I could tell some remarkable stories of marvelous changes that have been worked in some people whom I know. I am sure they would not recognize themselves if they were to meet their old selves as they were five years ago, or, if they did, they would cross the road and get on the other side of the street, so as not to come into contact with their old selves. They would say, Thank you, no. I would rather not walk with you. You are not good company for me. I hoped you were dead and buried, and I never wanted to see you again. I am dead with Christ, I have been buried with Christ, I have risen from the dead in Him and I am a new creature in Him, This marvelous Light makes a wonderful change in a mans character! That is to say, if it really comes to him because, you know, there are some who go into the Enquiry Room and kneel down and cry a good dealand all the good that can possibly do is to take away some of the superfluous fluid from the brain, for there is no heart in their repentanceit is mere excitement and nothing more.   
But it is a very different thing to have the Light of Godto have the Holy Spirit really shed abroad in the heart. Do not any of you be satisfied with saying, I am converted. Happy day! Mind that you are converted. Be sure that it is heart-work, soul-work and that the Spirit of God has worked itnot the preachernot an excited evangelistnot a book you readbut that God Himself has come to you and made you a new creature in Christ Jesus, for, unless this is the case, I shall not be able to speak of the change as I have spoken, and which, to my intense joy, I have seen in hundreds, and in thousands who have passed from darkness to Light, and from the power of Satan into the Kingdom of Christ.   
One change that always takes place as the result of receiving this Light is great joy. The joy is not always as great in all to whom the Light comes but, still, it does bring great joy wherever it shines. Talk of true happinessit is nowhere to be discovered till the eternal Light breaks in upon the mind and heart! And then, Heaven has begun below! Some of us have our full share of pain of body and depression of spirit, yet, in our worst moments, we would not change places with the happiest worldling that lives! Not even when most depressed and weary would we exchange our position, even for a minute, for that of the greatest emperor in the world who does not know that Inner Light. I can truly say, and so can many of you   
**I would not change my blest estate   
For all that earth calls good or great!   
And while my faith can keep her hold,   
I envy not the sinners gold.**   
VI. Lastly, it is marvelous Light BECAUSE IT WILL NEVER GO OUT.   
As it is the Light of God, the devil cannot blow it out. If all the devils in Hell were to try to blow out one single spark that is in a true Believers heart, they might puff till they died of puffing, but they would never put that spark out! God has lit it and they cannot quench it. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. If you do not keep this everlasting life, it is quite clear that you never had it. If you really have eternal lifeit must be eternal lifeand it shall abide with you forever.   
But, what is better, not only shall you never lose it, but it will continually increase! If you have Gods marvelous Light, though it seems only like starlight now, it will soon be like moonlight. Then it will be daylight and soon it will be noontide, for, to whomever God has given a little of this Divine Light, more is sure to follow, for the Light of God, which is given to us by the Holy Spirit, is the very Light of Heavenit has only to be fully developed! You have all the elements of eternal happiness within your own spirit if the Holy Spirit has truly enlightened you and made your character like that of the Lord Jesus Christ. As to deathwell, at the moment of death, you will leave your body behind and you will leave with it all tendency to sin! The root of eternal blessedness is in you, now, if the Lord has really looked upon you in love and you have looked to Christ by faith. You have the plant of Grace springing up! Some of you have leaves and buds, so all that will happen to you in Heaven is that the buds will open and the flower will be perfectedbut it is all there right now. Christ said, I givenot, I

will givebut, I give unto My sheep eternal life. You have eternal life if you believe in Himthe same life that will develop in Glory is in you now!   
I did not know that, says someone. Well, did you think that you were going to be born-again a second time? That can never be! To be bornagain is mentioned in Scripture, but to be born-again, and againI never read of that in the Word of God though I have heard certain people talk about falling from Grace and being restoredas if they could be bornagain, and again, and again, and again, no end of times! But there is nothing like that in the Bible. The great change takes place once and that change is final. If you are born-again, you receive the life that you will live in Heaven. Just think of this! Christ has gone to Heaven to prepare a place for you, but He has left within your bosoms, now, the life that is to be in Heaven! Pray God to develop that lifeentreat the Lord to increase it. Think a great deal of it. Value it highly. Suffer not your body, which is its temple, to be dishonored by sin. God dwells in youthe Divine Life is within youso, I beseech you, live as those should live who are not only heirs of Heaven, but who have the life of Heaven already abiding in their hearts! Come, my Brothers and Sisters, let us rejoice and be glad as we thus think of this marvelous Light which is to be our Light forever and ever, for, up there, the Lord God gives them Light and He gives Light to us even now! And it is His Light and there cannot be any Light better than His! So, in it let us rejoice and magnify His name.   
I wish that some here who have not this Light, could be set a-longing for it. Mr. Bunyan says that even if we do not invite the sinner to come to Christ, if we spread a good table before him, it makes his mouth water and that is the next best thing to an invitation! Does any poor soul begin to say, I do not know anything about that Light. I am not going to deny that it may exist, but I would be a fool if I were to go upon negative evidence. I wish I did know? Well, you may know! Do your soul this piece of justicego and pray to God to make you know it. Go and bow before Him and say, Lord, if You do, indeed, reveal Yourself to men by your Spirit in Christ Jesus, reveal Yourself to me. He will hear you, I am sure of that. Even if He did not, there would be this reflection on your mind, that, having listened to the testimony of one who has no motive for deceiving you, you have at least given enough credence to it to try it and test it. And you will feel all the easier in your mind even if the experiment should fail.   
But it will not fail, for never did a soul, in honest, guileless heartiness, seek the Light and love of God, and seek in vain! And nor will you! Go, then, to God through Jesus Christ, and this marvelous Light shall break in upon you. God grant it, for Jesus Christs sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **1 PETER 2.**

Verses 1-3. Therefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil-speaking, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby: if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. When the Apostle describes us under the character of newborn babes, he would have us lay aside all that is inconsistent with that character. Newborn children have no malice. They have no guile or craftiness; they have no hypocrisies, nor envies, nor evilspeaking. They are clear from all these evils. Would God we were as clear as they are! It would be better to be infants, not speaking at all, than to be among those who speak evil. It would be better to begin life over again than to live long enough to have gained a treasure of malice and a hoard of cunningand to have learned the tricks of hypocrisy. Let us be as simple as little children, as guileless, as harmless, as free from anything like unkindness as newborn babes are. And inasmuch as we are to follow them in what they have not, let us also imitate them in what they have. Let us desire ardently, as for our very life, the unadulterated milk of the Word. Let us cultivate that combination of hunger and thirst which is found in a little child, that we may hunger and thirst thus after Gods Word. We have done more than taste the Wordwe have tasted that the Lord Himself is gracious. Let us long to feast more and more upon this Divine food, that we may grow thereby.

4. To whom coming. That is, to the Lord. We are always to be coming unto Him. We began our spiritual life by coming to Jesus, and we are to continue coming to Him. To whom coming.

4. As unto a living stone. We are to settle down on Him as the stones of a building settle down upon the foundation. To whom coming, as unto a living stone.

4. Disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. Christ always was disallowed of men and He always will be, until the great consummation of all things. Some disown Him in one way, some in another. Some boldly blaspheme Him with something like honesty. Others pretend to be His ministers, yet all the while are undermining the Gospel which He lived and died to preach. It matters little that Christ is disallowed, indeed, of men, for He is chosen of God, and precious.

6. You also, as lively stones. Or, living stones.   
6. Are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. You must have noticed, in reading the New Testament, that you never find the officers of a Church called priests. Whenever that term is used by way of illustration, it is applied to all the people of God. They are all priests but, under the Christian dispensation, there is no set of men who have any right to take that title above their fellow Believers. All those who believe in Jesus Christ are priests, everyone of them as much as all the others and the assumption of priesthood under the Christian dispensation is most truly the repetition of the sin of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, though the men who commit it usually try to lay the guilt of that sin at the doors of other people. We ministers are no more priests than all of you who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are. We shake our skirts at the very thought of such wickedness and cry, God forbid that we should, with unhallowed hands, try to steal away from Gods people what is the right and prerogative of them all! You also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.   
6. Therefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious: and he that believes on Him shall not be confounded. Put all your trust in Jesus, for you will never have cause to regret doing so! The text in the Old Testament, from which Peter quoted, says, He that believes shall not make haste. He shall not need to be in a hurry, he shall enjoy the holy leisure which springs from a quiet confidence where confidence ought to be placed. O Beloved, stay yourselves on Christ! Rest your whole weight on Him, for then, you shall not be confounded.   
7. Unto you therefore who believe He is precious. He is an honorHe is your honor, your glory, your boast. It is an honorable thing to be a Believer in a Lord so glorious as He isin a Gospel so reasonable as His Gospel is, in promises so certain of fulfillment as His promises arein an Atonement so effectual as His Atonement is, and in a Master so Omnipotent as He is! Unto you therefore who believe He is an honor.   
7, 8. But unto them which are disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. This is the distinguishing mark between Gods chosen people and the rest of mankind. His elect receive Christ and rejoice in Himbut as for the ungodly, they willfully reject the Savior and so He becomes to them a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense. Christ is the great Touchstone of humanityby contact with Him, the precious are discovered and the vile are discerned,   
9, 10. But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous Light: who in time past were not a people. Who were you and what were your ancestors when the Apostle wrote these words? Our forefathers were, in Peters day, uncivilized and barbarous tribes at the utmost end of Romes dominions. We were not a people.   
10, 11. But are now the people of God: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly Beloved, I beseech you us strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul! If you are priestsas you are if you are believers in the Lord Jesus Christtake care that you are clean before God! Let no impurity stain your body, for sin committed by the body grievously fouls the spirit and defiles the heart! Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.   
12. Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, when they speak against you as evildoers. As they are sure to do, for none are so certain to be slandered as the pure. And the more clean you are in Gods sight, the more will you excite the animosity of ungodly menand they will show it by slandering youthat, when they speak against you as evildoers.   
12-14. They may, by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lords sake: whether it is to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. True Christians give no trouble in the State. They are not law-breakers, but they strive to do that which is honest and upright. Where the laws are not righteous, they may cause trouble to bad law-givers and lawmakers, but when rulers ordain that which is just and righteous, they find that Christians are their best subjects.

15, 16. For so is the will of God, that with well doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as freeWhat a grand word that is, as free! Byron wrote   
*He is the free man whom the truth makes free, And all are slaves besides.*   
But we may alter that, and say, He is the true free man whom His Lord makes free. As free   
16, 17. And not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood: Fear God. Honor the king. A great deal of stress is sometimes laid upon that last precept, and I would lay just as much emphasis upon it as the Scripture does! But also recollect the earlier commandHonor all men  
*A mans a man for all that.*   
Whatever his condition may be, honor the manhood that is in him. Do not despise him because he is poor, or because his coat is not so fashionably cut as yours is, for, perhaps, he may be a better man than you are. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.   
18-26. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle but also to the harsh. For this is commendable, if a man for conscience toward God, endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if when you are buffeted for your faults, you shall take it patiently? But if, when you do well, and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For to this you were called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judges righteously: who His own Self bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes you were healed. For you were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

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DEATH FOR SIN AND DEATH TO SIN   
NO. 1143

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 16, 1873, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes you were healed.**

**1 Peter 2:24.**

PETER, in this chapter, exhorted Christians to holiness and dwelt upon that branch of holiness which consists in the patient endurance of wrong. He could find no better argument with which to plead with the saints than the life and example of their Lord, and, indeed, who could find a better? Since the Lord Jesus is all our salvation, He is also all our desire. And to be like He is, is the highest object of our ambition. If, therefore, we find Him patient under wrong, it is to us a conclusive argument that we should be patient, too. I admire the Apostle Peter, because in using so good an argument he selected from the life of his Lord that particular portion of it which must have been most vividly written upon his own soul.

Judge you, my Brothers and Sisters, if I am not correct in this. Which hour do you think, of the sufferings of the Lord, from Gethsemane to Golgotha, would be most deeply engraved upon the memory of Peter? Surely it would be that space of time in which He was mocked and buffeted in the hall of the High Priest, when Peter sat and warmed his hands at the firewhen he saw his Lord abused and he was afraid to admit that he was His disciple, and by-and-by became so terrified that, with profane language, he declared I know not the Man.

So long as life lingered, the Apostle would remember the meek and quiet bearing of his suffering Lord. He alluded to it in the 23rd verse, When He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judges righteously. Many a tear had Peter to brush out of his eyes as he wrote that verse. He remembered having seen the Lord with his own eyes and so he mentioned, as an argument with others, that which was the most forcible upon his own mindin the hope that whenever they were misjudged, or falsely accusedthey might remember their Lord, and like He, be dumb as a sheep before her shearers, and silent as a lamb led to the slaughter.

Lest, however, we should think that the patience of our Lord was intended to be our example and nothing more, the Apostle goes on to speak expressly of the expiatory nature of the sufferings alluded to. He has held up the Savior in all His woes as our example, but knowing the evil tendency of skeptical minds, by any means, to becloud the Cross, he now puts aside the example, for a moment, and speaks of the Redeemer as the great Sacrifice for sin. The sacred writers are always very clear and distinct upon this Truth of God and so must we be. There is no preaching the Gospel if the Atonement is left out. No matter how well we speak of Jesus as a pattern, we have done nothing unless we point Him out as the Substitute and Sin-Bearer. We must, in fact, continually imitate the Apostle and speak plainly of Him, Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

It is to Christ, then, this morning, the Sin-Bearer, that I am about to direct your attention. It may not be many times longer that I may have the opportunity to preach the Gospel, for bodily pain reminds me of my mortality. How soon are the hale and the strong, as well as the sickly, carried off! So many, during the last few days, whom we knew, have been borne from among us to the silent tomb! We are reminded how feeble our life ishow short our time for service. Let us, then, Brothers and Sisters, deal always with the best things and attend to the most necessary works while yet our little oil suffices to feed the lamp of life.

Rising newly from the sick bed, I have felt that if any theme in the Scriptures has an importance far above all the rest, it is the subject of the atoning blood. And I have resolved to repeat that old, old story again and again. Though I may be guilty of needless repetition, I shall keep on sounding this silver trumpet, or ringing this golden bell again, and again, and again! And so, when I am dead and gone the way of all flesh, you will, perhaps, say, His fault was that he dwelt too much on his favorite subject, the Substitution of Christ. Ah, may I have no other fault to account for, for that shall be accounted to be one of my highest virtues!

I would know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and Him Crucified! At the same time, we shall try to make our subject practical, because the second half of our text suggests the way by which the great Sacrifice for sin leads us to make a slaughter of sin and tells us that when Christ puts sin away for us, we are moved to put away sin from us. Two things this morning, thenfirst, Christs death for sin. Secondly, our death to sin.

I. First, then, we will consider OUR LORDS DEATH FOR SIN. May the Holy Spirit help us to behold that wondrous sight of the Redeemer dying in our place, a Sacrifice for our sins. And here, before we approach to behold the great sight, let us take our shoes from off our feet and bow down in lowest reverence of repenting grief, for, remember, if Jesus had not died for sins, we must have died, and died eternally, too. The pangs of the Savior on the Cross surpassed all estimate. But, such as they were, they would have tormented us if they had not put Him to anguish.

That cup which made Him sweat in the garden was bitter beyond imagination, but to your lips and to mine it must have been placed and unable as we would have been to drain it dry, we would have continued to drink thereof forever and forever! In the day you eat thereof you shall surely die is the great sentence against sin and for a soul to die is a terrible doom, indeed. Our great father, Adam, felt the first drops of the dreadful shower of death in the moment that he ate of the forbidden fruit. He died to God, holiness, virtue and true happiness in that same hourand stood aghast before his Godbefore that very God whom at other times he had met with rapture, and adored with delight.

We, his children, share in his spiritual death in our depraved natures. And we would soon have passed away from the present death of this time state to that corruption which naturally follows upon death in the world to come when restraining and preserving influences are removed and the worm begins its workwhere their worm dies not, and their fire is not quenched. Yes, were it not for Him who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree, we should not have been here to speak to one another, or look each other in the face.

Or if the forbearance of God had allowed us a brief existence on earth, I might have stood here compelled to tell you that there remained nothing for any of us but to die and to endure the wrath of God in body and soul, world without end! Oh, the bitterness of our souls had we been in such a state! With my hands upon my loins this morning, in anguish of spirit, I might have been compelled to utter more woes than ever fell from the lips of Jeremiah, from whom all joy was gone, while I declared to you, and to your children, that there was no hope here or hereafterthat we had offended God and He had given us over to utter destruction! Blessed be His name, we have another message to deliver! We may rather imitate Isaiah, today, than Jeremiah, and tell of redeeming Grace and dying love instead of having to sound the dreadful knell of every hope and to proclaim the birth of legions of sorrows.

With this fact upon our minds, let us come lovingly to the blessed place of Calvary, once cursed on our account. Jesus died for me, that is the uppermost feeling of each one. There was a Substitution for our sins and by that Substitution Believers are saved. There was a Substitution! He His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree. A Substitute intervenedthe sins which would have crushed us were borne by Another actually and literally borne by Another! He His own self bore our sins. The sentence means that He bore the

punishment which was due to our sinswe are sure it means that.

But surely it means more! I cannot divest myself of the conviction that it means more, for it does not say, He bore the punishment of our sins, which would be the most natural expression if that were the meaning intended, but, He bore our sins. In that wonderful Gospel chapter of Isaiah we are told, The Lord has made to meet on Him the iniquity of us all. And again, He bore the sin of many. It does seem as if the bearing of the punishment, great as that is, would not exhaust the meaning of such phrases. The expression is so compact, so concise, so definiteit must mean what it says.

At any rate, I am content to believe that God knows how to speak and to express His own meaning and that the less we twist the Scriptures, or get away from the simple sense which they would suggest to a child, the more likely we are to understand them. He His own self bore our sins. In some wondrous sense He bore the sin, as well as the punishment. I know not how. This I knowHe was never a sinner, for, in Him was no sin.

This I knowHe never was defiled. It could not bereject the blasphemy with indignation! He, the Son of God, the Immaculate Man, stained with sin? Never! We abhor the thought! And yet, He bore our sins is still a Truth of God and we must not flinch from it.

Does it not mean that He was a representative Person? He was the Second Adam and therefore He stood for His people. And therefore the Lord dealt with Him as if the sins of all He represented had been His own sins. He was the Shepherd and the Lord bade Him give an account for the flockand all the wanderings of all the sheep and all their transgressions. Divine Justice visited upon the Shepherds head, because He was, by office and by Nature, the Representative of all those for whom He died, and so could justly be called to account for all that they had done. Sin was laid upon the Lord Jesus, for He was forsaken of His God.

The Lord did not merely chasten Him and scourge Him, and put Him to grief by the use of agencies which were suitable for such a purpose in an innocent Person. He went further and hid His face from Him, which was a sorrow fitting only for One upon whom sin was laid. Why should God forsake Him, unless He had first laid sin upon Him? When Jesus asked, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? there was no answer to that inquiry except this one, (at least I cannot imagine another), I have laid sin upon You, and therefore I must forsake You. If He were merely suffering for others in the sense of doing others good by His sufferings, the Father might surely have looked upon Him with complacency, and even, if possible, with increased delight and have encouraged Him in the benevolent disinterestedness which made Him stoop to such sufferings.

But inasmuch as He was not only enduring for others, but enduring in the place of others and bearing their sins, it became necessary that, despite the love of the Father and the admiration which glowed in His bosom towards His dear Son who was, then, above all things magnifying the Nature of God, the Father, regarding Him as bearing sinI say the Father must hide His face from Him, and smite Him with the blows of a cruel one till He cried out, Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani. Yes, there was a Substitution, and that Substitution went mysteriously far! It was not merely a transfer of punishment from one to Another, but there was a transfer of sin in some deep sense, or else the Scripture speaks not what it means He bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

Now, I want you to pause a minute, again, having noted the fact of Substitution, to consider the Substitute. He His own self bore our sins. And who was He? Beloved, I want you to feel a personal love to our dear Lord and Master. I want your souls, at this moment, to realize the actual Character of His existence and His true Personality. He is not here, this morning, in Person, to show Himself to you, else might I very well withhold my words, for His Presence would have an infinitely superior power over you. But remember that He lives and is as real as you areand at this moment bears in His body the scars of His sufferings for you. Think, then, who He was, and let your spirits kiss His feet in humble contrite love.

He who bore our sins in His own body on the tree was God over all, blessed forever, of whom and through whom and by whom are all things! Without whom was not anything made that was made. Less than God could not have borne your sins so as to put them away. But the infinitely glorious Son of God did actually stoop to become a Sin-Bearer! I wonder how I can talk of it as I do. It is a Truth of God scarcely to be declared in words. It needs flame and blood and tears with which to tell this story of an offended Godthe Heaven-Maker and the Earth-Creatorstooping from His Glory that He might save the reptiles which had dared to insult His honor and to rebel against His Glory! And, becoming one of them, to suffer for them, that without violation of His Law He might have pity upon the offending thingsthings so inconsiderable that if He had stamped them all out, as men burn a nest of wasps, there had been no loss to the universe!

But He had pity on them and became one of them, and bore their sins. Oh, love Him! Adore Him! Let your souls climb up to the right hand of the Majesty above, this morning, and there bow down in lowest reverence and adoring affection, that He, the God over all, whom you had offended, should, His own self, bear our sins! Though God over all, He became a Man like unto ourselves! A body was prepared for Him and that body, mark you, not prepared, alone, and made like man but of man. No, He was not otherwise fashioned than ourselves. He came into the world as we comeborn of a woman, a Child of a motherto hang upon a womans breast! Not merely like man, but Man, born in the pedigree of manhood, and so bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, yet without a taint of sin.

And He, in that double Nature but united Person, was Jesus, Son of God and Son of the Virgin. He it was who bore our sins in His own body on the tree. Here we call to your remembrance the fact stated in the text so positivelythat the Substitution of Christ was carried out by Him, Personallynot by proxy. He His own self bore our sins in His own body. The priest of old brought a substitution, but it was a lamb. He struck the knife and the warm blood flowed down it. But our Lord Jesus Christ had no substitute for Himself! He, His own self bore our sins in His own body.

O Priest of God! The pangs are to be Your own pangs! The knife must reach Your own heart! No lamb for You, You are, Yourself, the Lamb! The blood which streams at Your feet must be Your own blood. There must be wounds, but they must be wounds in Your own flesh. Oh, turn your loving eyes to your Lord, and remember that everything He did for you He did Himself! You sometimes say that another voice may speak for Jesusyou are often willing to serve God through the energy of anotherand I will not chide you. But oh, remember His personal sacrifice for you! Remember the griefs which Jesus bore put His own soul into a tempest of grief and made His own heart to boil like a cauldron within Him. The heart which was broken for our sins was His own heart! And the life given up was His own life! Not by another, though he were an angel, could Christ

have redeemed mankind, but He, His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

Notice, also, that the Substitution of Christ is described in our text in a way which suggests consciousness, willingness and great pain. He His own self bore our sins. They were upon Him. They pressed Him. The Greek word for bore suggests the idea of a great weight, He bore our sinsstooped under them, as it werethey were a load to Him. There are men in the world who may be bearing in their bodies the result of the sin of their parents, but they are not aware of it. And even if they were, they are voluntary bearers, just the same. But our Lord assumed our sins as one takes a weight upon his shouldersand when the sins were there He knew that He was carrying our burdensand still consented to do so.

There was not a moment in Christs life in which the pressure of our sin was unfelt. Though the wrath of God, on account of sin, was more especially felt by Him at Gethsemane, and up to the tree, yet at all times He was stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. What a weight was this! The solid earth cannot bear the weight of sin! It groans and travails in pain together, even now, like a creaking chariot whose axles are unable to bear up under the stupendous weight. Yet on Jesus was the burden laida far weightier one than the fabled Atlas boreand He sustained it to the tree. The text, in our English version, might seem to teach that our Lord bore our sins only on the treeand that erroneous dogma has been drawn from it.

No inference could have been more feebly sustained, for the original does not necessarily set forth anything of the kind. The word translated on is precisely the same word which in the next verse is translated to, or, untoWe are now returned unto and might have been just as correctly read, unto, in this case. I have not the slightest doubt that the meaning of the text is, He His own self bore our sins in His own body to the tree, so that when He reached the tree He left our sins there, condemned and crucified forever and ever. Instead of the doctrine being deduced that Christ was a Substitute only on the tree, the fact is He always was a Substitute up to the tree, and then and there that Substitution culminated in His dying as a Sin-Offering. Let us, this morning, know that consciously, from the time He was a babe in Bethlehem till the moment when He bowed His head and gave up the ghost, He His own self bore our sins in His own body to the tree.

And, Brothers and Sisters, He bore those sins manifestly. I think that is the mind of the Spiritwhen He says, in His own body, He means to give vividness to the thought. We are so constituted that we do not think so forcibly of mental and spiritual things as we do of

bodily things. But our Lord bore our sins in His own body. If you had looked at Him, had you been instructed by the Spirit, you would have seen in His body that He was a Sin-Bearer. Listen to this verseAs many were astonished at you, so His visage was more marked than that of any man, and His form more than the sons of men. Remember another textYet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God.

Think of that! Those who looked into the Saviors face thought Him smitten of God. First they thought Him stricken or demented, like one who has passed through such an awful sorrow that the mind has quailed beneath it. And then they looked at Him as smitten of God! Even the Jews judged Him to be near to 50 when He was scarcely 30 years of age, so worn and haggard did He look, that Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. He smiled and He cheered others. He wore a cheerful countenance among the sons of men that He might not make those who saw Him, sorrowful, and deep down in His heart there glowed a secret firea wondrous joy that He was redeeming His own chosenbut still imponderable, incomprehensible infinite griefs perpetually rolled over Him, so that all His lifetime He might have said, All Your waves and Your billows have gone over Me.

Who His own self bore our sins in His own body, so that His visage seemed to tell of it. And when He came to the tree, oh, how His body bore our sins, then, in communion with His sinless soul! I do not care who it is that speaks against descriptions of the Crucifixion, or who would have us keep in the background the bodily sufferings of JesusI am persuaded that the highest, most intense and forceful piety that ever existed among men has arisen out of contemplations of the agony of Gethsemane and the death throes of Calvary.

The Romish Church, with all her errors, and they are countless, has always had in her midst a band of loving, adoring spirits who have entered into the Redeemers passion and whose meat and drink have been the flesh and blood of Christ in their silent contemplations. And if Protestant Christians ever fall into the idea that we must not think too much of the blood and wounds of Jesus, they will lose the richest spiritual sustenance and we shall cease to have eminent saints among us. I shall not be ashamed at any time to talk to you of the bodily griefs of Jesus, when I remember that Peter, or rather the Holy Spirit by Peter, puts it so in the textWho His own self bore our sins in His own body to the tree.

There is the Cross and there is the bodythere are the visible things, as well as the spiritual and the unseen. We will not forget the second, but we will, by no means ever despise the first! We will speak lovingly and tenderly of the Body and of the bodily sufferings of the Lord. Oh, see, then, the Lord of Life and Glory taken outside the city gate of old Jerusalem and there, amidst a ribald throng, treated as a common criminal! It was the Tyburn, the Old Bailey of the city, where felons were usually executedand they took our Master, malefactors being with Him, and treated Him as a felon! They nailed His hands! Look! The cruel iron is driven through His feet!

They lift Him up, a spectacle of shame! They have stripped Him! They have gambled over the few garments which He hadand there He hangs. They gather round Him and they mock Him, as if the Cross were a pillory as well as a gallows! They insult Him with studied sarcasm and He has no reply to make except to bless them with His prayers and to appeal to His

God! All His friends have fled and when they timidly return they can only share His sorrow, but they cannot alleviate it. He must diedie in extreme pain of bodyand die with unknown inward agonies, the veil of which we will not attempt to lift. He His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree. Blessed are You, O Savior, and blessed are the eyes that have seen You and have looked to You by faith.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, let it be remembered, never ceased to bear our sins till He had taken them right up to the tree. And when He had taken them to the tree, there He hung them forever as a spectacle of eternal scorn. He, Himself, dying while He made our sins die. Himself crucified while He crucified our sins once and for all. O you who use a cross as an ornament, why do you do it? It is a gallows whereon our sins were hung up in shame! Will you wear a gallows around your neck? Will you make an adornment of that which was your Masters death! I had as soon wear about my neck a butchers knife which had killed my mother, as a cross on which my Savior was murdered!

It looks as if you had sided with His murderers and gloried in the instrument of His torture! It was a shameful thing to die the death of the crossand the Lord knew it to be soand yet He His own self bore our sins in His own body to the tree. Mark the tree of the Cross for a moment with much attention. It was the place of pain. No death could be more full of agony than that of crucifixion. When the headsmans axe falls on the neck the head is severed and the pain is overeven to stand burning at the stake is a shorter, if at the time a sharper, way to Heaven. But the pains of crucifixion may last for days!

Cases have been known in which men have actually lived after a three days nailing to a cross. The pain, itself, is inconceivably great. The most tender parts of the hands and feet, where they are most liable to bring on lockjaw, being torn by the nailsand the strain of the body continued tearing at the wounds. Yet our Savior bore that pain. Ah, it is not till you suffer pain that you begin to know the love of Christ to the fullest. You may thank Him, you sons of sorrow and daughters of suffering, for all your pangs, for now you have fellowship with Him. Blessed be Your love, O Jesus, that You could bear pain and death for us!

But the cross was not the place of pain merely, it was the place of scorn. To be fastened to the cross! Why they would not put the meanest Roman there though he committed murderit was a death for slaves and menials. When scorn mingles with pain you know what a compound of grief it makes. To be laughed at when you suffer is to suffer seven-fold. But more, it was the place of the curse, for, cursed is everyone that hangs on the tree, and the Word of God has told us, He was made a curse for us. Last of all, it was the place of death, for Jesus must not merely bleed, but bleed to death. He must not only suffer, but suffer till life, itself, was gone. O dying Savior, Your love to me was wonderful, for death, itself, could not turn it aside, and therefore blessed, forever blessed, be Your name!

Before we leave the Cross, let the Believer sit down and see on the Cross his sins hanging up as dead. Christ carried them up to the Cross and slew them. The Law comes to me and says, I arrest you for sin, but I reply, I have no sin. What would you do with my sins if I had any? I would put them to a shameful death. Lo, they are yonder, executed upon the accursed tree by Jesus Christ. Look, then, at your sins hanged up on the gallowsabhor and loathe thembut rejoice that, loathsome as they are, they are dead! The Lord put them all to death and put sin away forever by His death upon the tree. The death of Jesus is the death of our sins.

I fear I am addressing some who never knew what it was to have sin pardoned. Dear Hearer, all your hope of pardon lies in what I have been telling you this morning. You cannot make recompense to God for your sin either by repentance or by future reformation. Your only hope is to look to Jesus Christ, who bore the sins of His people in His own body on the tree. And if you will come and put your trust in Jesus, your sin shall be put away from you and you shall be accepted. Oh, I pray that at this hour you may be enabled to believe in Jesus and find peace through the Cross, and to Him shall be all the Glory!

II. And, now I hope I shall not strain your attention while I bid you consider the second part of the textOUR DEATH TO SIN. Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes you were healed. Now, observe right well that we are dead to the condemning power of sin. No sin can condemn a Believer in Jesus Christ. For what reason? Because Christ has suffered what we ought to have suffered on account of sinHe has rendered a full recompense to Divine Justice.

You bring me a large file full of bills and you say to me, Are not these bills against you? I answer, No doubt they are all correct in every item, and they might take me many a month to examine. You ask me, Can you pay them? No, and I do not need to try. But do they not trouble you? No. I can make a pillow of them if that is all, and sleep, notwithstanding their number and greatness. You are wonder-struck to think that I should have such a mass of bills and take the matter so coolly. I ask you to take off these bills from the file one by one, and as you do so you see that they are all paid forthere is a red mark at the bottom of every one. Who troubles himself about a bill when it is paid?

But did you pay those debts? No, not I. I have not paid a penny. Did you not pay part of them? Not I. I never contributed a rusty farthing towards them. Did you not offer a composition? No, not a farthing in the pound. Yet you are perfectly easy? Yes, because He who bore my sins in His own body on the tree, took all my debts and paid them for me, and now I am dead to those debtsthey have no power over me. I am dead to my sins. Christ suffered instead of me. I have nothing to do with them. They are gone as much as if they had never been committed

*Now freed from sin, I walk at large;   
My Saviors bloods my full discharge.*

From now on I have nothing to do but to live as a righteous man, accepted in the Belovedto live by His righteousness and rejoice in it blessing and magnifying His holy name!

Beloved, hear the text again! As many of you as have looked to Jesus Christ bearing your sins in His own body on the tree, you are dead to sin as to its reigning power! Dead, first, because we have seen its detestable nature. The sin which was so base that it required the Son of God, Himself, to die before it could be pardoned, is too awful and desperate an evil for us to dally with any more. It had its charms, but now we have perceived its hypocrisies. The false Prophet Mokanna, who wore the silver veil upon his brow, deceived many, for he said that should that veil be lifted, the light which would gleam from under it would strike men blind, the glory was so great.

But when one had once perceived that the man was leprous and that on his brow, instead of brightness, there were the white scales of a leper, nobody would become his disciple. And so, O Sin, at the Cross I see your silver veil removed and I mark the desperate leprosy that is on you! I am dead to you! Begone, you foul blood-stained traitor! I cannot harbor you in my heart. The death of Christ, then, is, to us, the death of sin. We are dead to sin, again, because another passion has absorbed all the forces of our life. Have you ever seen men dead to other things because some one passion has eaten them up? Look at the miserask him why he does not eat a full meal. He is dead to appetite. Tempt him with rich wines. Bring before him the dainties of the season.

They will cost him money and he wants them not. He tells you he has no taste nor love for such things. But you tell him that there is sweet music to be heard and there are pleasures to be enjoyed. Yes, but there must be money doled out for them and therefore he has no ear and no eye. His own dear gold is everything! He is dead to all else. But there is rent due from a poor widow with many children and he will pounce upon her and turn her out upon the cold stones of the street. Tell him of the widow and her tears, of the orphans and their woeswhat does he care? He asks you whether you ever had any house property and assures you that if you had, you would soon have as hard a heart as he has. But has the man no heart at all? No, Sir, he has no life except that which pulsates to the chink of his money bags. The zeal of his gold has eaten him up!

Now, it is just so with us as to Christ. We have no eyes or ears for anything but for our dear Lord who bled and died, and who is gone up into His Glory. Now sin may charm, but we have the adders ear. Sin may put on all its allurements, but we are blind as bats to its beauty and wish to be. We are dead to sinso says the text. Another passion has sucked up our lifeand our life for sin is all dried up. And yet again, sin appears to us now to be too mean and trivial a thing for us to care about. Picture Paul going along the Appian way towards Rome. He is met by some of the Christians far away at Puteoli, and afterwards by others at the Three Taverns.

Can you imagine what was their conversation as Paul walked chained along the highway? Why, they would commune concerning Jesus and the Resurrection and the Spiritand saints converted, and souls in Heaven! I can conceive that the soldiers and others who would come up with them along the Roman road, stopping at the taverns, and so on, would have many things to talk of. One of them would say, There will be a grand fight at the amphitheatre next week. And another would say, Oh, but over at such a theater there is a splendid showa hundred beasts are to be slain in a single night, and the famous German gladiator is to exhibit his prowess tomorrow evening.

And others would say, Who is to be commander in Spain next year? Who is appointed over the Praetorian Guard? And the babble would be about a thousand thingsbut the Apostle would be supremely indifferent to it all. Not a topic that any one of those soldiers could bring before him, or any one of the people around him, could interest him. He was dead to the things to which they were alive and alive to the things to which they were dead. So is the Christian! The Cross has killed him and the Cross has quickened him! We are dead to sin that we should live unto righteousnessand now our very power to enjoy sin, if, indeed, we are resting in Christ, is gone from us!

We have lost, now, by Gods Grace, the faculty which once was gratified with these things. They tell us we deny ourselves many pleasures. Oh, Sirs, there is a sense in which a Christian lives a self-denying life, but there is another sense in which he practices no self-denial at all, for he only denies himself what he does not need and what he would not have if he could! If you could force it upon him it would be misery to him, his views and tastes are now so changed. Have you ever looked at a green field and marked the sparkling dew drops, and thought how bright they are? Did you ever then turn your eyes on the sun and look at him and try to stare him out of countenance?

If you have, I know what has happened, for when you looked down upon the landscape again, you could not see ityou seemed to have lost your eyesthey had been put out by the brightness on which you gazed. So you may look on the world of sin and see some beauty in it till you look at HIMand then the brightness of His Glory puts out your eyes! The world is dark and black, after that, and you wish it to be so. Let these eyes be forever sightless as the eyes of night, and let these ears be forever deaf as silence, rather than sin should have a charm for me, or anything should take up my spirit save the Lord of Love who bled Himself to death that He might redeem me unto Himself! This is the royal road to sanctification! The death of Christ becomes the death of sin. We see Him bleed for us and then we put our sin to death.

And it seems to me, Brothers and Sisters, and listen to it, as if the last sentence of our text told us thisBy His stripes you were healed. It is as good as if the Spirit said, There is the recipe for sanctification. If you want to know how to be dead to sin and alive unto righteousness, there it isHis stripes will heal you. The welts, the blue marks of His scourging these will take out the lines of sin. The wounds, the sweat, the death

throes of the Saviorthese will cure you of sins disease. You go to a physician and ask him to heal you. He gives you what we commonly call a recipe. What does recipe mean? Take. Ah, there is the cure for sin! We think that the cure for sin is to give something out from ourselves and to do some good thing. But in truth the cure for sin is, Take.

Take what? Take your dear Lords wounds and trust them! Take His griefs and rest in them! Take His death and believe in it! Take Himself and love Him! And by His stripes you are healed! Sanctification is by faith in Jesus Christ! We overcome through the blood of the Lamb. And oh, as the topmost stone is stained with the blood, so must the foundation be. And I say, in parting, to every man and woman to whom I have spokenas you and I shall meet at the Great White Throne at last, in the general assembly which shall be the last meeting of the sons of men, and the last partingif you would be found at the right hand of God, believe the message I have brought you, for it is the very Truth of God!

Do not only hear it, but act upon it, and before you leave this house I do pray that the Spirit of God may show you what it is to believe in Him, alone, who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree. And if you do, though your sins have been as scarlet, they shall be as wool. Though you have been the most atrocious offender existing on the face of the earth, you shall be clean every whit from every sin! You may have come here as black as Hell, but you shall go out pure as the white-robed hosts in Heaven, if you will but believe in Jesus. This is the washing in the fountain, the Fountain which alone can make us clean.

God help us to wash immediately, lest the time for washing be past and the time for judgment be today. God bless you, for His names sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON1 Peter 2.   
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OUR LORDS SUBSTITUTION   
NO. 2790

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, AUGUST 3, 1902.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, JUNE 23, 1878.

Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree. 1 Peter 2:24.

PETER had almost incidentally mentioned his Masters name and, having done so, he felt that he must enlarge upon that theme, for the name of Christ was very dear to him. He seems to again hear that thricerepeated question ringing in his ears, Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me? and he can still answer, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. So, having mentioned his Masters name, he feels that he must say something about Him. Oh, that we, also, may have such love for Christ that a touch of His hand, or a glance of His eyes may suffice to detain us! May we never be weary of hearing about Him! May His name exercise a sacred fascination upon us! May it cheer us in life and in death and be the theme of our song throughout eternity!

There is, perhaps, a special reason why Peter wrote, in this place, concerning the vicariousness of Christs death. He had just been alluding to another aspect of that death. In the 21st verse, he had said, Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps. Ah, thought Peter, they may, from my mentioning His death by way of example, draw the inference that Christ only died as our Exemplar. They may sayas, alas, so many in modern times have donethat the death of Christ was merely the completion of His life and that He is simply the Savior of men by setting before them a higher ideal of what men should be than they would otherwise have been. The Holy Spirit forewarned Peter of this danger and taught him how to avert it, in the best possible way, by adding this most significant sentence, Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree. It is quite true that Christ is our Exemplar, but no man can ever follow Christs example until he has first believed in Him as his Substitute and Savior. Christ did not come merely to be an examplewhen we are dead in trespasses and sins, of what use can His example be to us? It is life that dead men need and Christ came to bring us life! In our natural state, we are already condemned because we have not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. Of what use would an example of perfect innocence be to those who are already condemned? None whatever. But Jesus comes to bring us pardon bought with His own precious blood, that then, through gratitude to Him, we might begin a new lifeand then His example might be of service to us. It behooves us, first and foremost, to view Christ as the SinBearer, for, if we do not receive Him in that capacity, we have missed eternal life altogether and all our professed imitation of Christ will be but mere empty formalitywhich will fall far short of the righteous requirements of God.

We are going, therefore, to meditate upon the great central doctrine of our Lords Substitution. I shall have nothing new to say upon it, for I find that the old, old story has an endless charm for Believers and I wish to tell it again in such a way that if it should have been, up to now, unknown to any hearer, he may give heed to it and, this very hour, find peace and pardon through believing in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior!

First, I shall speak upon the blessed fact mentioned in our textWho Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree. And then, secondly, I shall call your attention to some points of practical instruction which may be found in this blessed fact.

I. First, then, let us think about THE BLESSED FACT ITSELF. That fact is that Christ Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree. This fact is the sum and substance, the pith and marrow of the whole Gospel, so, lay hold of it, feed upon it and live by it. God, of old, in Infinite Justice, determined that sin must be punished, but He also determined to save His people, whom He had given to His Son by the Everlasting Covenant. How could both these results come to pass? Divine Wisdom devised the plan of substitution and Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became Man, that He might be able to be the Substitute for sinners. It was fitting that He should take that position, for He had, by His Covenant with the Father, assumed the place of Head of the race of mankindthe second Adam, the Lord from Heaven. The people, whom He had chosen as His own, were all represented in Him and, therefore, He was fully qualified to stand in their place and to serve and suffer in their place.   
And He did so, first, because the sins of Gods people were laid upon Him. What says Isaiah? The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. If you carefully read through that 53rd Chapter of Isaiah, you will notice that, several times, in so many distinct words, the sin of Christs people is said to have been transferred to Him and borne by Him. I remember, once, hearing a certain Divine assert that sin could not be transferred but it was, for Holy Scripture again and again declares that it was. Blessed is the man, says David, unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity. The man has committed iniquity, but it is not imputed to him because it has been imputed to Christ Jesus, his Substitute, who stood in that sinners place and took upon Himself that sinners sin. In vision, I can see the Christ of God coming forth from the Father, bearing upon His shoulders the enormous load of His peoples guilt. It well near crushes Him with its awful weight, but He presses on. He is Himself perfectly innocent, but sins not His own are reckoned to Him, for He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bore the sin of many.   
In due time, in consequence of this imputation, our blessed Master bore our sins in another sense, namely, by answering for them at the bar of God. As Joseph Hart sings   
*Came at length the dreadful night   
Vengeance with its iron rod   
Stood, and with collected might   
Bruised the harmless Lamb of God*because He was the Sin-Bearer. Christ then appeared with His peoples sin upon Himso, when Divine Justice came to punish sin and found it upon Christ, it arrested Him and bruised Him so sorely that He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground. Justice took Him off, like a malefactor, to the Hall of Judgment and there was no one to declare His innocence or to plead for His release. He was brutally scourged and given over to the Roman soldiers, that they might treat Him as they wouldfor nothing was thought of Him, even as He had made Himself of no reputation. In the hall of the Praetorian guards, all manner of insults were heaped upon Him.   
Then they took Him out to the hill of doomthey nailed Him to the transverse wood, they lifted Him up on high, they fixed His Cross in the earth and there they let Him die, hanging by His hands and feet. Thus was He, Himself, bearing, in His own body on the tree, the sins of all His people and, all the while, His soul was being tortured with sufferings that cannot be described in human language! We must be perfectly pure, as He was, before we can even begin to understand how sin must have affected Him. We must be perfectly happy, as He was, before we can comprehend how He suffered when He was enduring the wrath of God for our sakes and was forced to cry, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? That was because He was bearing the consequences of our sin. He took the sin upon Him and, therefore, He also took the sorrow which resulted from the sin. He took the place of the guilty, so He must suffer the penalty which they had incurred. And the text tells us, as a matter of fact, that He, Himself, bore our sins in His own body on the tree.   
Before we pass on, let us draw the right inference from this blessed factnamely, that if Christ bore our sins, we need not bear themno, we do not bear them. If, as a believer in Jesus, I know that He bore my sin, it cannot be on my back and also on His! It cannot be that He took the sin upon Himself, yet left it upon me. A thing cannot be in two places at one time, so, if He bore my sin, I am clear! Again is verified the text I quoted to you just nowBlessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity. How can He impute it to him when He has already imputed it to Christ and caused Christ to suffer in that mans place? So there, again, I say, is the very core of salvation, the heart of the Gospel Christ suffering in the place of all who believe in Him!   
Note carefully the words of the text. It says not only that Christ bore our sins, but, from the full, unqualified expression that is used, it is implied that He bore them allWho Himself bore our sins. That is to say, whatever sins a Believer has ever committed, or ever will commit, Christ bore them on the Cross! Sins original and sins natural. Sins actual and practical. Sins of thought, word and deed. Heinous sinblasphemies, uncleanness. Those that are thought to be the minor sinsevil imaginations, hasty words. I will not go on with the list, for time would fail me to get to the end of it! But when you have mentioned all the sins you can think of, I can still say that the text covers them allWho Himself bore our sinsnot some of them, not the greater ones, not the lesser ones to the exclusion of the greater, but all our sinsin His own body on the tree   
*Covered is our unrighteousness,   
From condemnation we are free.*   
And the text, from its unguardedness, teaches us that Christ bore all our sins completelyWho Himself bore our sins. They were all laid upon Him and He did effectually carry them away and make an end of them. He bore them to the tree, says the margin, and crucified them there. He carried them upon His shoulders, up to the Cross and there, once and for all, annihilated them, so that they have ceased to be. O my Soul, rejoice as you look upon the Sin-Bearer who made a full, complete and absolutely acceptable Atonement, finished transgression, made an end of sins, made reconciliation for iniquity and brought in everlasting righteousness, as it was foretold that the Messiah would do! In this, we do rejoiceyes, and will rejoice!   
The text also implies, from its being free from any kind of limitation, that Christ alone bore themWho Himself bore our sins. There was no Peter, or James, or John to help Him in His hour of deepest need. Nor did an angel tread that winepress side by side with Him. Alone and singlehanded, our great Champion entered the arena and won the victory for us! Let this be one of the chief articles in our creed henceforth and forevermore. I say to the man who calls himself a priest, No, Sir, I do not need any absolution from you, even though you may be a lineal descendant of the Apostlesthrough Judas Iscariotfor I am perfectly satisfied with the forgiveness which I have obtained by faith in Christ Jesus! You say that you can offer for me the unbloody sacrifice of the mass in order to help in the putting away of my sin, but I need nothing of the kind, for Christ, Himself, bore our sins in His own body on the tree. On that tree, He Himself said of His atoning Sacrifice, It is finished. This man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified. Let these words roll out like a thunder peal and let all men know that there is no need of any addition to that Sacrificeeither of penance, or purgatory, or human merit, or priestly powernor can there be any repetition of it! Loves redeeming work was done by Christ, alone, and in Him we rest and in Him, alone!   
The sweetness, however, of this passage lies in the fact that Christ bore our sins. Come, Brothers and Sisters, can we all say thatChrist bore our sins? I am not now talking of the general aspect of the work of Christ, for it had a special aspect to Believers and the full blessings of the Atonement only comes to them. Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it. Can we say, then, Who Himself bore our sins? Let me put it in the singular, and pass it round to each one herecan you say, my Friend, Who Himself bore my sins in His own body on the tree? My sins, so many and so heavy, and once so terrible to meHe bore them, bore them all and I am clear and free from every charge because He bore them! This is being saved. I trust Christ and know, in consequence, that He bore my sinsthen I am saved! How many of you are thus saved? May the heart-searching Spirit of God go from soul to soul and constrain you to give a true answer! And if you cannot reply in the way we wish, give the other answer and say, I do not know that Christ bore my sins.   
When you get home, write that down, and look at itI am not trusting in Christ. I have no part nor lot in Him. My sin is pressing upon me, but I have no saving interest in Christ. I think that if you were to write that down legibly with pen and inkand then sit down a little while and think it overit might be much more useful to you than any word of mine. No, Sir, you say, I would not like to write that. But, surely, you may write what is true! A man ought not to be afraid to know the truth about his spiritual state, nor yet to write it for his own eyes to see. I do not ask you to print it in the newspaper or in a book, but just to put it down for your own informationI am without Christ. I am an unbeliever. I am still in my sins. If I die as I am, I shall be lost. Oh, may God grant that you may see your true condition and feel it and not rest until you can say, Now I have believed, and I know that Christ, Himself, bore my sins in His own body on the tree. If you are trusting Him, you know that He did so. Your faith is the evidence of your election and the proof of your redemptionand if you do but simply and completely trust Him, He has saved you and you may rejoice in the fact that, in the sight of God, you are fully and freely forgiven!

II. Now, secondly, I am to call your attention to SOME POINTS OF PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION which may be found in the blessed fact mentioned in our text. I always like to be as practical as possible in my preaching and I think there are, in this great Truth of our Lords Substitution, some practical lessons which we shall do well to learn.   
The first is this. See the self-sacrifice of Christ and imitate it. Jesus Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree. He was not forced to do it. He might still have remained in Heaven, sharing in all His Fathers Glory, forever, but, out of love and pity for us, He descended from His Divine eminence, veiled His Godhead in our humanity and came to earth among the sons of men that He might bear His peoples sins up to the tree and away from the tree. Can anybody measure the self-denial of the Savior in acting thus? Is it possible for us to estimate the stoop of love and the amazing suffering which He endured for us? Then, let us learn from Him what self-sacrifice means. I do not believe in our service for Christ always being pleasant. If we are truly His servants, there will sometimes be a galling of the shoulders by the yoke of our servitude and we shall delight to be thus galled for His sake. Has any Christian ever given what he ought to give until he reaches the pinching point when he has to deny himself in order that he may give to Gods cause? Has any Christian ever done for his Savior what he ought to do if he has not come to the point of real self-denial in it? To go to the Sunday school class when it is a pleasing duty, is all very well, but, in the service of our Master, we ought to keep on at such work even if the brain should be weary and if, in such trying weather as we often have, it should seem to be almost impossible to get through it.   
I have sometimes heard it said, Oh, but the Lord cannot expect us to do that! There are two ways of looking at that expression. I do not expect much from some people, but from those for whom Christ died, from those whose sins He bore, we ought to expect anything and everything of which they are capable if they act up to the measure of their sacred obligations! Many servants of our Lord Jesus Christ have been content to be poor, or have been satisfied to abide in a very lowly station in life, or have been willing to go to distant lands and suffer great privations and hardships. And the secret of their willingness to deny themselves has been that each of them could truly say, Christ denied Himself for my sake. He bore my sin on Calvarys Cross and if His blessed and perfect shoulders could bear the load of my sin, shall I not bear the far lighter load of His service? Shall I not take His yoke upon me and learn of Him, as He has bid me do?   
Are you worried by the little troubles of the family? Are you getting tired of trying to bear a testimony for Christ in the workshop? Are you becoming weary, my Brother, or my Sister? Then remember what Paul wrote to the Hebrews, Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds. Think how He bore your sins and from this moment feel, I will count self-denial to be a luxury if I may but exhibit to Him my love and let Him see that I am not altogether oblivious of that which He endured for me. Come, Beloved, can you not be stirred up to some nobler form of love than you have ever before known? Is there not something more that you could do, or something more that you could suffer by way of proving your love to Him who, Himself, bore your sins in His own body on the tree?   
In the next place, see what abasement there was in Jesus Christ bearing our sins. Up, up, up, our soaring thoughts may fly, but we can never reach the height of His magnificence in the eternal world with the Father! Yet down, down, down He comes, till He is a poor Manno, morea despised Man, a suffering Man, a condemned Man, a crucified Man, a dead Man lying in a borrowed tomb! That is a wondrous stoop, but the greatest condescension of all is indicated by that expression in our text Who Himself bore our sins. Well, then, what say we concerning this abasement of our Lord? Why, surely, that we ought to be ready to be despised and reproached for Christs names sake! I think we get off wonderfully easy, in these days, compared with what some Christians have had to bear for Christs sake and the Gospels. Yet, in days gone by, some of us have known what it was to have all manner of evil spoken against us falsely and to be reviled again and again for Christs sake. It is a good thing when a Christian minister feels that he has given up his character and everything else to Christ, so that, if men choose to slander and abuse him, he will bear it all so long as he may thereby but honor Christ and keep his conscience clean.   
If you are a Christian, you must expect to be dragged through all the muddy pools that your persecutors can find. If you do even a little wrong, they will magnify it a thousand timesand if you do no wrong at all, the most blameless life will not enable you to escape from the envenomed tongue of slander! If that is your lot, just bear it. Be willing to be Christs servant, to be, as the Apostle Paul was, Christs branded slave, bearing in your body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Say, to your Lord, as Thomas Haweis wrote   
*If on my face, for Your dear name,   
Shame and reproaches be,   
All hail reproaches and welcome shame,   
If You remember me.*   
I know that some of you young people get dreadfully frightened at the ugly epithets which have been applied to you. Perhaps you say that you do not like to be ridiculed because you are a Christian. Why, you ought to be proud of such treatment! Just adopt the very nickname that they give you and let it be to you what the stars and garters are to the nobility of Englandbear it as the insignia of a Knight Companion of the Cross of Christ. The Lord grant you Grace, in this matter, to account the reproach of Christ to be greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt!   
Those two things are, I think, clearly enough set forth in the textour Saviors self-sacrifice and self-abasement. And it is equally clear that those who would be His followers should imitate Him, as far as they can, in both these respects.  
Notice, next, our Saviors willingness, as it is set forth in the text. Who Himself bore our sins. There was, in His self-sacrifice and selfabasement, the utmost spontaneity, freeness, voluntariness. Nobody pressed Him to it. He Himself did it and He did it of Himself, unprompted, unsolicited. No sinners followed at His heels, crying, Blessed Savior, bear our sins for us! No necessity, except the wondrous love of His own great heart, constrained Him to be a Sin-Bearer. He could truly say, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Your will, O My God. He told His disciples that He had a baptism to be baptized with and that He was straitened until it was accomplished. He loved us so much that He could not be content without dying for us. Now, mark, this is the way in which we ought to serve Godfreely, cheerfully, gladly. I dislike, above all things, that kind of holiness into which a man has to be flogged, for it could only be a mockery of holiness! I loathe that generosity which only flows through much pumping and that work for Christ which results from such a remark as this, You must do it. Somebody will think ill of you if you dont. Bear your fruit to Christ freelydo not need to have it forced, like hothouse grapes. Grow on the wall and bear your fruit freely. The best juice that comes from the grape is that which leaps from it on the first pressingand the best piety in the world, the best virtue, the best service is that which a man freely yields to Christ and His cause.   
We say that one volunteer is worth five pressed men in the defense of ones country and I am sure that he is. The mercenary is but a poor tool compared with the noble citizen who grasps his sword to defend his hearth and home. And, in the service of Christ, troops of slaves may be urged forward, but they never do anything for Him. It was said of the Persians that whenever they went to battle, you could hear the sticks of the captains who were beating the soldiers to make them fightand they won no victories. Look, on the other hand, at the brave Spartanhe was glad at the very thought of fighting, he lived in it. He was a born lion and he rushed to the fray, delighted to be in the fiercest conflict! He was the man to win battles and so is it with the Christian to whom the service of God is his holidayhis holy day. To serve the Lord Christ in any way that is possible to him, is his highest ambition. He does not wish to be excused. He desires to be invited. As the eagles gather to the place where the carcass is, so do men of this stamp gather to the spot where the service of God can best be carried on! Leap to the front, Christians! Leap to the front and let no one hold you back, for, if Christ willingly suffered for us, we ought willingly and gladly to serve Him!   
I ask you, next, to notice the reality of our Lords Substitution. Who Himselfwhat? Proposed to bear our sins? Oh, no! That rendering will not do! We must try again. Who Himself promised to bear our sins? No, no! That is not correct. Who Himself began to bear our sins and then became tired of the task? No! Yet I have read, in somebodys book, something very much like that. Who Himself talked about bearing our sins? Who Himself had a good word to say in commendation of somebody else who would bear our sins? No! None of these are correct readings, for our Lords Substitution is something actual and real! He bore our sins and bore them, not according to fiction or imagination, but, in His own bodyin His own hands, His own feet, His own sideHimself bore our sins in His own body on the tree. The bearing of our sins was as real as our sins were! Well, then, let us take care that we render to the Lord Jesus whatever actual service we can in return for His actual Sacrifice for us!

Did you ever hear a thrilling sermon or a very stirring speech about serving the Lord and, as you listened to it, did you keep on saying to yourself, Yes, I will do that! I will excel others in earnestness! I will make great sacrifices for the cause of God! I will be very prayerful! I will be one of the most devoted Christians who ever lived? So you talked and patted yourself on the back and said, Well done! But you never did anything, yet you gave yourself the credit for doing it.   
I have heard of a man who owed a great deal of money and when a bill became due, he got it renewedand then he came away and said, There, that is all right now. And when the bill became due again, he did the same, yet he never paid sixpence of the debtbut he always walked away and seemed as pleased as if it had been paid! We have far too many professing Christians of that kindthey are great at moving and seconding resolutions and making fine speechesbut nothing ever comes of them!   
Now, in our Lords case, there was actual, solid service and suffering for us! So do not try to put Him off, Brother, Sister, with good intentions and with the repetition of those intentions again and again! Come, now, for the love we bear His namelet us really get at actual service for Him. If it is only the teaching of one poor little boy to read his Bible, it will be far better than talking about what we mean to do, even if we utter it with commanding eloquence which might move the nations!   
To drop two-pence into the offering box will be better than writing a fine essay on generosity and never giving anything! To breathe one real fervent prayer to God will be better than a long parade of your own excellencies, or a doleful talk about the sad declension of the Church and I know not what besides! There is nothing that can take the place of real service for Christ! We have a great deal of talk from some people who do very little work.   
I sometimes wish that those who write me long epistles about various plans and schemes and who draw out elaborate details of what could be done if everybody gave so much, would only give their share and not make any plans at all! We can all make plans when we need them, but a more important thing is to take our share and to do our part in the actual work. If we all do that, some of us will be following our Lord better than we are now doing.   
My last observation is thisNotice the strong personality of our Lords SubstitutionWho Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree. He did not employ anybody else to accomplish the great work of our redemption, but He did it Himself, in His own proper Person. You and I do not believe in sponsors, but, assuredly, one of the worst forms of sponsorship is that of a man getting somebody else to do his work for Christ. I sometimes admire the way in which certain persons, who have no special gifts, will try to get others to do what they cannot do. A friend said to me, I have often wished to preach the Gospel, but I am slow of speech and I have come to years at which I cannot expect to ever become fluent. So I want to find somebody who has a ready tongue and who can speak well for my Master. I wish you could tell me of such a man. I said that I thought I knew several, but what would be the good of them? Because, he said, I will sponsor oneI will find the means for his support so long as he will go about and preach Jesus Christ.   
That seemed to me to be a right thing, especially when the gentleman said, I do speak for Christ as much as I can. Many Christian people say, We are doing a great deal at our church. We have an excellent Sunday school. We have an admirable Tract Society. We have a capital Young Mens Institute. Wait a moment, Friend, and let us sit down and figure it all out. What class do you take in the Sunday school? Oh, ahem! Ahem! I dont take any. I thought so, but what part do you take in the tractdistribution? Oh, there are 50 or 60 distributors, Sir! Yes, but what part do you take in it? None at all, I can see. Well, our church does a great deal for home missions. But what do you do for home missions? I see that some of you smile at this personal question. I wonder whether that is because you would not like to be pushed into a corner in that way! But I want to push you into that corner! I want to get you to answerwithout any personal questioning from meby taking stock of yourself! An owl is a fine bird to look at, but he is a very small bird when he is pluckedhe is nearly all feathersand I think that a great many Christian professors are very much like owls. They are fine birds to look at, but it is mostly feathersis it mostly feathers with you?   
Let me remind you of our textWho Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree. There is a poor Christian woman lying bedridden. She very seldom has a visitordo you know her? Yes, I know her, and I got a city missionary to call upon her. But the text says, Who Himself bore our sins. Poor Mary is in great need. Yes, I know, Sir, and I asked somebody to give me something to give to her. ListenWho Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree. There is your sister, who is unconverted. Yes, Sir, I know it, and I-I-I have asked Mrs. So-and-So to speak to her. Who Himself bore our sins. Can you not get to that point and do something yourself? But I might do it badly. Have you ever tried to do it at all? I believe that personal service for Christ, even when it is far from perfect, is generally much more efficient than that sort of substituted service which so many prefer. Oh, if we could but get all those who are members of our churches to personally serve the Lord Jesus Christ, what a powerful church we would have! Would not the whole South of London soon feel the power of this church of more than 5,000 members if you all went to this holy wareach man, each womanby himself or herself? But it is not so. Many of you just talk about it, or propose to do something, or try to get other people to do something.   
Well, but really, Sir, one says, what could I do? My dear Friend, I do not know exactly what you could do, but I know that you could do something. Oh, but I have no abilities! I could not do anything! Now, suppose I were to call to see you and, meeting you in your parlor, I were to say, Now, my dear Friend, you are no good to us. You have no abilitiesyou cannot do anything. I am afraid that you would be offended with medo you not think that you would? Now, it is not true, is it? You can do somethingthere never yet was a Christian who had not some niche to occupyat least one talent to lay out in his Masters service! You young people who have lately joined the churchlittle more than boys and girlsbegin personally to serve Christ while you are yet young, or else I am afraid that we shall not be able to get you into harness in later life. And even those who are encumbered with large families and great businesses, or with old age and infirmities, yet say, nevertheless, We must not sit still. We must not be idle, we must do something for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We must serve Him who, Himself, bore our sins in His own body on the tree.   
In the spirit of this text, go forth and, even before you go to bed, do something to prove your love to Jesusand unto His name be glory forever and ever! Amen and Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **1 PETER 2.**

Verses 1-3. Therefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby: if, indeed, you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. If you have once had that sweet taste in your mouths, you will wish to have it always and you may do so if you continue to drink the unadulterated milk of the Word of God and do not sour that good milk through tempests of malice, envy and evil speaking.

4. To whom coming. We should always be coming to Christ. We have come to Him, we are coming to Him and we will keep on coming to Him To whom coming.

4. As unto a living stone. Sinking down, settling, resting on that Stonealways pressing closely upon Christ. To whom coming, as unto a living stone.

4, 5. Disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, you also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. All of you who are in Christ Jesus are the living stones in this spiritual temple! And you are also priests who offer up spiritual sacrifices. You need no material temple, for you are yourselves the temple. You need no other priest save the Great High Priest who has gone into the heavenly, for you are, yourselves, priests unto the Most High God.

6-8. Therefore also is it contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious: and he that believes on Him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe, He is precious: but unto them which are disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient whereunto also they were appointed. God grant that we may not be found among that unholy company who, rejecting Christ as a foundation, stumble over Him and, in consequence, find themselves broken to pieces!

9. But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Oh, the dignity which Christ has put upon the meanest Believer! What a high office and, consequently, what a solemn responsibility is ours!

10. Which in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Look back to what you were before your conversion. Whenever you are tempted to be proud of your present standing, remember the horrible pit and the miry clay out of which Sovereign Grace, alone, has plucked you! When you are on the throne, recollect the dungeon from which the Grace of God lifted you up. When you are in full possession of your spiritual faculties and are rejoicing in the Lord, do not forget the time when you lay sick, even unto death, until the Great Physician passed that way and healed you.

11-17. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lords sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; as free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honor all men. Honor even the poorest of men. Remember that they are men. Even though they are sunken in vice or crime, honor the manhood that is in them, however much you may detest their crimes. Honor all men.

17-20. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when you are buffeted for your faults, you shall take it patiently but if, when you do well, and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. This is a correction of what we often hear a slandered person say. Soand-So has been spreading an evil report against me and I am depicted in a bad way. I would not have minded it if it had been true, but I cannot bear the slander, as it is false. My dear Friend, you ought not to mind it if it is not true! But, when you do well, and suffer for it, there is then an acceptableness with God if you take it patiently.

21-23. For even hereunto were you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again: when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judges righteously, who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes you were healed. For you were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. The Lord make this true of all of us, for Christs sake! Amen.

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A DIRE DISEASE STRANGELY CURED   
NO. 2887

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 9, 1904.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, MAY 28, 1876.

With His stripes we are healed. By whose stripes you were healed. Isaiah 53:5. 1 Peter 2:24.

IT is well for the preacher, every now and then, to go back to the very beginning and once again traverse the whole ground of the Gospel, just as the schoolteacher does when, after his pupils have advanced to some of the higher branches of study, he deems it desirable to make sure that they are well grounded in the very elements of knowledge, for he knows that it is quite possible for him to be doing mischief in leading them on to the higher forms of study unless they are thoroughly familiar with the first principles. So he goes back to the beginning over and over again and a wise preacher will do likewise. As for myself, it is not at all grievous to speak, in the simplest terms, of Jesus Christ and the plan of salvation and, for you, it is safe as Paul said in writing the same things to the Philippians. I have always noticed that those who love Christ best and who know the most about His great salvation are just the very people who delight to hear again and again

*The old, old story   
Of Jesus and His love.*

To persons of that sort, the Gospel message never grows stale! It is like that familiar song, Home, Sweet Home, which had such a strange influence over our soldiers in the Crimea, only that whereas the playing or singing of that tune brought on such an attack of homesickness that the men who heard it, when far from their native land, were rendered quite unfit for duty! In our case, the familiar story of Jesus and His dying love, and His substitutionary sufferings will never cease to charm our ears and fire our hearts with holy ardor in His blessed service. I am also quite sure that to those who least relish the Gospel and who know the least about it, it is beyond measure important that they should hear it as often as they possibly canfor it may be that one of these days it will find an entrance into their hitherto closed hearts.

Therefore, preacher, ring that bell again and again! It may be that when you rang it before, their ears were stopped up, so that they did not catch its sweet silvery note. So, ring it again, Brother, for it may be that the next time you do so, the Holy Spirit will unstop those ears that have been so long shut to the Gospelyes, even though the blessed bell has been ringing close to them for 70 years or more and they have grown gray, or white, without having ever caught the sweetness of its melodious music! So, ring that bell again, Brother! Yes, even if they are dying, let them still hear it, for the dying have, through the mercy of God, at last heard and heeded it and so have begun to hear the harps of angels only a few moments afterwards!

I am going, at least on this occasion, to do what I urge other preachers often to dothat is, keep to the simplicities of the faith, trying to show how the dire disease of sin is strangely cured by the stripes that fell upon our Lord Jesus Christfor both the Prophet and the Apostle say that we are healed by or with His stripes

I. So, I begin by saying THERE IS A DISEASE IMPLIED.   
You cannot heal men who are not sick, or wounded. It matters not how matchless the medicine iseven though it is the substitutionary suffering of the Son of God, Himselfif it is to heal, it must heal some malady or other and, Brothers and Sisters, it is quite true that there is a dreadful disease which has attacked the whole human race! You scarcely need that I should tell you that it is the disease of sin. It came to this earth when that old serpent, the devil, tempted Mother Eve. Then did this dire disease begin to course through human veins and it has descended to every individual of the whole race and, at this moment, it lurks within each one of us. Lurks, did I say? No, it is worse than that, for it has manifested itselfit has displayed its venom and virulence, it has shown itself in the life and, like the leprosy upon the brow of the man suffering from that dreadful diseaseit is visible upon us all!   
The disease of sin is exceedingly injurious. There are some diseases that affect the heart and sin has turned the heart of man to a stone. There are some other diseases that afflict the eyes and sin has blinded mans understandinghis mental and spiritual eyesight. There are some diseases that affect the hands and, in our natural condition, we cannot work for Gods Glory, or grasp Gospel blessings because the disease of sin has spiritually withered our hands. We never know at exactly what point the danger from any disease may be the greatest, for it is not always that which appears upon the surface which is most to be dreaded, as there are hidden places in the system which may be seriously affected without giving eternally any indication of the mischief. The Lord desires truth in our inward parts, but sin is the enemy of truth and it is only the Lord who can make us to know wisdom in our hidden parts, for sin has made us foolish, even as Solomon says that foolishness is bound in the heart of a child. Sin has injured us in more ways than I can tell. When man fell, it was no slight accident that happenedit was the utter ruin of humanity that occurred! There is something grand, at least in appearance, about humanity, even in its ruined condition, for it is the work of God, but, alas, the bat, the owl and the viper and many other unclean creatures have made human nature to be their foul den. Lucifer, son of the morning, is not the only one who has fallen as from Heaven, for this is also true of the whole race of mankind!   
You see, then, that this disease of sin is most injurious. There are some diseases that make men quite helpless. We have seen a man who could not do a days work even if his very life depended upon it. He could not lift so much as his handand he had to be fed, nursed and cared for by others, for he was paralyzed. And, in a spiritual sense, so far as anything in the nature of good works is concerned, sin has paralyzed man altogether. Indeed, it has taken his very life away from him so that he is truly said to be dead in trespasses and sins.   
Sin is also a disease which frequently becomes loathsome. In some men who have had the opportunity of indulging their evil propensities and passions to the utmost, sin has become so loathsome that even their fellow men have had to put them away by themselves. What are our prisons and many of our asylums but moral morgues where we have to shut up leprous men and women lest they should contaminate the whole race. I said that sin is a disease which frequently becomes loathsomeI meant loathsome to menfor it is always loathsome to God and to the holy angels. I suppose that the most lascivious ulcer which ever sickened the pitying gaze of a sympathizing onlooker could not be so disgusting to the mind of the most delicate man or woman as the slightest sin is to the mind of God. His righteous soul loathes and abhors it and He says of it, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate!   
Frequently, also, sin makes men a source of danger to others. It is really always so, although we do not always know it, for every evil example is contagious, every foul word is infectious and there is something about even the most moral man which it would not be safe for others to copy. Certainly, if he has that dreadful disease of unbelief in his heart, it would be wrong for any other person to imitate him in that respect, whatever excellences may stand side by side with it!

In some cases this disease of sin becomes very painful. I wish it were painful to every unhealed man and woman, for they might then be anxious to be cured of it. And let me tell you that there is no disease to which our flesh is heir that can bring such pain to a man as sin can, when once his conscience is quickened by the Holy Spirit! I think I know, as well as most men, what physical pain means, but I would sooner lie bedridden, suffering all the pains that could be crowded into a human body and lie like that for 70 years than endure the tortures of a guilty conscience, or the pangs of a soul under sentence of condemnation! I know that when I was under conviction of sin, I could sympathize with Job when he said, My soul chooses strangling and death rather than my life. It is a terrible thing to see yourself as in a mirror with all your wounds bleeding and to feel that you must say, They have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. It is a truly awful experience to see a devil in each wound and to realize that you are, yourself, the worst of devilsand to hear the curse of God, like distant thunder, rumbling far away, yet constantly coming nearer and nearer and to live in dread of the storm of everlasting wrath beating upon your unprotected head! Yes, the disease of sin is painful to the last degree to men whose consciences are not seared with a hot iron.   
Worst of all, this disease causes death. There is no human being in whom sin has not already caused spiritual deathand no one in whom it will not cause eternal death unless God, in His Almighty Grace, shall prevent it. The soul that sins, it shall die, is a declaration that is only too terribly true! What that death will be, I shall not, at this time, attempt to show, but such words as these, coming from the lips of Christ, may tell youThese shall go away into everlasting punishment, into the fire that shall never be quenched; where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched. May none of you ever have to endure that death which never diesthat dread eternal death of which the Lord of Life so positively speaks! Yet, as surely as God lives, you will experience even that dread doom unless this mortal malady is healed!  
II. Now, turning from the disease, let me point out to you THE MEDICINE MENTIONED IN THE TEXTWith His stripes we are healed.   
Brothers and Sisters, you know right well that the medicine here meant is the substitutionary suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ on His peoples behalf. I cannot imagine how anyone can read the chapter from which our first text is taken without seeing that the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. This is strange medicinethat the wounds of Jesus should heal the wounds which sin has madethat the wounds upon His back and shoulders where the cruel scourge struck Him, should, by their blueness, bring spiritual healing to usyet so it is. And this is the only remedy for the malady of sin. There have been many remedies recommended by various quackssome have come with their so-called sacraments. Some with their ceremonies, some with their philosophiesbut they are all quacks and their medicines have no healing power! The only cure for the wounds of sin is to be found in the stripes of Jesus!   
Let me put this point very plainly before you. Jesus Christ stood in the place of the sinner and borethat the sinner might not have to bearthe righteous anger of God because of the sinners guilt. They who say that we represent God as being angry and only to be appeased by the sufferings of His Son, know that they altogether misrepresent the Truth of God that we believe. What we say is that the Infinitely Holy God could not righteously have pardoned sin without having first vindicated His Justice and the majesty of His Law. I do not think that the enlightened conscience of man could ever have been contented without an atoning sacrifice. There is a necessity, not only with God, but also with us, for a sacrifice for sinwe must have it, or else our conscience cannot rest. This was the question I used to ask when I was in the depths of soul trouble How can God be just and yet forgive my sin? I wanted Him to forgive me, but I did not want Him to do it unjustly, for, if I could have obtained the forgiveness of my sin at the expense of His Justice, I do not think that such forgiveness could ever have appeared to me to be consistent with the Character of God!   
It was only when I understood that God could be both just and the Justifier of all who believe in Jesus that my soul rolled herself upon that blessed Truth of God and enjoyed such a luxury of rest as she had never even dreamt of before! Yes, God is infinitely just! His Justice is as stern as if it had never been blended with His Grace, yet He is as merciful and gracious as if justice had never been one of His attributes! This wonderful blending is gloriously manifested in the Atonement of Jesus Christ, where, mark you, God Himselffor Christ is God, as He says, I and My Father are OneGod, Himself, the righteous Judge, becomes the innocent Sufferer, standing in the culprits place and sheathing in His own heart the gleaming blade that must, otherwise, have been bathed in human blood! O Sirs, it is what Jesus bore that will heal youwhat Jesus bore when He stood in the place of sinners and offered to Infinite and inflexible Justice a full recompense for the crime, guilt, sin and transgression of all who believe in Him!   
Look away from your sin to the great Sin-Bearer! We will not trace Him through all His sufferings, but begin with the stripes He endured in the Garden of Gethsemane. Can you bear to look upon that terrible agony, to hear His piercing cries and to see His copious tears? Above all, can you bear to look upon His bloody sweat? His three favored disciples could not, for, He found them sleeping for sorrow. Can you bear to look upon Him as the rough men, guided by Judas, the traitor, seize Him and lead Him away to the various halls of judgment and charge Him with sedition and blasphemy? Can you endure to see Him forsaken by every friend He had and denied by that impetuous follower who had said, not, long before, Though I should die with You, yet will I not deny You? Can you bear to see Him surrounded by the brutal Roman soldiersmaltreated, mocked and spit upon by the unfeeling mob of railing legionaries? Can you bear to gaze upon His crown of thorns? Can you bear to listen to the blows from that awful scourge as they fall in quick succession upon His blessed back and shoulders?   
I must not go on to tell the sad, sad story at full lengthit is too sorrowful to relatebut you know how, at last, they fastened Him to the tree of the curse, then lifted Him up upon the Cross, dislocating all His bones as they dashed it into the socket in the earth which they had prepared to hold it. You have read of the fever which came upon Him till His mouth was dried up like an oven and His tongue clung to the roof of His mouth. Yet, after terrible as all this was, it was only the shell, the externals of His bodily suffering! The suffering of His soul was the very soul of His suffering. It was by the smiting of His body and the more terrible smiting of His soulthe suffering of His entire Manhood in unison with His Godheadthat He took away the sin of His people and opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers!   
Let me urge all of you who are diseased through sin to go for healing to those blessed wounds of Jesus! Long ago I learned the secret of this wondrous way of healing and, now, whenever my wounds bleed afresh, I go again to the

*Fountain filled with blood   
Drawn from Immanuels veins*   
for it is with His stripes that I am healed.

III. Now, thirdly, I want to say a little about THE HEALING HERE MENTIONED.   
Our second text speaks of it as a thing that was done in the pastBy whose stripes you were healed, so I would like you, my dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, to remember when you were healed years ago. Do you recollect the place where Jesus met with you? I remember, to a yard, where He revealed Himself to my soul. Some of Gods saints do not, but that does not matter in the least! A living man must have been born, at some time or other, even if he does not know when his birthday was. And as long as we have been healed, we need not be anxious to know when it took place. Still, it is helpful if we can recollect when God gave us healing through the wounds of His beloved Son.   
Let me try to describe the process of healing. First of all, the stripes of Jesus heal us by taking away the guilt of sin. That is the all-important work. By nature and by practice, too, we are guilty. But when we look to Christs stripes, we see our guilt laid upon Him and, as it cannot be in two places at one time, we know that it is not on us any longer. The moment that a poor sinner sees Christ bearing His burden of guilt and trusts Christ as his Burden-Bearer, his burden is all gone. We sang, a little while ago, that blessed hymn about Substitution in which one line says   
*Now theres no load for me.*   
There was a load on me, but Jesus took my load upon Himself, so

*Now theres no load for me.*

That was the grandest of all Gods transactions, when He took sin off the sinner and laid it upon His sinless Son! As the Prophet Isaiah says, All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, everyone to His own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Or as the Apostle Paul says, He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Yes, the sinner who believes in Jesus is no longer accounted guilty by God! Though black as night, before, the moment he looks to Christ, he becomes white as the newly-fallen snow. Though he was a stranger to God and condemned for his sin, as soon as he believes, he becomes accepted in the Beloved and he may shout with the Apostle Paul, Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us!

The stripes of Jesus are also an Infallible remedy for the disease of despair. What thousands of men and women in this world have been ready to lay violent hands upon themselves while under a sense of sin! They never had even half a glimpse of comfort till they were told that Jesus took their sin and carried it, in His own body, up to the tree and there forever made an end of it, that they might be saved! I should like those who do not believe in Christs substitution for sinners to have to deal with some troubled souls who have come to me. Ah, you may evoke, you may charm, you may use fine language and talk about the moral influence of the Sacrifice of Christbut what use will all that be to those who are on the borders of despair? Will you take from us, who have to deal with sin-sick souls, the only balm we have to give them? I have done with Christianity, I have done with the Bible, I have done with all preaching if you can once convince me that the Substitution of Christ is not a fact! This Truth of God is, to me, the kernel, the core, the marrow, the vital essence of the Gospel! With this remedy in my hands, I can turn despair into confidence! But, take this away and there remains nothing for me to preach to the despondent and the despairing. Let the man who can disprove itif disproved it can be, and that I do not believerecollect that he will have taken away from the sky of many of us the only sun that shines and from our life the only joy we have, for, if this Truth of God is gone, all is gone! O bleeding Savior, if You did not suffer in our place, it would have been better for us if we had never been born! But we know that Your stripes do heal the disease of despair, so we will still pass on the remedy to all whom we find in that terrible condition.

Bring the stripes of Jesus home to a manthey heal his soul of a thousand other ills, such as thisthe idea of trifling with sin. That is a very common disease. It is incidental to sin that men sin and think nothing of it. Oh, they say, What is sin? We are poor frail creatures and we make mistakes, but what of that? That is mans estimate of sin, but, O You bleeding Son of God, when we once get a clear view of Your wounds

*Sin does like itself appear.*   
See Gods only-begotten Son dying on the Cross that sin may be put away and you will never again think it a trifle! The Sacrifice of Calvary was upon a scale so vast that there is no human method of measuring it. God, the Creator, Provider and Judge of All, has taken upon Himself our Nature and made expiation for our sin by His own death in the midst of the utmost ignominy, shame and agony! Now, sin could not have been a little thing to need such an Atonement as that to put it awayand the man who believes in Jesus, henceforth looks on sin in the right light and never trifles with it again.

It also corrects his estimate as to eternal things. The other day he said, What do I care about Heaven or Hell? What is the Day of Judgment to me? These are bugbears to frighten children! What is it to me whether God is angry or not? Eternal things are for old women to think aboutI mind the main chance and make all the money I can. Ah, but a sight of Christ on the Cross cures all that! Now eternity seems to be everything and time insignificant! Now to be reconciled to God, to live to His Glory seems to be the one thing necessary! The Cross of Christ is the great rectifier of human judgments. We trifle no longer with eternal things, but they become of infinite concern to us.

Then, next, the wounds of Jesus cure us of the love of sin. By nature, we love sin, but when we understand what sin cost Christ, we cannot love it any longer. If you had a very favorite knife which you prized much, but someone took itand with it murdered your motheryou would loathe the instrument with which so foul a deed was done! And sin that you prized and played with has the blood of Christ on it. It cut Him to the very soul! So now you hate it. You say to yourself, How can I love that cursed thing that made my Savior bleed? There is no cure for the love of sin like the blood of Christ!

And it cures us, yet again, because it awakens the dull, inanimate soul which had long been indifferent to God, into life and love. When a man knows that Jesus died for him, he must love Him and serve Him. He cannot help doing so. You may tell him about the punishment of sin in terms of terror and you may describe the Glory of God in the most glowing language, but you cannot win a human heart. The deaf adder will not hear with such charming, but, O Jesus, if You say to a sinner, with Your own lips, I love you and I have given Myself for you, the iceberg-soul thaws into feeling, the granite begins to throb and the man says, Love You, my Savior? Oh, how can I have lived so long without loving You?

Love You? *Yes, I love You, and adore   
Oh, for Grace to love You more!*   
Nothing cures the hearts of coldness towards God like a sense of bloodbought pardonand that will dissolve a heart of stone!   
And so, let me add there is no form of mischief which sin takes, but  
the stripes of Jesus, when we come to know them, will heal us of them. If  
you love the world too muchyes, if you love it at allcome and drink   
from my Masters cup and it will make you feel yourself a stranger in the   
earth and you will set no store by this world any more. If you have been   
redeemed, you must have been a slave, so you will bow yourself in the   
dust with gratitude to your Redeemer. We see advertisements of medicines which are said to cure all diseases, but this is a medicine which   
will cure all ills. There is no form of the disease of sin upon which the   
stripes of Christ have not been triedand the wondrous medicine has   
healed in every instance! Oh, whom has it not healed? We have seen the   
harlot healed and she has become a joyous Magdalene singing chastely  
and sweetly the love song unto Him that washed her from her sins in His   
own blood! We have seen the thief touched with this sacred heal-all and   
he has become a saint amidst the seraphim above! We have seen a persecutor who has but taken a draught of this medicine and he has begun  
to preachand he has preached right on and he has said, Unto me, who   
am less than the least of all saints, is this Grace given, that I should  
preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. Yes, we  
have seen men lying at the very gates of Hell, in their own estimation,  
despairing, feeling the serpents of remorse twisting their desperate coils   
about them everywhere and the venom coursing through their blood  
and they have lifted up themselves and smiledand the serpents have   
dropped off them, as they have looked to the Son of Man, as the bitten  
Israelites looked to the bronze serpentand they have been healed at   
once! I would that any here who doubt this, would try it for themselves.   
Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good, for there never was a soul yet  
that received this medicine of the stripes of Jesus who was not thereby  
healed!   
IV. Now, to close, WHAT IS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO GET THIS   
HEALING?   
The answer is, first, you must believe this to be true. You must believe   
in the wondrous mystery of God Incarnate. There were many witnesses to   
Christs Incarnation and death and there are four narrators of the story   
of His life and Sacrifice. There were many who saw Jesus risen from the   
dead and saw Him till He rose to Heaventhey knew that they saw Him   
and many of them died as martyrs because they said so. They were simple, honest witnessesnot ecclesiastics trained in twisting language and   
inventing fictions. They were fishermen and, many of them, poor men,   
with a few of another rank, but they all saw Jesus and they saw His miracles. They saw Him tread the sea and they saw Him dieand saw Him   
after He was risenand they tracked Him till He went up into Glory! And   
they received His Spirit and, in His name, they worked miraclesand  
they were quite sure that what they testified was true. Some of us have   
believed their testimony and we have been healed by this medicine. And   
if you would be healed, you must receive it yourselves.   
I think I hear you say, Why, I have always believed the Bible to be   
true. Well, then, next, you must take the medicine. What does the physician put at the beginning of his prescription? A great R, which stands   
for the Latin word, Recipe.What does that mean? Take. Take of suchand-such a drug so much, and of another, so much. That is what the   
Gospel saysWhoever will, let him take the water of life freely. That  
word I leave with you, Recipetakereceive. Take what? Why, take the   
sufferings of Christ to be instead of your sufferings! Trust in Him to save   
you now because He died for all who trust Him! Rest yourself on Him  
now!   
Suppose I should trust Him and He should not save me? Ah, Soul,   
that were to suppose Him to be a liarand that cannot be! He that believes in Him is not condemned. Or, as He put it Himself, He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. You have to come to Him just as   
you are and trust Him to save you, relying upon the merit of His blood   
and righteousness to stand for you before the Justice of God. Can you do   
that? Why, says one, it seems so simple! And are you going to quarrel  
with it because it is simple? Are you as foolish as Naaman who would not   
wash in Jordan because it was so simple? He wanted the Prophet to perform a great many ceremonies, but he would not at first bring himself   
down to wash, that he might be clean! Surely, my Friend, you are not  
such a fool as that! I will give you credit for more sense. But do you really mean that if I trust my soul with Christ, believing He can save me, I   
am saved? Mean it? Mean it? If that is not so, I am not saved myself, for   
this is where I stand! I have believed in Jesus Christ and rested myself  
on Him. and if He does not, cannot, or will not save me and I should ultimately be ashamed of my hope, I must be damnedfor I have not a   
second hope! You have heard of the fox that had three holes to run to

but the Christian has only oneand if that is stopped up, There is none  
other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be   
saved. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that   
whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. I do not know what you think about sermons. Perhaps you imagine   
that preaching is very easy work. It is not so to me. After having been  
laid aside sick, I tell you that if I could crawl to this pulpit on my hands   
and knees, it would be a delight to me to once again proclaim my Masters Gospel! But, at the same time, I feel that I may have very few more   
opportunities of preaching and, as the Lord lives, before whom I stand,  
my anxious desire is that every time I preach, I may clear myself of the   
blood of all menthat if I step from this platform to my coffin, I may have   
told at least all I knew of the way of salvation! I wish you unconverted   
ones could bring yourselves to take this Word of God home to yourselves,  
for, some day you will hear the Gospel for the last timeyou will listen to the last invitationand this may be the last time you will hear the story of the dying Savior.   
Will you have Him now, or not? With some of you, it is now or never! Hark to the ticking of the clock! As the pendulum swings to and fro, it says to some of you, Now or never! Now or never! Now or never! Now or never! Will you trust your soul with Jesus? If you will, the soft persuasions of His blessed Spirit are guiding you that way. Cast your guilty soul on Him and you are saved! But if you will have another Savior, or be your own Savior and reject Christ, I am clear of your blood! And when we stand before that dread tribunal when Heaven and earth shall shake, and reel, and pass away like a mist before the rising sun, you will have no one but yourself to blame that you are lost! God save you, for Jesus Christs sake! Amen!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:   
**MATTHEW 27:27-54.**

Verses 27-30. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered unto Him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped Him and put on Him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. Ridicule is very painful to bear at any time and soldiers have been masters of that cruel art when they have been encouraged in it by their leaders. Remember, Brothers and Sisters, who it was that bore all this shameful treatment from these brutal menyour Lord and the angels Lordthe Maker of Heaven and earth who had deigned, for a while, to veil his Deity in human flesh! And there He stood, to be set at nothingto be made nothing ofby those rough Roman legionaries, the creatures of His own hands whom He could have destroyed in a moment by a word or a wish! What matchless condescension our gracious Redeemer displayed even in His own deepest degradation and agony!

31, 32. And after that they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, and put His own raiment on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him. And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; he they compelled to bear His Cross. And I think that he must have been a glad man to have such an honor thrust upon him, yet you need not envy him, for there is a cross for you, also, to carry. Bear it cheerfully. If anything happens to you by way of ridicule for Christs sake and the Gospels, bow your shoulder willingly to the burden and, as knights are made by a stroke from a sword held in their sovereigns hand, so shall you be made princes of the realm of Christ by bearing the Cross after Him!

33. And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull. We do not know why it was so called. There have been many conjectures concerning the name, but they are only conjectures. It was probably just a little knoll outside the gate of the citythe common place of execution for malefactors. The special points to be noted are that Jesus suffered outside the gate, in the regular place of doomthe Tyburn or Old Bailey of Jerusalemand so was numbered with the transgressors.

34. They gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall. A stupefying draught was usually given to the criminals who were crucified, to mitigate their agony. But Christ did not wish for that to be done in His case.

34. And when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink. He came to earth that He might suffer and He would retain all His faculties while suffering. He would have every nerve made into a straight road for the hot feet of pain to travel over, for He would drink, even to the last dregs, every drop that was in the cup of suffering for His peoples sin.

35, 36. And they crucified Him, and parted His garments, casting lots that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet, They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots. And sitting down they watched Him there. Some of them gloating their cruel eyes with the sight of His suffering. Others watching Him out of mere curiosity. But there were some, hard by the Cross, who stood there to weep in sympathy with Hima sword piercing through their own hearts while the Son of Man was being put to death.

37. And set up over His head His accusation written, THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. And so He is. When will the Jews acknowledge Him as their King? They will do so one day. Perhaps they will do so when Christians begin to think and speak more kindly of them than they usually do. When the hardness of heart on our part towards them shall pass away, it may be that their hardness of heart towards Christ will also pass away. Long have they been despised, oppressed and persecuted in many lands, so that, by some means, they might be brought to look, in penitence, upon Him whom they crucifiedand to claim Him as their Lord and Savior!

38-40. Then were there two thieves crucified with Him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. And they that passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads and saying, You that destroyed the temple, and build it in three days, save Yourself. If You are the Son of God, come down from the Cross. That is the devils old DoctrineSave yourself. Look out for yourselves. Live for yourselves. Be selfish. But Christ could never act like that. He came to live and die for others. Save yourself, was not the Doctrine that He either preached or practiced. And this is another old taunt of Satan and those who follow himIf You are the Son of God, come down from the Cross and we will believe in You. There are plenty who would be willing to believe in Christ, but not in Christ Crucified. He was a good Man, they say, a great Prophet, no doubt far in advance of His times, and so on. But, if you talk like that, you are not on safe ground, for if Christ was not the Son of God, at any rate He professed to be and He made people think He wasand if He was not, He was an impostor and not a good Man at all! You must either repudiate Christ altogether, or take Him with His Crossit must be Christ Crucified, or no Christ at all.

41-44. Likewise also the chief priest mocking Him with the scribes and elders said, He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him: for He said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also. Those who were crucified with Him and were sharers of His misery.

44-46. Which were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama Sabachthani? That is to say, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? This was the climax of His griefnot merely to suffer intense agony of body, not only to be mocked alike by priests and people but to be forsaken of His God. Yet this was necessary as a part of the penalty that was due to sin. God must turn away from anyone who has sin upon him, so, as sin was laid upon Christ, God had to turn His face even away from His well beloved Son because He was bearing His peoples sins upon the accursed tree.

47-49. Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calls for Elijah. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink. The rest said, Let Him be, let us see whether Elijah will come to save Him. Mocking Him even in His prayers, for they well knew the difference between Eloi and Elijah!

50. Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. You know what He said when He cried with a loud voiceIt is finished.

51-54. And, behold, the veil of the Temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks split; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept, arose, and came out of the graves after His Resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with Him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquakes, and these things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly that was the Son of God.

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SARAH AND HER DAUGHTERS   
NO. 1633

DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 28, 1881, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bore you. Isaiah 51:2.

**Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters you are, as long as you do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. 1 Peter 3:6.**

I DESIRE to thank God for having had the privilege of preaching in Exeter Hall, yesterday, to a large congregation from the whole of the second verse of the 51st of IsaiahLook unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bore you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him. [See No. 1596, HEARKEN AND LOOKOR, ENCOURAGEMENT FOR BELIEVERS preached on behalf of the Baptist Missionary Society on the morning of April 27,1881.] On that occasion I confined my remarks to Abraham and tried to make prominent the facts that God called him while he was a heathen man, one man and a lone manand yet He blessed him and made him the founder of His people, multiplying his seed as the stars and as the sand of the seashore. I devoutly beseech the Lord to accept my testimony to His power and to increase the faith of the many of His servants to whom I spoke on that occasion. His Holy Spirit gave me the wordmay He cause His saints to feed upon it!

Now, I never like to do an injustice to anybody and I feel that I did not, in that sermon, speak sufficiently about Sarah, though I did not quite forget her. Let us make up for our omissions. If we had Abraham at Exeter Hall yesterday morning, we will have Sarah at the Tabernacle, tonight, and maybe we shall learn a lesson from her holy character as well as from that of her husband. And the two lessons combined may go to the perfecting of each other. May our great Teacher, the Holy Spirit, now instruct us! To begin with, let us note what a happy circumstance it is when a godly, gracious man has an equally godly and gracious wife.

It is ill when there is a difference, a radical difference, between husband and wifewhen one fears God and the other has no regard for Him. What a pain it is to a Christian woman to be yoked with an unbelieving husband! In a case which I remember, the husband lived all his life indifferent to Divine things, while the wife was an earnest Christian woman and saw all her children grow up in the ways of the Lord. The father lived unregenerate and died without giving any testimony of a change of heart. When our Sister speaks of him, it is with fearful anguish. She does not know what to say, but leaves the matter in the hands of God, often sighing, O that by a word or a look I could have been enabled to indulge a hope that my poor husband looked to Jesus at the last.

The same must be the case of a husband who has an ungodly wife. However much God may bless him in all other respects, there seems to be a great miss thereas if a part of the sun were eclipsedthat a part of life which should be all light is left in thick darkness. Oh, let those of us who have the happiness of being joined together in the Lord thank and bless God every time we remember each other! Let us pray God, that having such a privilegethat our prayers are not hindered by irreligious partnerswe may never hinder our prayers ourselves! God grant that we may give unto His name great glory because of His choice favor to us in this respect.

Abraham had cause to praise God for Sarah and Sarah was grateful for Abraham. I have not the slightest doubt that Sarahs character owed its excellence very much to Abraham. I should not wonder, however, if we discover, when all things are revealed, that Abraham owed as much to Sarah! They probably learned from each other. Sometimes the weaker comforted the stronger and often the stronger sustained the weaker. I should not wonder if a mutual interchange of their several Graces tended to make them both rich in the things of God. Perhaps Abraham had not been all that Abraham was if Sarah had not been all that Sarah was.

Our first text bids us, Look to Sarah, and we do look on her and we thank God if we, like Abraham, are favored with holy consorts, whose amiable tempers and characters tend to make us better servants of God. We notice, next, as we look to Sarah, that God does not forget the lesser lights. Abraham shines like a star of the first magnitude and we do not, at first sight, observe that other star with light so bright and pure, shining with milder radiance but with kindred luster, close at his side. The light of Mamre, which is known under the name of Abraham, resolves itself into a double star when we apply the telescope of reflection and observation. To the common eye, Abraham is the sole character and ordinary people overlook his faithful spouse, but God does not!

Our God never omits the good who are obscure. You may depend upon it that there is no such difference in the love of God towards different persons as should make Him fix His eyes only upon those that are strong and omit those who are weak. Our eyes spy out the great things, but Gods eyes are such that nothing is great with Him and nothing is little. He is infinite and, therefore, nothing bears any comparison to Him. You remember how it is written that He who counts the stars and calls them by name also binds up the broken in heart, and heals all their wounds. He who treasures the names of His Apostles, notes, also, the women that followed in their train. He who marks the brave confessors and the bold preachers of the Gospel also remembers those helpers who labor quietly in the Gospel in places of retirement into which the hawks eyes of history seldom pries.

Let, therefore, those here present who count themselves to be of the tribe of Benjamin, to be little in Israel, never be discouraged on that accountfor the Lord is too great to despise the little ones! You are not forgotten of God, O you who are overlooked by men! The Lords eyes are upon innumerable the creeping things in the great sea as well as upon leviathanHe will observe you. If He sends the deluging showers that make strong the cedars, which are full of sap and adorn the brow of Lebanon, so does He send to each tiny blade of grass its own drop of dew. God forgets not the less in His care for the greater! Sarah was in life covered with the shield of the Almighty as well as Abraham, her husbandin death she rested in the same tombin Heaven she has the same joy! In the Book of the Lord she has the same record!

Next, notice that it would be well for us to imitate God in thisin not forgetting the lesser lights. I do not know that great men are often good examples. I am sorry when, because men have been clever and successful, they are held up to imitation, though their motives and morals have been questionable. I would sooner men were stupid and honest than clever and tricky! It is better to act rightly and fail altogether than succeed by falsehood and cunning. I would sooner bid my son imitate an honest man who has no talent and whose life is unsuccessful, than point him to the most clever and greatest that ever livedwhose life has become a brilliant successbut whose principles are condemnable.

Learn not from the great but from the good! Be not dazzled by success, but follow the safer light of truth and right! But so it is that men mainly observe that only which is written in big letters. But you know the choicest part of Gods books are printed in small characters. They who would only know the rudiments may spell out the words in large type which are for babes, but those who want to be fully instructed must sit down and read the small print of God, given us in lives of saints whom most men neglect! Some of the choicest virtues are not so much seen in the great as in the quiet, obscure life. Many a Christian woman manifests a glory of character that is to be found in no public man. I am sure that many a flower that is born to blush unseen and, as we think, to waste its fragrance on the desert air, is fairer than the beauties which reign in the conservatory and are the admiration of all!

God has ways of producing very choice things on a small scale. As rare pearls and precious stones are never great masses of rock, but always lie within a narrow compass, so full often the fairest and richest virtues are to be found in the humblest individuals. A man may be too great to be good, but he cannot be too little to be gracious. Do not, therefore, always be studying Abraham, the greater character. Does not the text say, Look unto Abraham, your father, and unto Sarah that bore you? You have not learned the full lesson of patriarchal life until you have been in the tent with Sarah, as well as among the flocks with her husband.

Furthermore, another reflection arises, namely, that faith reveals itself in various ways. Faith makes one person this and another that. Faith in Noah makes him a shipbuilder and the second of the worlds great fathers. Faith in Abraham makes him a pilgrim and a stranger. Faith in Moses makes him plague Egypt and feed a nation for 40 years in the wilderness. Faith in David makes him kill a giant, save a kingdom and ascend a throne. Faith in Samson makes him slay a thousand Philistines and in Rahab it makes her save two Israelites. Faith has many ways of working and it works according to the condition and position of the person in whom it dwells. Sarah does not become Abraham, nor does Abraham become Sarah.

Faith in Isaac does not make him the same royal man as Abrahamhe is always tame and gentle rather than great and noblehe comes in like a valley between the two great hills of Abraham and Jacob. Isaac is Isaac and Isaac has such virtue as becomes him whom the Lord loved. And Jacob, too, is Jacob and not his father. He is active, energetic and farseeing. God does not, by His Grace, lift us out of our place. A man is made gentle, but he is not made a fool. A woman is made brave, but Divine Grace never made her masterful and domineering. Grace does not make the child so self-willed that he disobeys his fatherit is something else that does that. Grace does not take away from the father his authority to command the child. It leaves us where we were, in a certain sense, as to our position, and the fruit it bears is congruous to that position.

Thus Sarah is beautified with the virtues that adorn a woman, while Abraham is adorned with all the excellences which are becoming in a godly man. According as the virtue is required, so is it produced. If the circumstances require courage, God makes His servant heroic. If the circumstances require great modesty and prudence, modesty and prudence are given. Faith is a wonderful magicians wand! It works marvels, it achieves impossibilities, it grasps the incomprehensible. Faith can be used anywherein the highest Heaven touching the ear of God and winning our desire of Himand in the lowest places of the earth among the poor and fallen, cheering and upraising them. Faith will quench the violence of fire, turn the edge of the sword, snatch the prey from the enemy and turn the alien to flight.

There is nothing which it cannot do. It is a principle available for all times, to be used on all occasions, suitable to be used by all men for all holy ends. Those who have been taught the sacred art of believing God are the truly learnedno degree of the foremost university can equal in value that which comes with much boldness in the faith. We shall see, tonight, that if Abraham walks before God and is perfectif he smites the kings that have carried Lot captive, if he does such deeds of prowess as become a manthe same faith makes Sarah walk before God in her perfectness and she performs the actions which become her womanhood. And she, too, is written among the worthies of faith who magnified the Lord!

We are led by our second text to look at the fruit of faith in Sarah. There were two fruits of faith in Sarahshe did well and she was not afraid with any amazement. We will begin with the first. It is said of her that SHE DID WELL, whose daughters you are as long as you do well. She did well as a wife. She was all her husband could desire and, when, at the age of 127 years, she at last fell asleep, it is said that Abraham not only mourned for her, but the old man wept for her most true and genuine tears of sorrow. He wept for the loss of one who had been the life of his house. As a wife she did well. All the duties that were incumbent upon her as the queen of that traveling company were performed admirably and we find no fault mentioned concerning her in that respect.

She did well as a hostess. It was her duty, as her husband was given to hospitality, to be willing to entertain his guests. And the one instance recorded is, no doubt, the representation of her common mode of procedure. Though she was truly a princess, yet she kneaded the dough and prepared the bread for her husbands guests. They came suddenly, but she had no complaint to make. She was, indeed, always ready to lay herself out to perform that which was one of the highest duties of a God-fearing household in those primitive times. She did well, also, as a mother. We are sure she did, because we find that her son Isaac was so excellent a manand you may say what you will, but in the hands of God the mother forms the boys character!

Perhaps the father unconsciously influences the girls, but the mother has evidently most influence over the sons. Any of us can bear witness that it is so in our own case. There are exceptions, of course, but for the most part, the mother is the queen of the son and he looks up to her with infinite respect if she is at all such as can be respected. Sarah, by faith, did her work with Isaac, well, for from the very first, in his yielding to his father when he was to be offered up as a sacrifice, we see in him evidence of a holy obedience and faith in God which were seldom equaledand were never surpassed. Besides that, it is written that God said of Abraham, I know Abraham, that he will command his children and his household after him.

There is one trait in Abrahams character that, wherever he went, he set up an altar unto the Lord. His rule was a tent and an altar. Dear Friends, do you always make these two things go togethera tent and an altar? Where you dwell, is there sure to be family worship there? I am afraid that many families neglect it and often it is so because husband and wife are not agreed about it. And I feel sure that there would not have been that invariable setting up of the worship of God by Abraham in his tent unless Sarah had been as godly as himself. She did well, also, as a Believer, and that is no mean point. As a Believer, when Abraham was called to separate himself from his kindred, Sarah went with him. She would adopt the separated life, too, and the same caravan which traveled across the desert with Abraham for its master had Sarah for its mistress.

She continued with him, believing in God with perseverance. Though they had no city to dwell in, she continued the roaming life with her husband, looking for a city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. She believed Gods promise with all her heart, for though she laughed, once, because when the promise neared its realization it overwhelmed herit was but a slip for the moment, for it is written by the Apostle in the 11th of HebrewsThrough faith, also, Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. It was not by nature, but by faith, that Isaac was born, the child of another sort of laughter than that of doubtthe child according to the promise of God. She was a believing woman, then, and she lived a believing life and so she did well.

She did well to her parents, well to her husband, well to her household, well to her guests, well before her God. Oh, that all professing Christian people had a faith that showed itself in doing well! But never let it be forgotten that though we preach faith, faith, faith, as the great means of salvation, yet we never say that you are saved unless there is a change worked in you and good works are produced in you, for faith without works is dead, being alone. Faith saves, but it is the faith which causes men to do well. And if there is a faith (and there is such a faith) which leaves a man just what he was and permits him to indulge in sin, it is the faith of devils!

Perhaps not so good as that, for, the devils believe and tremble, whereas these hypocrites profess to believe and yet dare to defy God! They seem to have no fear of Him whatever! Sarah had this testimony from the Lord, that she did well. And you are her daughters, all of you who believe, if you do well. Be no discredit to your queenly mother. Take care that you honor your spiritual parentage and maintain the high prestige of the elect family.

The point that I am to dwell upon just now is thisthat she proved her faith by a second evidenceSHE WAS NOT AFRAID WITH ANY AMAZEMENT. The text says, whose daughters you are, as long as you do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. She was calm and quiet and was not put in fear by any terror. There were several occasions in which she might have been much disquieted and put about. The first was in the breaking up of her house life. You see, her husband, Abraham, gets a call to go from Ur of the Chaldees. Well, it is a considerable journey and they move to Haran. There are some womenunbelieving womenwho would not have understood that.

Why does he want to go away from the land in which he lives and from all our kindred, away to Haran? That would have been her question had she not been a partaker in her husbands faith. An unbelieving woman would have said, A call from God? Nonsense! Fanaticism! I do not believe it! And when she saw that her husband would go, she would have been afraid with great amazement. When Abraham went to Haran with his father Terah, and Terah died in Haran, and then God called him to go further, they had to cross the Euphrates and get right away into a land which he knew nothing of, and this must have been a still sterner trial.

When they packed up their goods on the camels and on the asses and started with their train of servants and sheep and cattle, she might very naturally have said, if she had been an unbelieving woman, Where are you going? I do not know, says Abraham. Why are you going? What are you going to get? I do not know, says Abraham, God has bid me go, but where I am going, I do not know. And what I am going for, I cannot exactly say, except that God has said, Get you out from your country and your kindred, and I will bless you and multiply you, and give you a land wherein you shall dwell. We do not read that Sarah ever asked these questions, or was ever troubled at all about them. The things were put on the camels backs and away she journeyed, for God had called her husband to go and she resolved to go with him. Through floods or flames, it mattered not to hershe felt safe with her husbands God and calmly journeyed on. She was not afraid with any amazement.

Then, though we do not hear much about her, we know that all those years she had to live in a tent. You know the man is out abroad attending to his business and he does not know much about the discomforts of home, not even in such homes as ours. But if you were called to give up your houses and go and live in tents, well, the master might not mind it, but the mistress would! It is a very trying life for a housewife. Sarah traveled from day to day and what with the constant moving of the tent, as the cattle had to be taken to fresh pastures, it must have been a life of terrible discomfort. Yet Sarah never said a word about it. Up tomorrow morning; every tent-pin up; and all the canvas rolled away, for you must move to another station. The sun scorches like an oven, but you must ride across the plain, or if the night is cold with frost and heavy dews, still, canvas is your only wall and roof.

Remember, they were dwelling in tents as pilgrims and strangers, not for one day, or two, nor for a few days in a year, but for scores of years at a stretch! It was bravely done by this good woman that she was not afraid with any amazement. Besides, they did not live in a country where they were all alone, or surrounded by friends, for the tribes around them were all of other religions and of other tastes and waysand they would have slain Abraham and killed the whole company if it had not been for a sort of fear that fell upon themby which Jehovah seemed to say to them, Touch not My anointed and do My Prophets no harm. The Patriarch and his wife dwelt in the midst of enemies and yet they were not afraid! But if she had not been a believing woman, she must have often been afraid with great amazement!

And then there was a special time when the old man, Abraham, put on his harness and went to war. He hears that Chedorlaomer has come down with tributary kings and swept away the cities of the plain and taken captive his nephew, Lot. Abraham says, I will go and deliver him. And she might have said, My husband, you are an old man. Those gray locks should not be touched with the stains of warfare. She said nothing of the sort, but doubtless cheered him on and smiled as he invited some of his neighbors that dwelt near to go with him. She is under no distress that her husband is gone and all the herdsmen and servants round about the tents all gone, so that she is left alone with her women servants. No, she sits at home as a queen and fears no robbers, calmly confident in her God!

Abraham has gone to battle and she fears not for him. And she needs not, for he smites the kings and they are given like driven stubble to his bow. And he comes back laden with spoil. God was pleased with Sarahs quiet faith, because in troublous times she was not afraid with any amazement. Then there came, a little while after, that great trial of faith which must have touched Sarah, though its full force fell on her husband. She observed the sadden disappearance of her husband and his servant. Where is your master? He does not come into breakfast. The servants say, He was up a great while before day and he has gone with the servant, and with the ass, and with Isaac.

He had not told her, for Abraham had struggled enough with himself to take Isaac away to the mountain and offer him! He could not bear to repeat the struggle in Sarah. He was gone without telling Sarah of his movements. This was a new state of things for her. He did not return all day. Where has your master gone? I never knew him go away, before, without informing me. And where is Isaac? Oh, that Isaac! How she feared for her jewel, her delight, the child of promise, the wonder of her old age! He did not come home that night, nor Abraham either. Nor the next day, nor the next. Three days passed and I can hardly picture the anxiety that would have fallen upon any one of you if you had been Sarah, unless you had enjoyed Sarahs faithfor by faith in this trying case she was not afraid with any amazement.

I dare say it took three days for Abraham to come back, so that it was nearly a week, and no Abraham and no Isaac. One would have thought she would have wandered about, crying, Where is my husband, and where is my son? But not so. She calmly waited and said within herself, If he has gone, he has gone upon some necessary errand, and he will be under Gods protection. And God, who promised to bless him and to bless his seed will not suffer any evil to harm him. So she rested quietly, when others would have been in dire dismay. She was not afraid with any amazement. We hear so little said about Sarah that I am obliged, thus, to picture what I feel she must have been, because human nature is so like itself and the effect of events upon us is very like the effect which would have been produced upon the mind of Sarah.

Now, this is a point in which Christian women and, for that matter, Christian men, also, should seek to imitate Sarah. We should not let our hearts be troubled, but rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. What is this virtue? It is a calm, quiet trusting in God. It is freedom from fear, such as is described in another place in these wordsHe shall not be afraid of evil tidings. His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. Or, as we read in Davids words, the other night, Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff they comfort me. It is composure of mind, freedom from anxiety, the absence of fretfulness and clean deliverance from alarm, so that, whatever happens, trepidation does not seize upon the spirit, but the heart keeps on at its own quiet pace, delighting itself in a faithful God.

This is the virtue which is worth a kings ransom and Sarah had it! Whose daughters you are if you are not afraid with any amazement. When is this virtue to be exercised by us? Well, it should be exercised at all times. If we are not self-composed when we are happy we are not likely to be calm when we are sad. I notice that if I am at all pleased with the praise of a friend, I become in that degree open to be grieved by the censure of a foe. By so much as you are elated by prosperity, by so much are you likely to be depressed when adversity comes. But if you are calm, quiet, happyno, more than thatwhen everything goes well, then you will be calm, quiet, happynot less than thatwhen everything goes ill. To keep up an equable frame of mind is a thing to aim at, even as the gardener desires an even temperature for his choice flowers.

You ask, Who are to exercise this virtue? We are all to do so! But the text is specially directed to the sisterhood. I suppose women are exhorted to it because some of them are rather excitable, a little hysterical and apt to be fearfully depressed and utterly carried away. I am not saying that this fault is general or common among women, neither am I blaming them, but only stating the fact that some are thus afflicted and it is a happy, happy thing if they can master it so that they are not afraid with any amazement. But this virtue especially serves in time of trouble when a very serious trial threatens us. Then the Christian is not to say, What shall I do? I shall never endure it. I cannot live through it. Surely God has forgotten me. This trouble will crash me. I shall die of a broken heart. No. No. No! Do not talk so! My dear Friend, do not talk so.

If you are Gods child do not even think so. Try in patience to lift up your head and remember Sarah, whose daughters you are if you are not afraid with any amazement. And so must it be in times of personal sickness. How many are the pains and sufferings that fall to the lot of the sisterhood! But if you have faith, you will not be afraid with any amazement. I saw one, the other day, who was about to suffer from the surgeons knife. It was a serious operation, about which all stood in doubt. but I was happy to see her as composed in the prospect of it as though it bad been a pleasure rather than a pain. Thus calmly resigned should a Christian be! I went to see, yesterday, an aged Sistera member of this Church, close upon fourscore years of age. She is dying with dropsy and, being unable to lie down in bed, is obliged to always sit upa posture which allows little or no rest.

When I entered her room she welcomed me most heartily, which, perhaps was not amazing, for she is greatly attached to her minister. The wonder lay in the fact that she expressed herself as being full of happiness, full of delight, full of expectancy of being with Christ! I went to comfort her but she comforted me! What could I say? She talked of the goodness of God with an eye as full of pleasure as if she had been a maiden speaking to her young companion of her marriage day! Our Sister used to sit just there, in yonder pew. I seem to see her sitting there now, but she will soon sit among the bright ones in Heaven! I was charmed to see one with such evident marks of long-continued pain upon her face, but with such sweet serenity there, too! Yes, with more than serenitywith unspeakable joy in the Lordsuch, as I fear, some in health and strength have not yet learned! A Christian woman should not be afraid with any amazement either in adversity or in sickness, but her holy patience should prove her to be a true daughter of Sarah and Abraham.

Christian women in Peters day were subject to persecution as much as their husbands. They were shut up in prison, scourged, tortured, burned, or slain with the sword. One holy woman in the early days of the Church was tossed upon the horns of bulls. Another was made to sit in a red-hot iron chair. Thus were they tortured, not accepting deliverance. In the early days of martyrdom the women played the man as well as the men! They defied the tyrant to do his worst upon their mortal bodies, for their conquering spirits laughed at every torment! If persecuting times should come again, or if they are here, already, in some measure, O daughters of Sarah, do well and be not afraid with any amazement! And so, if you should be called to some stern duty; if you should be bound to do what you feel you cannot do, remember that anybody can do what he can do. It is the believing man who does what he cannot do. We achieve impossibilities by the power of the Almighty God. Be not afraid, then, of any duty, but believe that you will be able to do it, for Grace will be sufficient for you.

At the last, in the prospect of death, my dear Friends, may you not be afraid with any amazement! Oftentimes a deathbed is vantage ground for a Christian. Where others show their fear and, sometimes their terror, there should the Believer show his peacefulness and his happy expectancy, not afraid with any amazement, whatever the form of death may be! Now, what is the excellence of this virtue? I shall answer that question by saying it is due to God that we should not be afraid with any amazement. Such a God as we have ought to be trusted. Under the shadow of such a wing, fear becomes a sin! If God were other than He is, we might be afraid. But while He is such a God, it is due to Him that fear is banished. Peacefulness is true worship. Quiet under alarming conditions is devotion. He worships best who is most calm in evil times.

Moreover, the excellence of this virtue is that it is most impressive to men. I do not think anything is more likely to impress the ungodly than the quiet peace of mind of a Christian in danger or near death. If we can be happy, then, our friends will ask, What makes them so calm? Nor is the usefulness confined to others. It is most useful to ourselves, for he who can be calm in time of trouble will be most likely to make his way through it. When you once become afraid, you cannot judge wisely as to your best course. You generally do wrong when you are frightened out of your confidence in God. When the heart begins palpitating, then the whole system is out of order for the battle of life. Be calm and wait for your opportunity. Napoleons victories were, to a large extent, due to the serenity of that masterly warrior and, depend upon it, it is so with you Christian peopleyou will win if you can wait. Do not be in a hurry. Consider what you should do.

Do not be so alarmed as to make haste. Be patient; be quiet; wait Gods time and so wait your own time. Wait upon God to open your mouth. Ask Him to guide your hand and to do everything for you. Calmness of mind is the mother of prudence and discretion. It gives the firm foothold which is necessary for the warrior when he is about to deal a victorious blow. Those who cannot be amazed by fear shall live to be amazed with mercy! How, asks one, can we obtain it? That is the question! Remember, it is an outgrowth of

faith and you will have it in proportion as you have faith! Have faith in God and you will not be afraid with any amazement.

Very early in my preaching days I had faith in God in times of thunderstorms. When I have walked out to preach, it has happened that I have been wet through and through with the storm and yet I have felt no annoyance from the thunder and lightning. On one occasion I turned in, by reason of the extreme severity of the rain, to a little cottage and I found a woman there with a child who seemed somewhat relieved when she had admitted me, but previously she had been crying bitterly with sheer alarm and terror. Why, she said, this is a little round lodge house and the lightning comes in at every window. There is no place into which I can get to hide it from my eyes.

I explained to her that I liked to see the lightning, for it showed me that an explosion was all over and, since I had lived to see the flash, it was clear it could now do me no harm. I told her that to hear the thunder was a splendid thing, it was only God saying, It is all over. If you live to see the lightning flash, there is nothing to be afraid ofyou would have been dead and never have seen it if it had been sent to kill you! I tried to console her on religious grounds and I remember well praying with her and making her happy as a bird! It was my being so calm and quiet and praying with her that cheered her up and, by Gods Grace, when I went on my way I left her in peace. You may depend upon it, my dear Friends, that unless our own souls have peace we cannot communicate it to others.

In this way we must believe in God about everything. It so happened that about that matterthe thunder and lightningI did believe in God up to the very last degree and, therefore, I could not be alarmed on that score. So if you believe in God upon any other subject, whatever it is, you will have perfect peace with God about it. If you can believe God when you are in a storm at sea, that He holds the water in the hollow of His hand, you will be at peace about the tempest. It is the thing that troubles you that you must believe aboutand when Faith makes an application of her hand to the particular trialthen will peace of mind come to you.

This holy calm comes, also, from walking with God. No spot is so serene as the secret place of the tabernacles of the Most High. Commune with God and you will forget fear. Keep up daily fellowship with Christ in prayer, in praise, in service, in searching the Word, in submitting your heart to the work of the eternal Spiritand as you walk with God, you will find yourself calm. You know how our poet puts it

*Oh for a closer walk with God,   
A calm and heavenly frame.*

These go together. If you would feed upon certain Truths of God which will produce this calm of mind, remember, first, that God is full of love and, therefore, nothing that God sends can harm His child. Take everything from the Lord as a token of love, even though it is a stroke of His rod, or a cut of His knife. Everything from that dear hand must mean love, for He has said, I have engraved you upon the palms of My hands. When you accept every affliction as a love token, then will your fear be ended.

Next, remember the faithfulness of God to His promises and the fact that there is a promise for your particular position. The Lord is, at this moment, under promise to you, and that promise is registered in His Book. Search it out and then grasp it, and say, He must keep it! He cannot break His Word. He has said, In six troubles I will be with you. Have you got to number six? He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you, and how can He run back from His Word? If He does not leave you nor forsake you, what can you fear? Whatever is comingpoverty, sickness, shame, slanderif all the devils in Hell are loosed and they are all coming up against us at once, yet, if the Lord is with us, we will smite them hip and thigh and send them back to the infernal deep as quickly as the swine of old ran down a steep place into the sea and were drowned in the waters!

Oh, says the devil, I can overcome you. We say nothing to him but thisYou know your Master! You know your Master. Lie down, Sir! You know your Master and that Master is our Covenant Head, our Husband and our Lord. Neither the world, the flesh, nor the devil shall be able to overcome us since we have the promise of a faithful God to protect us! Many of you here tonight have gray hair, or bald heads. I have always such a large proportion of aged people in my congregation that I can say to you what I might not say to the young folk. We, dear Friends, ought not to be afraid, for trials are no novelties with us! We have smelt powder and been grimed with the dust of the conflict times out of mind! We ought not to be troubledwe have been to sea before.

And has not the Lord helped us? Tell it for His honor! He has been a very present help. He has borne us through such things that to doubt Him would be an impudent slander upon His Character! As for myself and I suppose the language I now use would come from the lips of many heremy way has been strewn with wonders of Divine mercy! Trials have abounded and I am glad that they havethey have been opportunities for the display of Divine Grace. Labors have been attempted of which some said, these are visionary schemes. But God has always been better than our faith! We have never been confounded and I think we ought, by this time, to have ]earned that trusting in God is the most reasonable thing that we ever do!

There are speculations in business, risks, even, in the most solid trading. But there is no speculation in believing God, no risk in trusting in Him! He that hangs the world upon nothing and yet keeps it in its place, can bring His people to have nothing and yet to possess all things! He that makes yon arch of Heaven stand secure without a buttress or a propa mighty arch such as no human engineer could ever contriveHe can make us stand without helpers, without friends, without riches, without strength and stand, too, when all other things except that which God supports shall have come down in the final crash! Trust you in the Lord forever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.

I pray for you who are most timid, that from this day you may be true daughters of Sarah and not be afraid with any amazement. God bless you with this gracious help and you will praise His name. Amen.

THIS SERMON is revised at Mentone, and the preacher is happy to say that he is receiving rapid restoration through perfect rest. The Lords goodness in moving friends to send in help to the various enterprises and His Grace in blessing special services, have kept the pastors mind free from anxiety, and thus supplied the best form of repose. Friends who read these sermons regularly are reminded that a Bazaar will be held at the Tabernacle during the first week of the coming year to provide further buildings for the Girls Orphanage. It is hoped that each reader will have a brick in the wall. Monies are to be sent to C. H Spurgeon, Beulah Hill, Upper Norwood. And parcels of goods to V. J. Charlesworth, The Orphanage, Stockwell, London.

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HINDRANCES TO PRAYER   
NO. 1192

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 13, 1874, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

That your prayers be not hindered.   
1 Peter 3:7.

TO many persons this discourse will have but little reference because they do not pray. I fear, also, there are some others whose prayers are so worthless that if they were hindered it would be of no very material consequence. It is even possible that their being forced to omit them might arouse them out of a self-righteous lethargy. Merely to bow the knee in formality, to go through a form of devotion in a careless or half-hearted manner is rather to mock God than to worship Him. It would be a terrible theme for contemplation to consider how much of vain repetition and heartless praying the Lord is wearied with from day to day. I would, however, most solemnly remind those who do not truly pray that the wrath of God abides on them! He who never seeks for mercy has certainly never found it. Conscience acknowledges it to be a righteous thing with God that He should not give to those who will not ask.

It is the smallest thing that can be expected of us that we should humbly ask for the favors we need and if we refuse to do so, it is but right that the door of Divine Grace should be closed so long as men refuse to knock. Prayer is no hard requirementit is the natural duty of a creature to its Creatorthe simplest homage which human need can pay to Divine liberality. Those who refuse to render it may well expect that one of these days, when in dire extremity they begin to bemoan their folly, they will hear a voice from their insulted God, saying, I called and you refused; I stretched out My hands and no man regarded; therefore I, also, will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear comes.

The old story tells of a monarch who gave to a favorite courtier a ring which he might send to her in case he should be under her displeasure, promising that at the sight thereof he should be restored to favor. Later, when the courtier was implicated in treason, the Queen anxiously awaited the ring, but that ring was never shown, though long waited for, and it was little wonder that, concluding the offender to be stubbornly rebellious, a sentence of execution was carried out. If a sinner will not plead the name of Jesus to which the promise of forgiveness is appendedif he will not bend his knee in penitential prayer and ask for pardon at the hand of God, none will wonder that he perishes for his folly. None will be able to accuse the Lord of too great a severity when He casts away forever all prayerless souls! O you who never pray, I tremble for you! Would to God you would tremble for yourselves, for there is cause enough for it! To those who pray, prayer is a most precious thing, for it is the channel by which priceless blessings come to them, the window through which their needs are supplied by a gracious God. To Believers, prayer is the great means of soul enrichmentit is the vessel which trades with Heaven and comes home from the celestial country laden with treasures of far greater worth than ever Spanish galleon brought from the land of gold. Indeed, to true Believers, prayer is so invaluable that the danger of hindering it is used by Peter as a motive why, in their marriage relationships and household concerns, they should behave themselves with great wisdom. He bids the husband dwell with his wife according to knowledge, and render loving honor to her, lest their united prayers should be hindered! Anything which hinders prayer must be wrong. If any management of the family, or lack of management, is injuring our power in prayer, there is an urgent demand for an alteration. Husband and wife should pray together, as joint-heirs of Divine Grace, and any temper or habit which hinders this is evil.

The text would be most appropriately used to stimulate Christians to diligence in family prayer, and though I shall not so use it on this occasion, it is not because I undervalue the institution, for I esteem it so highly that no language of mine can adequately express my sense of its value. The house in which there is no family altar can scarcely expect a Divine blessing. If the Lord does not cover our habitation with His wings, our family is like a house without a roof. If we do not seek the Lords guidance, our household is a ship without a pilot. And unless guarded by devotion, our family will be a field without a hedge. The mournful behavior of many of the children of professing parents is mainly due to the neglect or the coldness of family worshipand many a judgment has, I doubt notfallen upon households because the Lord is not duly honored therein.

Elis sin still brings with it the visitations of a jealous God. That word of Jeremiah bears hard upon prayerless families, Pour out Your fury upon the households that call not upon Your name. His mercy visits every house where night and morning vows are paid, but where these are neglected, sin is incurred. In the good old Puritan times it was said that if you had walked down Cheapside you would have heard in every house the voice of a Psalm at a certain hour of the morning and evening, for there was no house, then, of professed Christians without family prayer! I believe that the bulwark of Protestantism against Popery is family worship. Take that awayand the instruction of children in the fear of Godand you lay this country open, again, to the theory that prayer is most acceptable in the parish Church.

And then you get into the sacredness of places. Then, taking away the priesthood from the father of the familywho ought to be the priest in his own houseyou make an opening for a superstitious priesthood and, leaving the teaching with these pretenders, mischief innumerable are introduced! If neglect of family prayer should become general throughout our Churches it will be a dark day for England! Children who observe that their parents are practically prayerless in the household will grow up indifferent to religionand in many cases will be utter worldlingsif not altogether atheists. This is a matter about which the Church cannot make any inquisitorial inquiryit must be left to the good sense and the Christian spirit of the heads of households! I therefore speak all the more strongly and pray you to order things at home that family prayer is not hindered.

At this time, however, I shall use the text for another purpose, and apply it to the hindrances which beset private prayer. Our prayers may be hindered thusfirst, we may be hindered from prayer. Secondly, we may be hindered in prayer. And, thirdly, we may be hindered from our prayers being effective with God.

I. First, there is such a thing as being HINDERED FROM PRAYERand that may be done by falling into a generally lax, lukewarm condition in reference to the things of God. When a man becomes cold, indifferent and careless, one of the first things that will suffer will be his devotion. When a sick man is in a decline his lungs suffer, and his voiceand so when a Christian is in a spiritual decline the breath of prayer is affectedand the cry of supplication becomes weak. Prayer is the true gauge of spiritual power. To hold back prayer is dangerous and of deadly tendency. You may depend upon it that, take it for all in all, what you are upon your knees you are really before your God.

What the Pharisee and the Publican were in prayer was the true criterion of their spiritual state. You may maintain a decent reputation among men, but it is a small matter to be judged of mans judgmentmen see only the surfacewhile the Lords eyes pry into the recesses of the soul. If He sees that you are prayerless, He makes small account of your attendance at religious meetings, or your loud professions of conversion. If you are a man of earnest prayer and especially if the spirit of prayer is in you, so that in addition to certain seasons of supplication your heart habitually talks with God, things are right with you. But if this is not the case and your prayers are hindered, there is something in your spiritual system which needs to be ejected, or something lacking which ought to be taken care of at once. Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life, and living prayers are among those issues.

Prayers may be hindered, next, by having too much to do. In this age this is a very common occurrence. We men have too much business for ourselves. The quiet days of our contented forefathers are gone and men allot to themselves an increasing drudgery. Not content to earn as much as is necessary for themselves and families, they must have much more than they can possibly enjoy for themselves, or profitably use for others. Wisdom seems to say that one staff is enough for a man to walk with, but ambition cannot be contented unless it carries a load of staves upon its back. Enough is as good as a feast, said the old proverb, but nowadays neither enough nor a feast will satisfy men! They must accumulate more than would feast thousands of families before they can be contentno,

they are not even content then!

Many a man who might have been of great service to the Church of God becomes useless because he must branch out in some new direction in business which takes up all his spare time. Instead of feeling that his first care should be, How can I best glorify God? his all-absorbing objective is to stretch his arms like seas and grasp in all the shore. Thousands, hundreds of thousands and even millions of pounds cannot silence the greedy horseleech which men have swallowed, which continually cries, Give, give! Many add house to house and field to field, as though they meant to be left alone in the land! Alas, that Christians should be infected with the same fever! The rich man in the parable had no time for prayer, for he was busy in planning new barns in which to bestow his goodsbut he had to find time for dying when the Lord said, This night shall your soul be required of you. Beware, I pray you, of the desire of other things, the canker of riches, the insatiable greed which drives men into the snare of the devil, for if it works you no other ill, it will do you mischief, enough, if your prayers are hindered.

We may even have too much to do in Gods house, and so hinder our prayers by being like Martha, numbered with much serving. I never heard of anyone who was hindered with too much praying. The more we do, the more we should pray, and prayer should balance our service, or rather, it should be the lifeblood of every action and saturate our entire life, as the dew of Heaven filled Gideons fleece. We cannot labor too much if prayer is proportionate, but I fear that some of us would do far more if we attempted less and prayed more about it. I even fear that some allow public religious engagements to override private communion with Godthey attend too many sermons, too many conferences, too many Bible readings, too many committeesyes, and too many Prayer Meetings! They are all good in their way, but all acting injuriously when they cramp our secret, or private prayer.

Mrs. Row said that if the Apostles were preaching at her time of private communion with God she would not forsake her closet to go and hear them. It must be better to be with God than with Peter or Paul1 Praying is the end of preaching, and woe to the man who, prizing the means more than the end, allows any other form of service to push his prayers into a corner. There can be no doubt, also, that prayer is hindered by having too little to do. If you want a thing well done, you must go to the man who has a great deal to do, for he is the man to do it for you! People who have nothing to do generally do it with a great deal of fuss. From morning to night they waste other peoples timethey are the callers, the interviewers, the people who write catching paragraphs about public menvery frequently invented in their own silly brains.

These are the propagators of slander, who in very wantonness spit upon good mens characters. Having nothing to do, they are hired by Satan to hinder and injure others. If such people ever do pray, I am sure their indolence must very much hinder them. The man who has to teach in the Ragged School finds he must cry for help to master those wild young natures. The young lady who has, around her, a dozen girls whom she longs to bring to the Savior, feels it imperative upon her to pray for Jane and Ellen, that they may be converted to God. The minister, whose hands are full of holy toil and whose eyes fail with sacred watching, finds he cannot do without drawing near unto his God! If these servants of Jesus had less to do they would pray less, but holy industry is the nurse of devotion!

I said we might do too much and I could not balance that truth unless I added that a very large proportion of Christians do too little. God has given them enough wealth to be able to retire from business. They have time upon their hands and they have even to invent ways of spending that timeand yet the ignorant require instructing, the sick need visiting, the poor need helpingshould they not lay out their abundant leisure in the service of God? Would they not, then, be quickened in prayer? I wish that all could say with one of the Lords saints, Prayer is my business and praise is my pleasurebut I am sure they never will till the zeal of the Lords house shall more fully consume them. Some people hinder their prayers, again, by a lack of order. They get up a little too late and they have to chase their work all the day and never overtake it. They are always in a flurry, one duty tripping up the heels of another.

They have no appointed time for retirement, to little space hedged about for communion with God and, consequently, something or other happens and prayer is forgottenno, I hope not quite

forgotten, but so slurred and hurried over that it amounts to little and brings them no blessing. I wish you would each keep a diary of how you pray next week, and see how much, or rather how little time you spend with God out of the 24 hours. Much time goes at the table, how much at the Mercy Seat? Many hours are spent with men, how many with your Maker? You are somewhat with your friends on earth, how many minutes are you with your Friend in Heaven? You allow yourself space for recreation, what do you set apart for those exercises which in very truth re-create the soul?

A place for everything, and everything in its place, is a good rule for schools and houses of business, and it will be equally useful in spiritual matters. Other duties should be done, but prayer must not be left undoneit must have its own place and sufficient time for it. Care must be taken that our prayers be not hindered, so that we omit or abridge them. But time compels me to leave this wide subject and proceed.

II. Secondly, we must watch that we are not HINDERED IN PRAYER, when we are really engaged in that holy work. Here I might go over the same ground as before and remark that some are hindered while in their prayers by being lax and lukewarma great hindrance. Others by having too much or too little to do, and another class by being in that hurried condition of heart which results from a lack of order. But I need not repeat myself when you are so eagerly drinking in my words! Let us note that some are hindered in prayer by selecting an unfit time and place.

There are times when you may expect a knock at your own door, do not just then knock at Gods door! There are hours when your letters arrive, when customers call, when trades people need attention, when workmen need ordersit would be foolish to be going into your closet just then!

If you are employed by others, you must not present to God those hours which belong to your employer. You will be honoring the Lord better by diligence in your calling. There are times that are demanded of you by the necessities of the household and your lawful callingthese are already the Lords in another waylet them be used for their own purpose. Never defile one duty with the blood of another. Give to God and prayer those suitable times in which you can reasonably expect to be alone. Of course you can pray at your work in ejaculations and silent groansand you ought to be in the spirit of supplication all day longbut I am alluding, now, to times specially devoted to supplicationand I say choose a season and a place where you can be free from interruption.

A pious lad who had no place at home to pray, went to the stable and climbed up into the hayloft. But very soon someone came up the ladder and interrupted him. The next time he took care to pull the ladder up after hima very useful hint for us. It would be well, indeed, if we could so completely pull the ladder up that neither the devil nor the world could invade our sacred privacy. You, when you pray, enter into your closet, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father which is in secret. And your Father which sees in secret shall reward you openly. Select, then, the fittest time and place that your prayers are not hindered.

Worldly cares are frequent and most mischievous hindrances to prayer. A Christian man should be the most careful man in the world and, yet, without carefulness. Do you understand that paradox? He should be careful not to sin, but as for other matters, he should cast his care on Him who cares for him. To take everything from Gods hands and to trust everything in Gods hands, is a happy way of living and very helpful to prayer. Has not your Master told you of the ravens and the lilies? Your heavenly Father feeds and clothes themwill He not clothe you? Seek you first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Faith gives peace and peace leaves the soul clear for prayerbut when care comes in, it confuses the mind and puts the heart away from pleading. A heart clogged with care is like a man trying to swim with heavy clothes upon himhe must get them off if he hopes to swim to shore. Many a sailor has cut his clothes to pieces because he felt he should sink if he did not get them off.

I could wish that many Christians would tear themselves away from their excessive worldly engagements, for they have such a mass of care upon them that they scarcely keep their heads above water! Oh, for more Grace and less worry! More praying and less hoarding! More intercession and less speculating! As it is, prayers are sadly hindered. Earthly pleasures, especially of a dubious kind, are the worst of hindrances. Some professors indulge in amusements which I am sure are not consistent with prayer. They resemble flies which plunge into the honey until the sweet sticks to their wings and legs and they cannot fly. I once remember reading, A prayer to be said by a Christian man after coming home from a theater, A collect for a saint on returning from the races, and, A prayer for a Christian lady on returning from a ball. Of course they were written sarcastically and were, indeed, a broad farce.

How can you come home from frivolity and sin and then look into the face of Jesus? How can the fashions of the world be followed and communion with God be maintained? You cannot roll in the mire and then approach with clean garments to the Mercy Seat! How can you come before the Throne of God with petitions when you have just been dishonoring the name of the Most High? O Christians, keep yourselves from everything about which you have any doubt as to its rightness or even its expediencywhatever is not of faith is sin and will hinder your prayers! Further, prayers may be hindered equally much by worldly sorrow. Some give way to sorrow so extremely that they cannot pray. The tears of rebellious repining dampen the powder of prayer so that a Christian man cannot send his desires heavenward as he should. The sorrow which prevents a mans praying is flat rebellion against the will of God!

Our Lord was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death, but then He prayednotherefore He prayed. It is right to be sorrowful, for God intends that affliction should be grievous and not joyous. But when sorrow is right it will drive us to prayernot drive us from it. And when we find our grief at the loss of some dear child, or at the decay of our property hinders our prayers, I think we should say to ourselves, Now I must pray, for it must be wrong for me to be so rebellious against my Father as to refuse to ask anything at His hands. You would think your child in a very mean temper if, because he could not have his own way, he would refuse to ask anything of you and went about the house pouting. Yet many mourners act in this fashion. We would deeply sympathize with their sorrow, but we may not excuse their repiningfor the sorrow of the world works deathand is unfitting in a child of God. With all your grief, bowed into the very dust by affliction, still, like your Lord and Master, cry, Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will, and then your prayers will be helped and not hindered.

There are cases in which prayer is very greatly hindered by a bad temper. I do not know where this may apply, but, wherever it does, I trust that it will go home. You cannot habitually speak sharp to servants and children. You cannot join in a grand row or in small squabbles and then go and pray with power. I cannot be effective in prayer if I feel anger in my heart and I do not believe that you can, either. Get up and go and settle the matter before you try to talk with God, for the prayer of angry men makes God angry. You cannot wrestle with the Angel while you are under the power of the devil. I appeal to your own consciencesyou, yourselves, shall be judgesis it not so? That was good advice on our Lords part Leave there your gift before the altar, and first go and be reconciled to your brother. If that is not done, the sacrifice cannot be accepted, nor do

I see how you can dare offer it!

I have heard of two good men who had a sharp difference with each other in business. I do not know which was to blameperhaps neither of themthey might have misunderstood each other. One of them, as he walked home very much ruffled, saw the sun going down, and the passage occurred to him, Let not the sun go down upon your wrath. He thought, I will go back and offer an apology, for I believe I have spoken much too strongly. He went back towards his friends office and half way there he met the other coming to him on the same errand. Happy Christians to be both so mindful of the Holy Spirits teaching and so like the Lord Jesus! It must be that offenses come, but blessed are those who are foremost in removing them! Alas, men of a certain mold cannot do this, but will keep a grudge till it rots and fills their whole nature with its vile odors. Surely they cannot expect to be heard in prayer while their unburied enmities pollute their souls! Endeavor, dear Christian Friends, as much as you can, whenever you are angry, not to sin. It is possible, for it is written, Be you angry and sin not.

A man who has no anger in him is scarcely a man and certainly not a good man, for he who is not angry at sin is not in love with virtue! They say of some that they are as easy as an old shoeand they are generally worth no more than that article. Anger against injustice is right, but that anger against the person which degenerates into wishing him hurt is sinful and effectually blows out the fires of prayer. We cannot pray for forgiveness unless we forgive the trespasses of others against us.

Prayer can be hinderedvery terribly hinderedin three ways. If we dishonor the Father to whom we pray, or the Son through whom we pray, or the Holy Spirit by whom we pray. I say we can dishonor the Father. This can be done by inconsistency of lifeif children of God are not obedient to the Fathers will, they must not wonder if they find it difficult to pray. Something will rise in their throat that will choke their pleading. You cannot pour out your heart acceptably unless you believe in your heavenly Father. If you have harsh thoughts of God. If you have a cold heart towards Him and a lack of reverence for His name. If you do not believe in that great willing heart which is waiting to bless you, your lack of love, faith and reverence will strangle your prayers. Oh, when a man is fully at one with the great Father! When Abba, Father, is the very spirit of his soul! When he speaks to God as One in whom he places implicit trust and to whose will he yields himself up perfectly! When Gods glory is his souls delight

then he is on a vantage ground in prayerhe will win what he wills of God. If he is not so with God, his prayers will limp most painfully.

And, Brothers and Sisters, if we are wrong with Jesus, through whom we pray. If we are in any measure self-righteous. If we delight in self and forget our Beloved. If we fancy that we can do without the Savior and if, therefore, we pray like complacent Pharisees, our prayers will be hindered! If we are not like the Savior. If we do not make Him our Example. If we have none of His loving spirit. If, above all, we crucify Him afresh and put Him to an open shameand if we are ungrateful for the blessings we have already receivedour prayers will be hindered. You cannot plead in the court if you have quarreled with your Advocate. If your prayers are not taken in hand by the great Intercessor and offered by Him on your behalf, you will have no heart for the sacred exercise.

So, again, with the Holy Spirit. There is never a prayer that God accepts but the Spirit first writes it in our hearts. True prayer is not so much our intercession as the Spirit of God making intercession in us. Now, if we grieve the Spirit, He will not help us to pray. And if we attempt to pray for something that is contrary to the Spirits holy, gracious, loving Nature, we cannot expect Him to enable us to pray in contradiction to the mind of God. Take care that you vex not the Spirit of God in any way, especially by shutting your ears to His gentle warnings, His loving calls, His earnest entreaties, His tender monitionsfor if you are deaf to the Divine Comforter, He will be speechless to you. He will not help you to pray if you will not yield to Him in other matters.

So then, dear Friends, I have stated to you in a hurried manner some of the ways in which prayer may be hindered. May God grant that none of us may be overcome by them, but we may be delivered from everything which could mar our petitions!

III. I shall now want your earnest attention to the most important part of all, upon which I shall endeavor to be brief. We may be HINDERED IN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR PRAYERS. We may pray, but yet the prayer may not be heard. And here let me interpose a remark. The Lord will hear any mans prayer who asks for mercy through the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ. He never despises the cry of the contrite. He is a God ready to hear all those who seek reconciliation. But concerning other matters it is true that God does not hear sinnersthat is, while they remain sinners He will not grant them their wishesindeed, to do so would encourage them in their sins! If they will repent and cry for mercy through Jesus Christ, He will hear their cry and will save them. But if they are not, first, reconciled to Him, their prayers are empty wind.

A man will grant his childs request, but he does not listen to strangers. He will listen to his friends, but not to enemies. It is not right that the golden key which opens the caskets of Heaven should be hung at a rebels belt. Yet more, God does not hear all His children, alike, or alike at all times. It is not every Believer who is mighty in prayer. Read the 96th Psalm, and, if I remember rightly, you will find words like theseMoses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among them that call upon His name; they called upon the Lord and He answered them. They kept His testimonies, and the ordinances that He gave them. Yes, he answered themMoses, Aaron, SamuelHe answered them, for they kept His testimonies. When children of God find that their prayers do not succeed, they should searchand they would soon discover a reason why their prayers are hindered.   
First, there must be holy living in a Believer if his prayers are to succeed greatly with God. ListenThe effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Note that point of a righteous man. Listen to our Savior (John 15:7)If you abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you. There is an if there! If you do not do Christs will, He will not do your will. This is not legal! It has nothing to do with the Law, but is the Gospel rule of Christs house that obedience should have for its reward power in prayer! Just as you do with your childrenyou have a discipline over themyou do not turn them out of doors or give them over to the policeman because they do amiss. But you have ways of chastening the willful and rewarding the obedient. You are in no hurry to grant the requests of yonder fractious boyin fact you deny him his request. But that other dear, gentle, loving child has only to ask and have!

This is correct discipline and such as God exercises among us. He does not cast off His children for sin and utterly disown them, but He chastens them in love. And one of His chastisements lies in shutting out their prayers. If we compare prayer to shooting with a bow, you must have clean hands or you cannot shoot, for this bow refuses to bend to hands polluted with unrepented sin. If a sinner prays for mercy for Jesus sake he shall be heard, but for general blessings it is written, The desire of the righteous shall be grantednot the desire of the wicked. First wash in the Fountain of atoning Grace and have your heart cleansed by the Holy Spirit, or else you cannot succeed in prayer. If anyone should tell me of a man whom God greatly answered in prayer and then inform me that he lived in gross sin, I would not believe it! It is impossible for God to patronize a guilty professor of religion by giving him success in prayer! The blind man whom Jesus healed most truly said, If any man does His will, him He hears.

In addition to obedience there must be faith. He that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavers is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed: let not that man expect that he shall receive anything of the Lord. Faith obtains promises, unbelief goes empty-handed. The Lord may give a blessing to a doubter, but that is more than the promise, and the doubter has no right to expect it. The prayer which avails most with God is the prayer of one who believes that God will hear him and who, therefore, asks with confidence. In a word, faith is the bow of prayer. You must lay hold on the bow or you cannot shootand the stronger that bow the further you can send the arrowand the more execution you can do with it. Without faith it is impossible to please God in prayer or in anything else. Faith is the very backbone, sinew and muscle of intercession.

Thirdly, there must be holy desires, or else prayer will be a failure. And those desires must be founded on a promise. If you cannot find that God has promised a blessing, you have no right to ask for it and no reason to expect it. There is no use in asking money of a banker without a check at the counter they do not know youthey do know the promise to pay from a check and if you present that, you will get the amount. You must bring Gods own promises to the Mercy Seat, which is the counter of the Divine bank, and you will obtain what you need, but only in that way. Observe, then, that faith is the bow and strong desire fits to the string the arrow which is to be sent upward. No arrow may be shot towards Heaven but that which came down from Heaven. Christians take their arrows from Gods quiver and when they shoot them they shoot them with this on their lips, Do as You have said. Remember Your Word unto Your servant upon which You have caused me to hope. So the successful prayer is the desire of a holy heart, sanctioned by the promise. True prayers are like those carrier pigeons which find their way so wellthey cannot fail to go to Heaven, for it is from Heaven that they camethey are only going home!

Furthermore, if prayer is to be effective, there must be fervor and importunity. It is written, The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man avails much. Not the dead-and-alive prayer of the mere professornot the prayer of one who does not care whether he is answered or not. There must be eagerness, intensity, the pouring out of the heart before God! The arrow must be put on the bow string and the bow must be drawn with all our might. The best bow is of no use until you draw it. And if you draw the bow of faith and shoot at the target up there in Heaven, you will get what you willonly you must resolve to have it with only this boundary the will of the Lord be doneand you will succeed.

There must be, next, a desire for Gods Gloryfor that is the white of the targetand if we do not shoot towards that, the arrow will avail nothing. We must earnestly desire what we ask because we believe it will glorify God to give it to us. If we are wholly living unto God, our prayers will run side by side with His purposes and none of them will fall to the ground. Delight yourself, also, in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. We must also have holy expectancy or we shall hinder prayer. The man who shoots must look to see where his arrow goes. We must direct our prayer unto God and look up! Eyeing the Lord Jesus in all, we must look to succeed through the merits of the Redeemer. If we believe that He hears us, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

Presumption in prayer shoots with the bow of self-confidence, not for Gods Glory, but for the gratification of itself, and therefore it fails. Some have the idea that ask what they like of God, they are sure to have it. But I would ask them, first, Who are you? Secondly, What is it you are going to seek? And, thirdly, What right have you to expect it? These inquiries must be clearly answered, otherwise prayer may be an insult to God. I wish some Christians who pray about temporal things would be a little careful as to how they act. When they get into scrapes and messes by extravagance, do they expect God to get them out?   
I remember hearing of a remark of good Mr. Muller, of Bristol. At a

Prayer Meeting he read a letter from a Brother who thanked him for a gift of some 20 pounds which had arrived very Providentially, for he owed half a years rent. Mr. Muller remarked, Yes, our Brother should be very thankful. But I intend to write to him and tell him he ought not to owe half a years rent without being prepared to pay. And he is acting unwisely and unjustly by not laying by in store to meet the claim. When I took a house I said, This is another persons house. I am bound to pay his rent, and therefore week by week, as I used the house, I put by a portion to pay what was due. I did not spend the money and at the end of the quarter expect the heavenly Father to send me more.

This was sound morality and common sense, and I pray you attend to it. Pray by all means, but owe no man anything. Daily bread is to be prayed for, but speculations which may involve you in ruin, or make your fortune, are not to be mentioned. If you take to gambling, you may as well give up praying! Straightforward transactions you may pray about, but do not get the Lord mixed up with your finances! I have been requested to pray for a young man who has lost his job, through an embezzlement, that he may get another place of employment. But instead of doing so I have suggested that he should, himself, pray to be made honest. Another who is deeply in debt wants me to pray that he may obtain help, but I suggest that he should let his creditors have a dividend while there is anything left. I shall not ask of my God what I would not ask of man!

The approach to the Mercy Seat is holy ground and not to be trifled with, or made to minister to sin. You ask and receive not because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts. If we walk contrary to the Lord, He will walk contrary to us. And I say to every man and woman here who is in trouble and is a Christian, take the straight path out of itdo the right thingand if it brings you trouble, bear it like a man, and then go to God, and say, Lord, I have, by Your Grace, chosen a plain, honest path, now help me, and He will. God grant us Grace, as Christians, to walk with God in the power of His Spirit, resting alone on Jesusand may He make each one of us mighty in prayer! A man whom God has taught to pray mightily is one with Gods mind and is Gods hand moving among the sons of men! When he acts, God acts in him. He must, however, be careful and watchful, for the Lord is a jealous Godand most jealous where He loves most.

God grant you, Brothers and Sisters, to walk humbly with God and to live near to Him, that your prayers be not hindered. Amen.   
**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONMalachi 3.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK 434 (SONG III), 1001, 994. Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #2573 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

UNPARALLELED SUFFERING NO. 2573

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, JUNE 5, 1898.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, MARCH 4, 1883.

Christ also has once suffered.   
1 Peter 3:18.

IT is very unpleasant to our poor flesh and blood to suffer. Physical pain is a grievous inflictionmental agony or spiritual sorrow is still worse. Irons around the wrists can be worn till they fit easily, but when the iron enters into the soul, how it rusts the heart and eats into the spirit! Perhaps, to some minds, the most difficult of all suffering is that which is not deserved at all, but which comes because we do not deserve it. I mean that suffering which innocent persons are called to endure because of their innocence when they are slandered and oppressed and persecuted, not for evil-doing, but for well-doing. I admit that there is much about this form of trial which should tend to make it a light affliction, for we ought to take it joyfully when we suffer wrongfully. Yet, as a rule, we are not able to do so. Certainly not by nature, for there is a sort of sense of justice within man which makes him feel that it is very hard that he should have to suffer, not for unrighteousness, but for righteousnessnot for any wrong-doing, but for having espoused the cause of God and His Truth.

The Apostle Peter would have Christians prepare themselves for this suffering. They had to bear very much of it in his daythey will have to bear some of it as long as the Church of Christ remains in this wicked world. He says, in the verse preceding our text, It is better, if the will of God is so, that you suffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing. Further on, at the beginning of the next chapter, he says, Forasmuch, then, as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves, likewise, with the same mind. He warns us that we shall need to be clad in heavenly armor, for we shall have to pass through conflict and suffering for Christs sake and for righteousness sake. We must put on a coat of mail and be enveloped in the whole panoply of God. We must have, as our great controlling princip1e, the mind of Christ, that, as He endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, we, also, may endure it and not be weary or faint in our minds. We shall best bear our own sufferings when we find fellowship with Christ in them. Therefore, it is for your strengthening, that your spiritual sinews may be braced, that you may be armed from head to foot and preserved from the darts of the enemy that I would set forth before you, as best I may, the matchless sufferings of the Son of God, who, once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.

It has sometimes struck me that the first Epistle of Peter is greatly concerning Christs First Advent and that his second Epistle tells us about our Lords Second Advent. In this first letter there are many references to the sufferings of Christ. It may interest you to notice some of them. In the first Chapter, at the 11th Verse, we read, Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ. When the Apostle gets to the second Chapter, at the 21st Verse, we find him writing thus, For even hereunto were you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps. Next comes our text in the third Chapter. Then, in the Fourth chapter, at the first Verse, is the passage I have already read to you. [See Exposition at end of sermon.] And in the 13th Verse, the Apostle says, Rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christs sufferings. And in the 5th Chapter, at the first Verse, he calls himself, a witness of the sufferings of Christ. Thus his frequent expressionhis peculiar idiomis, the sufferings of Christ and, in the language of our text he thus describes the great work of our redemptionChrist also has once suffered, It may seem a very small thing to you to call your attention to such words as these, but it does not appear small to me. It seems to me that there is a great depth of meaning within these few words and it shall be my objective, at this time, to bring out that meaning, as far as I can, under the Holy Spirits guidance.

I. Notice then, first of all, A SUMMARY WITHOUT ANY DETAILS Christ also has once suffered. There is compassed within that expression a summary of the whole life and death of Christ! The Apostle does not give us details of Christs sufferings, but he lets us, for a moment, look into this condensation of themChrist also has once suffered.

It is the epitome of His whole earthly existence up to the time of His rising from the dead. Christ begins His life here with suffering. He is born into the world, but there is no room for Him in the inn. He must lie in a manger where the horned oxen feed. He is born of a poor mother. He must know the ills of poverty and, worse still, Herod seeks the young Childs life. He must be hurried away by night into Egypt. He must be a stranger in a strange land, with His life in peril from a blood-thirsty tyrant! When He comes back from Egypt, He grows in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and menbut you may rest assured that the years He spent in the carpenters shop at Nazareth, though we are not told about them, were years of sore travailperhaps of bodily pain, certainly of mental toil and preparation for His future service. Such a public life as His could not have been lived without due training. I will not attempt to lift the veil where God has let it fall, but I see, in the whole public ministry of Christ, traces of a wonderful mental discipline through which He must have gone and which, I should think, must have involved Him in suffering. Certainly it was one main point in His preparation that He was not without spiritual conflicts and struggles which must have involved suffering to such a nature as His was.

No sooner does He appear on the stage of action and the Spirit of God descends upon Him in the waters of Baptism, than He is hurried off to a forty days fast in the wilderness and to a prolonged and terrible conflict with His great enemy and ours. Of that time we may truly say that He suffered, being tempted. Throughout His life you may read such words as theseJesus, being weary, sat thus on the well. Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head. And then you can understand some of the ways in which He suffered. We cannot tell how much our Lord suffered even in the brightest portion of His career, for always was He despised and rejected of men; a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief. We cannot go into all the details of His life, but I think you may see that even in the very smoothest part of it, He suffered. And Peter does well to thus sum it up Christ suffered.

But when He comes to Gethsemane, shall I speak of the bloody sweat and the groans which startled angels? No, I need not say more than thisChrist suffered. Shall I tell of His betrayal by Judas, of His being hurried from court to court, falsely accused, despitefully entreated, bruised, scourged and made nothing of? Truly, I may sum it all up by saying that He suffered! And as for all the rest, that march along the

Via Dolorosathat fastening to the woodthat uplifting of the Cross. The wounds, the cruel fever, the direful thirst, the mockery, the scorn, the desertion of His Father when He must, at last, yield Himself up to death itselfwhat better summary could even an inspired Apostle give than to sayChrist also has once suffered? This expression sums up the whole of His life.

It is well for you and for me, when we have the time and the opportunity, to make as complete as possible our knowledge of Christ as to all the details of His life and death. But, just now, it must suffice us, as it sufficed Peter, to say, Christ suffered. When next you are called to suffer, when pains of body oppress you, let this text whisper in your ears, Christ also has once suffered. When you are poor, needy and homeless, remember that Christ also has once suffered. And when you come even to the agony of death, if such shall be your portion, then still hear the soft whisper, Christ also has once suffered. I know of no better armor for you than thisArm yourselves likewise with the same mindand be prepared to count it your honor and glory to follow your Master with your cross upon your shoulders!

Much may be said to be known concerning Christs sufferings, but still, to a great extent, they are unknown sufferings. Some eyes saw Him suffer, yet I might truly say, Eye has not seen, neither has ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man the things which Christ suffered for His people. You may think, Brothers and Sisters, that you know something of Christs sufferings, but they are a unfathomably deep, a height to which the human imagination cannot soar! We are obliged to leave this summary without any details. Christ also has once suffered.

*Much we talk of Jesus blood, But, how littles understood!*

*Of His sufferings, so intense,   
Angels have no perfect sense.   
Who can rightly comprehend   
Their beginning or their end?   
Tis to God and God alone   
That their weight is fully known.*

II. Secondly, this is A STATEMENT WITHOUT ANY LIMIT. How indefinitely it is put! Christ also has once suffered.   
Do you ask the question, When did Christ suffer? It is answered by not being answered, for, truly, we may reply to youWhen Christ was on earth, when was there that He did not suffer? Christ also has once suffered. The Apostle adds no note of time. He says not, Christ suffered on the Cross, or in the garden, but the very indefiniteness of the statement leaves us to understand that as long as Jesus was here, He was the acquaintance of grief. His life was, in a sense, a life of suffering. All the while He was here, even when He was not upon the Cross, and even when no bloody sweat was on His brow, it is written, He, Himself, took our infirmities and bore our sickness. He was bearing the lead, not, as some say, on the tree alone, but up to the tree, as the passage may be readdaily bearing it till, at length, He came to the Crossand there it was for the last time that He felt the pressure of human sin. You cannot get and yet you do, in some sense, get, from my text, an answer to the question, When did Christ suffer?   
Perhaps another asks, What did Christ suffer? The text is remarkable in giving no limit whatever to the statement. Christ also has once suffered. What did He suffer? I answerwhat was there that He did not suffer in body, in mind, and in spirit? What of painwhat of shamewhat of 1osswhat of hatredwhat of derision? He suffered from Hell, from earth, from HeavenI was going to sayfrom time and from eternity, for there was a certain sense in which eternal pangs passed through the heart of Christ and spent themselves upon Him. What did He suffer? Peter says, as if that should be enough for us to know, Christ has once sufferedthe very indefiniteness implies that He suffered everything that He could suffer.   
And where did Christ suffer? Peter does not answer that question. Where did He suffer? In the wilderness? In the garden? In Pilates Hall? On the Cross? The text as good as says, No. Yes. Not somewhere only, but everywhere! Wherever He was, Christ was enduring that great burden which He came into the world to bear till He would carry it away and it should be lost forever.   
From whom did Christ suffer? Mark how unlimited is the textChrist also has once suffered. From men falsely accusing Him and slandering Him? Yes, and that is the comfort of His slandered people. But He suffered not from only wicked men, but even from good menthe best of His disciples cost Him many pangs and sometimes made His heart ache. He suffered from devils. He suffered from the Father, Himself! There it standsa sky without horizona sea across which I look and see no endChrist also has once suffered. I think that Joseph Hart spoke well when he said that Christ   
*Bore all Incarnate God could bear,   
With strength enough, and none to spare.* So we leave this part of our theme. It is a statement without any limit. Christ also has once suffered.   
III. Now I want you to notice, in the third place, that this is A DESCRIPTION WITHOUT ANY ADDITION. Christ also has once suffered.   
Is that all? Was there not something else? No. This line sweeps the entire circumference. There was nothing in Christ, before His suffering, which was contrary to it. He never regretted that He had entered upon a course which involved suffering. When the time was come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, warning His followers that He was going there to be mocked, to be scourged and to be crucified. He might at any moment have relinquished His terrible task, but that idea never entered into His mind. Even when He came near to the worst part of His pain and His human Nature shrank from it, His true heart never was discouraged or thought of turning back. He said, The cup which My Father has given Me, shall I not drink it? And He did drink it, though it involved more suffering than we can imagine! Yet there was no resistance to that suffering. He suffered, but He never rebelled against it. He could truly say, I was not rebellious, neither turned back. He did not even complain and Isaiahs prophecy was literally fulfilled by HimHe is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opens not His mouth.   
If we were to describe the experiences of even the best of men, I am afraid that we would have to say, He suffered very much and he did not often murmur. Sometimes, however, he rebelled and cried out. It was not so with Christ. Peter says, He suffered and there is no addition to that. You know, my Brothers and Sisters, how, having undertaken to suffer for sins, He went through with it. If He stood before Pilate and His enemies smote Him, what did He do? He suffered. If they bound His eyes and buffeted Him, what did He do? He suffered. When they spat in His face, what did He do? He suffered. When they nailed Him to the Cross, what words did He speak against His murderers? Not one! He suffered. Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again. Even when they jested at Him, His only reply was the prayer, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. He suffered and there was nothing to take away from the completeness of that suffering. The whole of His Nature ran out into that act of obedience called suffering! It was the time when He must do the Fathers will by sufferingand all the power of His Being ran into that channel. The Lord had made to meet upon Him the iniquity and, consequently, the suffering of us all! And He just accepted it at the Fathers hand without a complaint or a murmur. You can sum it all up in the language of our text, without a single word added to itChrist also has once suffered.   
IV. Once more, I want you to notice that this is A DECLARATION WITHOUT ANY QUALIFICATION. Christ suffered.   
There is no word to bid us imagine that He had any alleviation of His agony. Of a person in very bad health we may be able to say, He suffers a great deal, but he has an excellent medical attendant, a good nurse and he has every comfort that can be given to him. But, in the case of our Lord, all is summed up in these two words, Christ suffered. Were there no comforters? No. He suffered. Was there no sleeping-draught to deaden His pain? No. He suffered. But did not His Father help Him in the hour of His agony? No. His cry, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? proves that we may say of Him, even with reference to God, that He suffered! The death of Christ was quite uniquenone of the martyrs were ever brought into the same condition as their Lord was in.   
I remember reading in Foxes Book of Martyrs, the story of a man of God who was bound to a stake to die for Christ. There he was, calm and quiet, till his legs had been burned away and the bystanders looked to see his helpless body drop from the chains. He was black as coal and not a feature could be discerned. But one who was near was greatly surprised to see that poor black carcass open its mouth and two words came out of it! And what do you suppose they were? Sweet Jesus! And then the martyr fell over the chains and, at last, his life was gone. Oh, how much of the blessed Presence of God that poor saint must have had to be able to say, at the last, when he was charred to a coal, Sweet Jesus!   
But the Lord Jesus had not that help and comfort. His Fathers Countenance was hidden from Him. Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani, is such a shriek as even Hell itself has never heard, for the lost ones there have never known what it was to have the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, as Christ had known it and, therefore, they could never know the loss of it as Christ knew it in that supreme moment of His agony. Christ suffered. That is all you can say of Him, He suffered, without any alleviation of His pain.   
Further, He suffered without any qualification in the sense of being compelled to suffer. We say of such-and-such a person, He suffers greatly, but he cannot help suffering. He has a deadly disease, the pain of which cannot be alleviated. He is, therefore, obliged to bear it. The martyr, whom I mentioned just now, was bound to the stakehe could not get awayhe suffered under compulsion. He was made to suffer. But you cannot say that of Christ. Herein is a marvelous thing, that while Christ suffered, you may take the word in the active sense. I do not know how exactly to express my meaning, but there is a sort of passive sense in which He sufferedthat is the sense in which we all suffer according to our sharebut Jesus also suffered in an active sense. That is to say, He suffered willingly, resolutely, without any compulsion. At any moment He might have broken loose from the Cross! He might have called for 12 legions of angels and scattered all His foes. He might have flung off His body and appeared before them as a Consuming Fire to utterly destroy them!

Or, retaining His Humanity, He might have smitten them with blindness, or worked some other miracle and so have escaped from them. If we should be called to die for Christ, it would only be paying the debt of nature a little beforehand, for we are bound to die sooner or laterit is the lot of man. But there was no such need in the case of Christ! There was no necessity of death about that Holy Thing which was born of the Virgin Mary! It would not corrupt and it needed not to die. All the way through His death, remember that He did not die as we dogradually losing consciousness, floating away and never able to suspend the process of dissolutionbut, at any instant, up to the final committal of His spirit to His Father, He could have caused all those pains to cease! Now see with what an extraordinary meaning my text is girt about. As the painters foolishly depict Christ with a halo around His head which was never there, I may truly picture His sufferings, mystically and spiritually, with a halo about them which is really there, for He suffered in this superhuman fashion, without any qualification as to alleviation or as to compulsion!   
Dear Friends, how shall I speak further upon this part of my subject? Only this word would I addthat Christ suffered without any desert. If we suffer, we must say to ourselves that we suffer less than we deserve, and even when a man suffers so as to die, we know that death is the penalty of sin. But Christ suffered in a very special sense because in Him was no sin. He had never done anything worthy of death, or of bonds. He suffered for sins not His own. There was nothing about Him that brought the suffering upon HimHis was the suffering of a pure and holy Being. We say of a criminal, not so much that he suffers, but that he is punished, He is executed, He is put to death. We never say that of Christwe say that He sufferedvoluntarily and without any obligation on account of demerit. He comes and takes upon Himself the sins of His people, stands in their place, is chastened with their chastisements, is smitten with their smiting. Well does He say, by the mouth of the Psalmist, Many a time have they afflicted Me from My youth: yet they have not prevailed against Me. The plowers plowed upon My back: they made long their furrows. So indeed they did, not only on His back, but on His heart!   
I am speaking now, not only of His external but of His internal sufferings. Truly did one say that the sufferings of Christs soul were the very soul of His sufferings. And so, no doubt, they were. But, in His case, there was no punishment due to Him, so in His sufferings there was nothing exacted from Him on His own account. I must leave you to think upon this great mystery, for I cannot speak of it as it deserves.   
V. I close with this last reflection. My text is AN EXPRESSION WITH AN EMPHASIS. Christ also has once suffered.   
When we think of our own sufferings, as compared with our Lords, we may print them in the smallest type that the printer can use. But where shall I find capital letters that are large enough to print this sentence when it applies to HimCHRIST ALSO HAS ONCE SUFFERED? It is almost as if the Apostle said, You have, none of you, suffered when compared with Him. Or, at least, He was the Arch-Suffererthe Prince of Sufferersthe Emperor of the Realm of AgonyLord Paramount in sorrow. Just take that term, a Man of Sorrows. You know that in the Book of Revelation, there is the expression, the man of sin. What does, the man of sin mean but a man made up of sin, one who is all sin? Very well, then, a Man of Sorrows means a Man made up of sorrows, constructed of sorrowssorrows from the crown of His head to the sole of His feetsorrow without and sorrow within. He did sleep with sorrow and wake with sorrowChrist was a Man of Sorrows, a mass of sorrow.   
Take the next expression, and acquainted with grief. Grief was His familiar acquaintance, not a person that He passed by and casually addressed, but His acquaintance that kept close to Him throughout His life. He said once, Lover and friend have You put far from Me, and My acquaintance into darkness. But this acquaintance was with Him there acquainted with grief. Listen to the words and if you can see my Lord pressed by the strong arm of grief until He is covered all over with a gory shirt of bloody sweat, then you know that grief had made Him to be acquainted with its desperate tugs. When you see Him bleeding from His hands, feet and side, with all His spirit exceedingly sorrowful even unto deathand God, Himself, leaving Him in the thick darknessthen you know that He was, indeed, acquainted with grief! You know a little about grief, but you do not know much. The hem of Griefs garment is all you ever touch, but Christ wore it as His daily robe! We do but sip of the cupHe drank it to its bitterest dregs. We feel just a little of the warmth of Nebuchadnezzars furnace, but He dwelt in the very midst of the fire!   
There I must leave the whole matter with you. But as you come to the Communion Table, come with this one thought upon youChrist also has once suffered. Somebody, perhaps, asks me, Is there any comfort in that thought? Is it not an amazing thing that there should be more of comfort in the sufferings of Christ than in any other thing under Heaven? Yet it is sothere is more joy in the sufferings of Christ, to those whose hearts are broken, or sorely woundedthan there is in His birth, or His resurrection, or anything else about the Savior! It is by His stripes rather than even by His glory that we are healed! Come, Beloved, take a draught from this bitter wine, which shall sweetly charm away all your sorrows and make you glad! May God the Holy Spirit grant that it may be so!   
And if there is anybody here who is not saved, remember, Friend, that your salvation depends upon the sufferings of Christ. If you believe on Him, then His sufferings are yoursthey have taken away your sin and you are clear! Therefore, go your way and be glad.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**PSALM 27; ROMANS 8:14-17.**

Psalm 27:1. The Lord is my light and my salvation; First comes light and then salvation. We are not saved in ignorance. The knowledge of our sinfulness is revealed to uswe discover our true condition in the sight of Godand then we perceive the mercy and the love of God. We see first the light and then the fullness of salvation, for this is not a matter of the past only, but of the present. At this very hour, each Believer can say, The Lord is my light and my salvation. Can you say that, dear Friend? If so, there is more real eloquence in that little sentence than in all the orations of Cicero!

1 *.* Whom shall I fear? There is nobody that I have any need to fear. I need not fear the powers of darkness, for the Lord is my light. I need not fear damnation, for the Lord is my salvation. Then, Whom shall I fear?

1 *.* The LORD is the strength of my life. Is not that a wonderful expression? Ordinarily, a man lives by the strength of his constitution, but the spiritual life lives by the strength of God within the soul.

1 *.* Of whom shall I be afraid. For, if God is my strength, then am I strong as Samson, and I may slay the lion or the Philistines with equal ease.

2 *.* When the wicked, even my enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Good men have enemies because they are good men. There are two classes in the worldthe righteous and the wickedthe seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. And you know that even in Eden, the Lord said to the serpent, I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed. We must expect, then, if we are among the righteous, that we shall be attacked by the wicked. But, when they come against us, we may believe that they shall be overcome even before we strike a single blow in our own defense!

3 *.* Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear. Though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. You know that, usually, we fear just before the battle beginswhen we see the enemy encamped against us. We do not know what they are going to do and we are sure to imagine the very worst. But such was Davids confidence in his God that he said, Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear. There they lie, their legions marshaled against him in all their dread array! But says the Psalmist, In this will I be confident. Oh, the joy of the man who has received this confidence from God and who is, therefore

*Calm mid the bewildering cry,   
Confident of victory.*

4 *.* One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in His Temple. Did David refer to any special spot, or to any one sacred shrine? I think not. He meant that he wished to be always at home with God. And, you know, at the same time we can also be in our own houses or in the fields, on the land or on the sea. This was Davids great desire, that he might always dwell with God, like a child at home, wherever he was. And that he might have such communion with God that he might behold the beauty of the Lord, that he might ask of God guidance in all his difficulties, and to enquire in His Temple. Those are two things, dear Friends, for which I hope many of us have come herethat we may behold Gods graciousness and loveliness in the ordinances of His sanctuaryand that we may ask and receive of Him help in all our difficulties and guidance in all our dilemmas. How often, in this house, has God spoken so personally to His dear children that they have thought that the preacher knew all about them, when he really knew nothing whatever of them, though God did, and sent a message by His servant, straight to their souls!

5 *.* For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock. If I dwell with God, He will hide me away in the pavilion of His Sovereignty and, as long as He is Kingand that will be forever and everHe will not let me perish! His sword and shield shall be stretched out for my defense. Then God has also a tabernacle as well as a royal pavilionas of old He had the Holy of Holies into which no man could enter, on pain of death, save only the High Priest on the appointed day. In the time of trouble, the Lord Himself shall take us and hide us there by the Mercy Seat, near the Ark of the Covenant, where His Glory shall shine upon us, and where none can intrude to hurt us. We have the protection of the Pavilion of Sovereignty and the Tabernacle of Sacrificewhat two places can be safer? We have also the rock of Gods ImmutabilityHis people shall stand on that high mount, beyond the reach of their adversaries, where their feet shall never slide.

6 *.* And now shall my head be lifted up above my enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in His tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises unto the LORD. This is a blessed resolution! Oh, that you and I would carry it out more and more! David says twice that He will sing the Lords praisesI will sing, yes, I will sing praises unto the Lord. Come, all you who sigh, change that word, and say, I will sing. Come, all you who make a mourning noise, and ask the Lord to help you to make a joyful noise before His face! Is not praise comely and fitting in the Presence of such a God as He is who has dealt so well with us? Let each individual who knows the goodness of God say, I will sing, yes, I will sing praises unto the Lord.

7 *.* Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice! Have mercy also upon me, and answer me. The Psalmist has only just begun praising when he takes to prayingand that should be a Christians double occupation praising and praying! I have often said that as our life is made up of breathing in and breathing out, so we should breathe in the atmosphere of Heaven by prayer and then breathe it out, again, in praise

*Prayer and praise, with sins forgiven,   
Bring down to earth the bliss of Heaven!*

8 *.* When You said, Seek you My face; my heart said unto You, Your face, LORD, will I seek. David springs forward to accept the Divine invitation which invitation was generalSeek you My facebut the response was personal, Your face, Lord, will I seek. Whether others would do so, or not, David resolved and declared that he would seek the face of the Lord! Let everyone of us, dear Friends, do the same.

9 *.* Hide not Your face far from me; put not Your servant away in anger *Dismiss me not Your service, Lord.*   
You know how masters sometimes discharge their servants in anger. But what a gracious Master you and I have, Beloved, or else He would have sent us adrift long ago! Get you gone, He would have said, you disgrace My house, you mar My work, you do not perform your service well. Be gone! But He does not speak or act in that fashion.

9, 10. You have been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. When my father and my mother forsake we, then the LORD will take me up. They carried me when I was a child and He will carry me now! The Lord will take me up. When they steel their hearts against me, because I become a Christian, He will love me and more than make up my loss of their love.

11 *.* Teach me Your way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of my enemies. Lord, do not let me get into difficulties, so that I shall not know what to do, for my foes are so sharp-eyed that if they can find a fault in me, they will! And even if there is no fault, they will make one up. Therefore, Lord, lead me in a plain path, because of my enemies.

12 *.* Deliver me not over unto the will of my enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty. Am I addressing anyone who is being slandered? Has somebody borne false witness against you? Well, be very thankful that it is false! I do not quite understand why it is so often said, You see, it is such a downright lie and that is what grieves me so. But, dear Friend, it is much better that it should be false than true! If anyone brings an accusation against me, I shall be glad to find that it is false. Let not that be the sting of the trouble which really is the sweetness of itbe glad that they cannot say anything against you unless they speak falsely! However, if you expect to go to Heaven without being slandered, you expect what you are not likely to get, for God Himself was slandered in Paradise! Our Lord Jesus, in whom was no fault, was slandered when He was upon the earthHis Apostles and followers in all ages have had the same treatment! And here is David saying, False witnesses are risen up against me.

13. I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. That is the point to be notedthere is no getting over fainting except by believing, for believing saves us from swooning and makes us strongI had fainted unless I had believed.

14. Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart. Here is a man of God giving us the benefit of his own experience! He waited upon God and now he bids us do the same, that we may be blessed as he was. At our Prayer Meeting before we came in here, one dear friend thanked the Lord that, for more than 60 years, he had been enabled to rest upon the Divine promises and he had never found one of them to fail in the hour of need. These testimonies are very precious. I remember, in my early Christian days, how my soul was greatly sustained by hearing a blind man say that he had lived on God by faith for more than 60 years, and he had found the Lord faithful to His promises all that time. Those of you, dear Friends, who are younger than others of us, may be comforted by the experience of your seniors! But if we were to live to be ten times as old as Methuselah, we would never find God backward in keeping His promisesHe must be true whatever happens.

14. Wait, I say, on the LORD. Now let us read just a few verses to remind us of our union with our suffering Lord.   
Romans 8:14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. You can judge yourself, dear Friend, by this test. Do you follow the Spirits leading? Do you desire continually that He should be your supreme Guide and Leader? If you are led by the Spirit of God, then you have this highest of all privilegesyou are one of the sons of God! Nothing can equal that honor! To be a son of God is more than anything of which ungodly kings and emperors can boast, with all their array of pomp and wealth!   
15. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear. You did receive it once and it was a great blessing to you. This came of the Law and the Law brought you under bondage through a sense of sin and that made you first cry for liberty and then made you accept the liberating Savior. But you have not received that spirit of bondage again to fear.   
15. But you have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. We who believe in Jesus are all children of God and we dare to use that name which only children might use, Abba. And we dare use it even in the Presence of God and to say to Him, Abba, Father. We cannot help doing it because the spirit of adoption must have its own mode of speechand its chosen way of speaking is to appeal to the great God by this name, Abba, Father.   
16. The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. There are two witnesses, then, and in the mouth of these two witnesses the whole Truth of God about our adoption shall be established. Our own spiritso changed as to be reconciled to God and led in ways which once it never trodour own spirit bears witness that we are the sons of God. And then Gods own Spirit bears witness, too, and so we become doubly sure!   
17. And if children, then heirs. For all Gods children are heirs and all equally heirs. The elder-born members of Gods family, such as Abraham and the rest of the Patriarchs, are no more heirs of God than are we of these latter days who have but lately come to Christ! If children, then heirs. Heirs of what?   
17. Heirs of God. Not only heirs of what God chooses to give, but heirs of Himself! There need be nothing else said, if this is true! The Lord is my portion, says my soul. Heirs of God.   
17. And joint-heirs with Christ; if it is so that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. Do you ever have in your heart a longing to behold the Glory of God? Do you feel pressed down when you see abounding sin? Are your eyes ready to be flooded with tears at the thought of the destruction of the ungodly? Then, you are having sympathy with Christ in His sufferings and you shall as certainly be an heir with Him, by-and-by, in His glory!

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OUR ASCENDED LORD

NO. 1928

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 7, 1886, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Who has gone into Heaven and is at the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him. 1 Peter 3:22.

LAST Lords Day morning [#1927 Our Sympathizing High Priest] we considered the humiliation of our Divine Lord and, I think, if one may speak for the rest, that we consciously and deeply felt how very near He came to us in His suffering condition and how very near He still is to us as truly Man. On that happy occasion we had fellowship with Him of the truest kind. The sympathy of His soul toward us awoke our sympathies towards Him. We felt it exceedingly profitable to sit and weep with Him who not only wept but bled for us.

This morning, in considering our Lords Glorification, I hope we shall feel quite as near to Him as we did on the former occasion, for if He was humiliated for us, He is also exalted for us. If He, Himself, once stooped to come near to us, He now lifts us up from our low estate and brings us near to Himself in His Glory. It is not only that He is partaker of our lowliness, but we are partakers of His exaltation. The fellowship is full and complete, for while He takes upon Himself our fall, we, on the other hand, partake in His rising again! He comes down to us in His Incarnation, but He calls us up to Him in His Ascension. He wears our garb of poverty by bearing our flesh, but He robes us in His splendor as He bears our nature into Heaven. Remember, it is this same Jesus whom they saw on earth who also is gone into Heaven and who is to come again a second time. Yes, it is this same Jesus and He is no less Man on the Throne of God than He was on the CrossHe is as truly our Brother, now, amid the acclaim of angels as among the weeping women of Jerusalem.

I beseech you, do not let the change of His estate create any distance in your hearts, since there is no distance in His heart, but rather ask for Grace that you may rise up unto Him, to joy in His joy and triumph in His triumph! Let us behold our Lords glories today, not as a blaze of intolerable splendor, driving us back with fear, but as a radiance of peace, drawing us near with hope! Let us go to the land where our greater Joseph is Lord of all! Let us go into His palace, let us sit at His table with Him, there, as He once sat at our table with us here! We went to David in the cave, let us not fear to approach Him now that He is King! Yes, let us rejoice that we share His royalty, for He has made us kings and priests, and we shall reign with Him forever and ever.

The history of our Lord after His death is as simple as it is sublime and I shall not try to set it forth with garnishing of human speech. When a renowned warrior writes home after great victories, his dispatches are short and to the point. The brilliance of the news is sufficient without the light of sparkling sentences. His words are few; he has so much to tell that he does not waste a letter! His achievements are so great that they do not require the aid of poetry or oratory. A dash from the conquerors pen is enough to set a nation rejoicing. I came, I saw, I conquered, is a line which will be quoted to the end of time! Such is the life of our Lord Jesus from the Cross onward. If I seem to preach very plainly and even baldly, this morning, you will understand that my theme forbids the adornments which other subjects invite.

Our Savior died, but He rose again. It is a sort of courtesy to death to speak of the period of our Lords entombment as three days. The victory of death was so short that Scripture can afford to let it be reckoned in the roughest manner, to give to death the utmost it could claim by the broadest method of reckoning. Give Death his three daysthat is the outside of all his victory! Let Death and Hell make the best they can of itthe bruised heel of the Seed of the woman soon ceases to be lame!

When the first day of the week began to dawn, before yet the sun had gleamed through the veil of the olives and lit up the garden of Joseph of Arimathaea, our Lord arose from His slumber and began to disrobe Himself of His grave clothes. In orderly manner He folded them up and divided them with intent of instruction. He left the grave clothes for us, that our last chamber may be fitly furnished when we shall come to lie in itand then He put the napkin by itself, that our friends may dry their tears thereon when they remember that there is now a glorious hope in death for all who are in Christ! The living Lord waited a while and then the messenger from the courts of Heaven descended to set Him free. The angel touched the stone which shut the mouth of the gravethe stone removedthe Risen One came forth from the dampness of the vault into the freshness of the morning air, frightening the watchmen and causing the solid earth to quake with fear! He was as truly risen as He had been truly dead! He was no apparition or phantomthat body which had most certainly given up the ghost now received life again!

Our Lord tarried here for 40 daysa time sufficient for the establishment of His identity and the production of proof of the fact that He had truly risen. During that 40 days He so showed Himself in different places that the testimony to His Resurrection became most abundant and convincing. He was seen by ones and twos who could the more carefully examine Him because they were alone with Him. He was tested by one who put his finger into the print of the nails and thrust his hand into His sidenothing could be more conclusive than the verdict of that suspicious examiner! He was seen by about 500 brethren at once, that by the eyes of many the fact of His being the once Crucified Jesus might be ascertained beyond all further question. His appearance was not a vision beheld by one or two enthusiasts when aloneHe was manifestly set forth among a great company as their Lord and Master who had been cruelly put to death, but had risen from among the dead! Our Savior would not go to Heaven till He had settled the fact of His Resurrection upon a basis which can never be shaken. There is no fact in history, ancient or modern, which is half so well attested as the Resurrection of our Lord from the dead! You shall turn to the pages of the most veracious and sober historians of any age you please, but you will not there find such assured evidence of any event as the Gospels give to us of the rising again of Jesus! Events which we now speak of as indisputable are not so surely true as that Jesus, who was taken down from the Cross and laid in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea, did really rise and live again among the sons of men!

He tarried 40 days, not only for the establishment of this great Truth of God, but for the comfort of His disciples. He wiped away the tears which they shed at His death and made them feel that it was no longer a calamity that their Lord had died. He also prepared them for the more enduring grief of His departureindeed, He so elevated their minds and raised their spirits, that we never hear of their lamenting His Ascension! He made them see that it was expedient that He should go away so that the Comforter might come to them. He also communed with them, gave them of His Spirit and filled them with His peace. He raised them from being common peasants to be the Patriarchs of a new age, the vanguard of the Divine crusaders who would conquer the world for Jesus! They went forth strong in the Lord and in the power of His might because He had spoken to them and they had heard from His own lips the Gospel which they were commissioned to proclaim.

He also stayed long enough to give them directions how to act. In fact, He organized His forces, ordered their line of battle and prepared them for the victory! To all He gave the direction to tarry at Jerusalem till they were endowed with power from on high and, in that command, we have our marching orders for all time. Some of the disciples He had to address individually, for they had special needs. He had to cheer the heart of Magdalene, to overcome the unbelief of Thomas, to give warning and encouragement to Peter and to brace them all for their coming struggle. The Great Shepherd of the sheep could not return unto His rest till He had seen to every sickly sheep and put the whole flock in order. He would not go to His Glory till He could leave all whom the Father gave Him prepared for their future destiny.

Those forty days were soon over. Very remarkable days they were, if you study themso different from His former life. Nobody molested the Lord. No scribes or Pharisees contradicted Him, no malicious Jews took up stones to stone Him. Those were calm days, days wherein the birds of peace sat on the still waters and not a wave ruffled the calm. I might almost say that those days were the prelude of His Glory, a sort of anticipation of His reign of peace when He shall stand in the latter day upon the earth and wars shall cease unto the end of the earth. When those 40 days were over, the Master went His way. All was done that He had covenanted to perform and He ascended to His reward. Now we have come to our text.

I shall this morning, first of all, rehearse the circumstances which are here mentioned in three partsHe has gone into Heaven. He is at the right hand of God. Angels and authorities and powers are made subject to Him. When I have rehearsed these circumstances, I shall then, Beloved, by the help of Gods Spirit, ask you to learn the simple but sublime lessons which these facts are meant to teach us.

I. First, LET US REHEARSE THE CIRCUMSTANCES.   
They begin thusWho is gone into Heaven. He is gonethat sounds rather gloomy. You might touch the mournful string as you hear these words, for if He is gone, we are bereaved, indeed! Yet we dare not raise a monument to Christ as one who is dead! Let us complete the sentence Who is gone into Heaven. Now you demand the trumpet, for the words are full of soul-stirring music and create intense delight! Still, there are the words, He is goneHe is gone away from you and from mewe cannot embrace His feet, nor wash them, nor lean our head upon His bosom, nor look into His face. We have to sing to our Well-Beloved **Jesus, these eyes have never seen   
That radiant form of Yours!   
The veil of sense hangs dark between   
Your blessed face and mine!**   
We are strangers here because He is not here. He intends us to remove, for He has removed. We are not at home on earth. If He were here, we might think this world could be our abiding place, but it cannot be so now. If He were here, earth would be a kind of Heaven to us, but away from Him it is a place of exile. If we could now run to Him and tell Him our griefs as they arise, they would cease to be griefs, but Jesus does not mean this to be our lot and portion. Our inheritance is not on this side of Jordan. Truly, this world and all the works that are in it, are to be burned upin token of which He is gone from it. It is vain for us to think that we can make our abode here! We are, ourselves, to go away soon and, therefore, He is gone   
*When He arose, ascending high   
He taught our feet the way.*   
He seems to say, Upwards, my Brethren, upwards from off this earth! Away from this world to the Glory Land! I am gone and you must be gone. This is not your place of resting, but you must prepare yourselves for a time when it shall be said of each one of you, He is gone. Those who linger behind us will see us no more, for we shall be gone into Heaven to be with our Lord in His Kingdom.   
I like to remember that our Lord Jesus is gone in the entirety of His Nature. His body is gone. He has not left His flesh in the grave. Jesus has carried with Him His entire Self, His whole Humanity. Therein I rejoice, for He has carried my nature to Heaven with Him! My heart is with Him on His Throne and all my being longs to follow it! Jesus has taken our manhood into Heaven. He is in Heaven, our Adam, the Representative of His people. He has taken us up with Himself, Beloved, even all of us who are in Him. He has gone into Heaven in His true and proper Manhood. In the New Jerusalem He looks like a Lamb that has been slain and still He wears His Priesthood, His Manhood and His sympathetic heart. He who is gone into Heaven is not an imposter, but the real Christ! We shall know Him there if we have known Him here. He on whose head are many crowns, is identical with the Christ whose head was encircled with thorns! Despite the change in His circumstances, there is no change in HimHe is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever. He, His own Self, who bore our sins, is gone up into Heaven!

We have dwelt long enough upon the words, He is gone. Now let us consider that He is gone into Heaven. What does this signify but, first, that He is gone out of the region wherein our senses can perceive Him? Be sure of this, that you will not now see Him, nor touch Him, nor handle Him. He is gone into Heavenout of reach of our earth-bound senses. It is a vain idea of carnal-minded men that Christ is corporeally in the sacrament. He is gone into Heaven! His very flesh and blood cannot be here among us. He is gone up into Heaven and, therefore, He is not where He can be recognized by these bodily senses. Spiritually He is here, according to His promise, Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world, but to say that He is here corporeally is to deny that He is gone up into Heaven. As Man, as His body was of substance, it is not capable of being in more than one place at a time! You must not transform His Humanity into DeityHis Deity is everywhere, but His substantial Humanity can only be in its one proper placeand to suppose it to be everywhere is virtually to deny that it is anywhere! A covert unbelief in the reality of our Lords body thus veils itself under the appearance of a superstitious faith. Jesus is really and indeed gone into Heaven and, therefore, we see Him not, we hear Him not and our communion with Him is by faithnot by the senses.   
But then, Beloved, we know that our Lord, as Man, is gone into a greater nearness to God than everHe is gone into Heaven where is the Throne of the Great King. The High Priest, on the Day of Atonement, lifted the mysterious veil which shut in the Holy of Holies. He passed within and the veil fell between him and the people. They could not possibly see him while he was performing his sacred functions. But they knew that he stood before the Throne of God. Though he was not with them, he was with God which was better for them. The High Priest was more useful to them within the veil than outside of ithe was doing for them, out of sight, what he could not accomplish in their view. I delight to think that my Lord is with the Father! Sometimes I cannot get to Godmy access seems blocked by my infirmitybut He is always with God to plead for me! Sometimes my intercessions seem to die outside the veilbut His prayers are always within the Holy Place, since He, Himself, is there, presenting His potent pleas directly to the Father and being always accepted by Him! Let us joy and rejoice that our Covenant Head is now in the bosom of the Father, at the Fountainhead of Love and Graceand that He is there on our behalf.   
In going into Heaven there is also this thought, that our Lord is gone, now, into the place of perfect happiness and of complete Glory. We rightly sing   
*No more the bloody spear,   
The Cross and nails no more,   
For Hell itself shakes at His name,   
And all the heavens adore.*   
No weariness, no mockery, no sinking of heart, no bearing of reproach, no crying, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? He is gone into peace, bliss, honor and renown. Heaven is a great wordnone of us can understand itnor shall we approach its meaning till we reach the place. He is where there are pleasures forevermore. The Human soul and body of Jesus are filled with delight! The Man, Christ Jesus, the son of MaryHe that died upon the Cross is now blessed forevermore! The Lord Jesus is filled with ineffable satisfaction which is the reward of His passion and His death. Let us this day be glad and rejoice in Him, for He is gone up into Heaven!   
Thinking this over, let us reflect, dear Brothers and Sisters, that nothing could stop His going there. He is gone up into Heaven, despite all who raged against Him.   
Death could not hold Him. Death bound Him very fast with the strongest cords, but He could not be held by them. This great monster must give up Jesus, even as another monster gave up Jonah, after the third day! Our greater Jonah came up, again, from the depths of the earth. He died and was a captive for our sakes, but His body could not see corruption, nor could His soul abide in the realms of death. He is gone to Heaven, despite the stone, the watch, the sealdespite the clay-cold hand of death.   
He is gone into Heaven despite malicious men. Have you ever wondered why they did not attack Him when He had showed Himself openly and had led out His disciples to the Mount of Olives? They paid the soldiers to say that His disciples stole Him away while they sleptwhy did they not seize Him? Why is Herod so quiet and Caiaphas so still? Scribes and Pharisees, where are they? Are these lions chained? Our greater Daniel is in their den, but they do not even roar at Him! It is now or never with themif they could capture Him, now, and stop His way to His eternal triumph, it would be a great victory! It is the last chance for the overthrow of His power! But truly, against Him did not a dog move his tongue! They were still as a stone while He passed over to take possession of the inheritance!   
As death could not hinder Him, so neither could the malice of men detain Him, nor could all the forces of the devil block His way. I see no trace of the arch-enemy after Christ has risen from the dead. O Prince of Darkness, you did meet Him in the wilderness at the beginningwhy not close with Him at the end? Why not assail Him by the sea when He stands there with His coals of fire, with fish laid on them, and bread? Prince of Darkness, why did you not hasten up to shoot a last arrow at Him and summon all your bands to waylay Him in mid-air to block His passage to the Golden City? No, the powers of darkness were baffled! In their silence they gnashed their teeth for rage, but they could not even hiss against Him! He had so thoroughly cowed and subdued Satan and all his angels in Gethsemane and on the Cross, that nothing remained but to triumph over them and lead captivity captive! The leaguered hosts of Hell could not summon courage for another encounterHis warfare was accomplished and the road to His Fathers capital lay open before Him! In peaceful triumph He passed beyond the clouds. Troops of angels on the road met with their joyful songs, the Heir of all things returning to His Home! My heart rejoices as I think that He is gone into Heaven, none disputing His passage.  
But I beg you to remember that He is gone up into Heaven as our Representative. Jesus does nothing by Himself, now. All His people are with Him. He says, Behold I and the children which God has given Me. They are always in union with Him. The Head is never separate from the membersthe supposition is ghastly! He is our Forerunner marking the way; our Herald predicting our coming; our Breaker clearing the road. As the great Lord calls them Home, it shall be said of each one of the saints, who is gone into Heaven. Jesus is gone there as Pioneer to open the way, as our Friend to prepare a place for us and as the Pledge that all who are in Him shall come to the same happiness! If He had not entered, neither could we, but in His Person God has given to us a token that we, also, shall rise from the dead and shall enter into Heaven! He who is the Surety of the Covenant is our guarantee of entrance into Heaven! This is the best seal that our faith could desire, the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ being practically the resurrection and the home-bringing of all His redeemed! I stopmay the Lord bless this to your souls.   
Secondly, we have to look at the next circumstance, His sitting at the right hand of Godwho is gone into Heaven, and is at the right hand of God. Remember that this being at the right hand of God relates to the complex Person of our Lord. It relates to Him not as God, alone, but as God and Man. It is His Manhood that is at the right hand of God. Wonderful conception! The next being to God is Man! Infinite leagues must necessarily lie between the Creator and the created, but between God and man, in Christ Jesus, there seems no distance at allthe Man Christ Jesus sits at Gods right hand. Is not this a sublime thought, that man, creature as he is, is now so linked with the Second Person of the Divine Trinity in Unity, that he is so near to God as to be at His right hand? So near, so very near to Godhe cannot be nearer! This is a wonderful thingJesus sits at the right hand of God as Manand man is thus brought into a singular nearness to God! As I said before, there is an immeasurable chasm between God and a seraph, and yet man, whom He made a little lower than the angels, and who was, consequently, a little further off, is, in the Person of the Son of God, brought so near to God that no being of any kind now intervenes between the Almighty God and man!   
What does it mean that Christ sits at the right hand of God? Does it not mean, first, unrivalled honor? To sit at the right hand of God is the highest conceivable glory. The mother of Zebedees children asked that her sons might sit, the one on His right hand, and the other on His left, in His Kingdom, but Jesus said it was not His to give. The Father has given the Son to sit in the highest place nearest to His Throne, yes, on the very Throne of God, for we read of the Throne of God and of the Lamb. Jesus, our Brother, is elevated to the throne of the Most High!   
Does not it also signify intense love? When Solomon would describe the love of the king to his bride, he said, Upon your right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir. The Lord God places the Son of Man in the seat of love, where none may be but the One who is the beloved of the Father. He loves Him with an unutterable, inconceivable love and even thus does He love us in Him! Christ at the right hand of God means all His people at the right hand of Godall the saints are in the place of the nearest and dearest love!   
It means, also, communion and counsel. We speak of a person with whom we take advice as the man of our right hand. God takes counsel with the Man, Christ Jesus. When you have a friend at court, you hope you will do well, but what a Friend have we in the Kings courtseven He who is The Wonderful, Counselor! He is the King of Glory, the Governor of earth, the Distributor of thrones and crowns, the Man Christ Jesus! Now I know that the decree of God must mean my good, for my Lord sits at the right hand of Him that does decree! Now I understand that the purposes of God must work out the happiness of the chosen, for He who loves them is in union with the Maker of the purpose!

Does it not also signify perfect repose? Jesus is gone up to the right hand of God and sits there. While He was occupied with His holy service, He did not sit down. There were no seats for the priests in the tabernacletheir work was too laborious for sitting down. But Jesus has forever taken His seat at the right hand of God, expecting till His enemies are made His footstool! O restful Savior, we, toiling and laboring, come to You and find rest in Youwe also sit down longing for and expecting the time when You shall put down all our enemies and we shall tread even Satan under our feet! Even now we sit with You in the heavenlies and enjoy Your peace. So much concerning the seating of our Lord.   
The third fact is, His dominionAngels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him. Angels are subject to Him upon whom cowards spatto Him whom they nailed to the Crossand at whom they wagged their heads! This is one of the wonders of Heaven. Is it possible that the conjecture of the old writers was true, that Satan rebelled against God because He heard a whisper that a man would one day be Head over all principalities and powers? I do not know, but certainly the angels must often marvel that Gabriel, nor the brightest of the seraphim is next to God but a Man! Lord, what is man! Man made of the dust of the earthwhat is he that he should sit above more spiritual beings, crowned with glory and honor? Yet it is so. God has set the Christ above all angels and principalities and powers. Is not this one of those things which angels desire to look into? Although Lucifer has fallen, there is yet no gap in Heaven. Creatures in part, material, are lifted up to fill the void caused by the great dragon when he drew down with his tail the third part of the stars of Heaven. Men in countless myriads are in Heaven, white-robed, praising God! And one Man is actually on the Throne of God, Vice Regent, Lord over allhaving every knee to bow before Him and every tongue to call Him Lord, to the Glory of God the Father!   
Oh, think of it! The Man Christ Jesus is Lord of all the shining ones! He can send an angel to comfort you in your griefAre they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? When you count up the available forces of your Lord, do not forget these invisible armies. Did He not say in the hour of His agony, Can I not now pray to My Father and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels? The air will soon teem with invisible spirits if they are needed for our defense, for our Savior is their Lord! They will count it all joy to do His bidding on our behalf. They are the chariots of God in which He rides to the rescue of His own. The day shall come when all the hosts of Heaven shall come down to earth, attending the Son of Manthen shall they gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend and, at the same time, they shall delight to display their loyalty to Him that once did hang upon the Cross. We rejoice, today, that God has set Him far above all principality, power, might and dominionand every name that is named!   
But I must not forget that He has power over all devils as well. They are fallen angels and Jesus has subdued them once and for all. They cannot tempt His followers without His permission. They cannot put forth their finger to bring any calamity upon a Job unless God wills it. These dogs are muzzled and, therefore, we should not fear them   
*A faithful God restrains their hands,   
And binds them down in iron bands.*   
Jesus is Lord of all!   
Whatever else this term angels and authorities and powers may comprehend, Christ has under His sway. That is to say, all kings and princes upon earth, all leaders of thoughtpolitical or religiousall controllers of human movements are subject to Him. Do not be afraid of this or that form of anarchynothing can shake the eternal Throne of the Prince of Peace! Monarchs may die and crumble back to dust and their empires with them, but the Throne of the Son of David shall endure forever and ever! No acts of senators, nor decrees of despots, nor raging of the multitude, nor foaming of rebels, nor deliverances of sages can interfere, in the least degree, with the supreme power of Jesus of Nazareth! His very Cross proclaimed Him Kingand King He is! Be cheered by His reign. Fear not, little flock, for it is your Fathers good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. It is surely so, for the Lord has given Jesus the Kingdom and He shall reign forever and ever.   
Yes, and all kinds of forces other than human are under subjection to Jesus. The Psalmist, when he measured the domain of man, saidYou made him to have dominion over all the works of Your hands; You have put all things under His feet: all sheep and oxen, yes, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatever passes through the paths of the seas. We do not yet see all things put under man, but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with Glory and honor! All things this day bow before the Lord Jesus, willingly or unwillingly. It matters not what powers, forces and energies may be now developed, or may be yet developed in the ages to comethey are all subject to the Lord Christ! That heel which once was bruised when the serpent wounded it, has crushed the dragons head and holds it down upon the earth. Life, death, Hell and worlds unknown lie in subjection to Him that lives and was dead! Oh that my Lord had a servant that could worthily declare His glories! Great princes have their heralds who, with blast of trumpet, proclaim their honors and dignities, but who shall proclaim the glories of the Son of Man who once died for our sins?   
Come, let us rejoice together in the victories of our Leader and Lord! I know of no better theme to stir the pulses of my soul with holy exultation than the thought that Jesus is victorious! I have heard of wounded men crushed amid a heap of bleeding bodies lying on the battlefield and awakening all the life that remained in them when they saw the great Napoleon come riding over the plain. With their legs gone, they raised themselves upon their arms, once more to salute their captain! Poor souls, to be thus enthusiastic for one who shed their blood like water! Far more wise is our enthusiasm for Him who shed His blood for us! If I knew that I must die in a ditch and be forgotten or slandered and abhorred of men, I would yet rejoice and cry, Hosanna! at the prospect of my Lords sure victory! Yes, I will salute Him now with my most hearty praises and be glad because I know that He is, even now, King of kings and Lord of lords. Hallelujah! He of whom they said, Crucify Him, crucify Him, is now Head over all! There I leave it. God grant us Grace to rejoice in this story of our Lord!   
II. Secondly, and very briefly, LET US LEARN THE LESSONS OF THESE CIRCUMSTANCES.   
The first lesson isthe religion of Christ is true. Whenever I read modern doubtsand you cannot read long without coming across themI am glad to get back to facts. If you read a certain set of modern sermons, you will find all the eternal Truths of God denied or maligned. Too many ministers, instead of being servants of Christ, are servants of the devil dressed in the livery of Godmay the Lord have mercy upon them! Whenever a doubt is proposed to me, I fall back upon this factJesus did rise from the dead. That is sure. He did also ascend into Heaven, for His disciples saw Him rise. Well, then, I am satisfied to be the least of His disciples and to take His Word and the words of His Inspired Apostles and believe themeven though faith is denounced as ridiculous! You are left behind in the march of progress. You are poor fools who cannot think for yourselves. I confess that I am such a foolI believe what God has revealed. I have more confidence in the Revelation of God than in the opinions of men. I know nothing among men except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. For this is the Truth of God! We know it! We have facts at our back. Our doctrine is not sentiment, view and opinion, but fact! Who has gone into Heaven and is at the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him.   
I learn another lessonthat Christs cause is safe. Let not His Church tremble. Let her not think of putting out the hand of unbelief to steady the Ark of the Lord. The history of the Church is to be the history of Christ repeatedshe is to be betrayed, she is to be scourged, she is to be falsely accused and spit onshe may have her crucifixion and her death. But she shall rise again! Her Master rose and, like He, she shall rise and receive Glory. You can never kill the Church till you can kill Christand you can never defeat her till you defeat the Lord Jesus who already wears the crown of triumph! The grand old cause is safe! The outlook may be dark, just now, and it may be unpopular to follow the Lamb wherever He goes, but the day will come when they who do so shall walk in white, for they are worthy! The wheel will turn and they that are lowest, now, shall soon be highestthey that have been with Him in the dust shall be with Him in His Glory.   
Now I can see that His saints are safe, for if Jesus has risen and gone into His Glory, then each individual in Him shall be safe, too. Where does your hope lie, Brothers and Sisters? Why, in Christ! Well, then, your hope is always safe, is it not? If you have any hope outside of Him, it may perish, but if your hope is all within Him, your treasure is all within the heavenly casket and it is always secure! Therefore, be glad and rejoice! You, too, may have to cry, Why have you forsaken me? You, too, may thirst. You, too, may die. But you shall live again and you shall triumph, for as He is, so are you and what Jesus is, that you shall be in Him!   
I can also see another lesson herethis explains the way in which Jesus deals with sinners. That which took place in His own Person, He makes to be a picture of what takes place in the men whom He saves. If you come to Him, you can only get to know the fullness of His gracious power by being scourged and buffeted with conviction and repentance and by having self, especially self-righteousness, crucified and slain! You must know the destruction of self, you must see death written upon all carnal hopes and then, out of that death, you shall live again in newness of life and you shall receive honor and glory and immortality! Therefore, dear troubled Heart, if Christ is killing you, be assured He will make you alive, for this is what He says, even He, the mighty GodI kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal. The history of Christ has to be written out again in us! Death to sin and a new life unto righteousness must be ours. That is a lesson worth the learning!

And so I must close with one more division which will have several points in it. I think, Beloved, since Christ has gone into Heaven and sits at the right hand of God, it shows which way we ought to go. I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. He draws them to the Cross and you may be sure He will draw them to the crown! Do you think He has lost His appeal, now that He sits on the Throne? Not He! He is drawing us up this morning! Let us send all our thoughts upwardour desires, our rejoicings, our aspirationslet them all climb Jacobs ladder up to the Lord! Oh that we could at once rise to Him! Stop a while, my Soul! Be patient through your appointed days. Though you can hardly stand delay, yet follow His example, for your Lord, Himself, had to wait. He had His time of waiting and so must you, in order that you may have fellowship with Him in His sufferings. Still feel the drawings. Remember that pretty parable, given by one of our ministers, of the boys kite. He made it fly aloft. It rose up so high that he could no longer see it. Still, he said he had a kite and he held fast to it. Boy, how do you know you have a kite? I can feel it pull, he said.   
This morning we feel our Jesus pull. He draws us with a far greater force than a mere string. He is gone into Heaven and He draws us after Him! O Lord, draw us with greater power than ever! Draw us, we will run after You. Do we not feel as though we could kneel down and pray over those words of the spouse? Wait a bit and soon you shall climb the shining way to embrace your risen Lord! Yield to His upward drawing! Do not pull away from Him to grasp earth and things that are earthly, but yield to His drawings. As you yield to them, begin to singHe has conquered! He has conquered! He has conquered! What matters it though my garments are rolled in dust and blood? He has conquered! He has conquered! What does it matter though the arrows fly thick about me, winged by the feathers of death? He has conquered! He has conquered! My Soul, grasp the victory, for there is laid up for you, also, a crown of life that fades not away!   
God bless you, Brothers and Sisters, for Jesus sake!

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LUMINOUS WORDS   
NO. 2549

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, DECEMBER 26, 1897. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, DECEMBER 28, 1884.

**Therefore since Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves, likewise, with the same mind: for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the**

**rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have worked the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. 1 Peter 4:1-3.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ has suffered for sin and He has suffered to the utmost extent, for He has paid the death penalty on His peoples behalf. Look at the 18th verse of the previous chapterFor Christ also has once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit. Christ has fought with sin to the bitter end. He has now done with sin, for He has died to it. He has borne the capital sentence pronounced upon the guilty, dying, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. Now, as many as have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ are one with Him. And what He did, He did representatively for them, so that they virtually did it in Him. Therefore, every Believer ought to regard Himself as having been put to death on account of sinas having undergone, in the Person of His Great Substitute, the capital sentence on account of sin and now, as a man who has been executed is clear of the guilt, so are we! And as a man who has been executed should not return, could he live again, under the old sin, so neither must we. Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He lives, He lives unto God. Likewise reckon you, also, yourselves, to be dead, indeed, unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now read between the lines of our text. In Christ we have died unto sin once, but now that we live unto God, we are as if we had actually died to sin and had passed into a new state and condition by virtue of our union with Jesus Christ our Lord. But while this is true, there is an experience of it which we have to undergo within our own spiritshence the Apostle says, Therefore since Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves, likewise, with the same mind. As He has died to sin, we are to die to sin, also. This takes placethe commencement of it, at any rateat the time of conversion. The man who formerly loved sin begins to hate it. The sin which he used to swallow greedily, he now loathes and shuns. There is such a change worked by the Spirit of God in the heart of the Believer that sin can no more have dominion over him. It is dethroned from the place which it occupied over his nature. It once put its foot upon his neck, but now he puts his foot upon its neck. He is dead to sin and he ceases from itnot only thatin the sight of the all-seeing Jehovah, he has his infirmities, his failures and his sins, but still, as far as his heart is concerned, he has done with it.

There is not any sin which he would willingly do. There is no sin which he wishes to spare. Destroy them all, he says, There is not one of them which is not a deadly viper which would cause my ruin. Sweep them all out, my happiness can never be complete till my character is perfect! O Lord, I can never have my hearts desire till

*The dearest idol I have known,   
Whatever that idol is shall be once   
And forever torn from off Your throne,   
That I may worship only You.*

You see, dear Friends, what a wonderful change it is, that is worked in those who are united to the Lord Jesus Christ. (It is as though a man were made to be dead to all for which he once lived and were made to live for that to which he was before dead). He has passed from death unto life, from loving evil into loving righteousness, from hating that which is good to the following after it with all his heart and soul and spirit! I am not going to enlarge upon that great Truth of God except to say this. I beg you to remember that there is no quitting of sinthere is no escaping from its powerexcept by contact and union with the Lord Jesus Christ. I may stand here and preach against the prevalent vices of the age, as I hope I never shall be ashamed to do, but no vice will be put down merely by my denunciation of it. I may charge this man to shake off his sins by righteousness and to escape for his life, but I have set him a task which is quite impossible to him unless I also tell him where the power is to be found by which this work is to be done.

You will not bring a man into the humor to break off his sin by merely telling him that it is his duty, or by warning him that he will be ruined unless he does so. No, but if you can lay that dead man at the foot of the Crossif you can bring the pierced hands of Jesus to touch that dead and powerless sinnerthen he will live! If he does but look to Christ, a glance at Him will give that moral and spiritual power which shall enable the man to make a total alteration in his life, because inwardly there shall be made, by the Holy Spirit, a complete transformation in his inner self. You may take a lantern which has no candle in it and you may clean the exterior as long as you like, but it will not guide you through the darkness. There must be a candle placed within, or else it will be useless to you, cleanse it as you may! And within mans secret nature there must be put the Divine candle of faith in Christ, otherwise all his outward moralities will leave him a dark lantern. You may take a sow from the trough and you may wash it with much soap and expend much toil upon itbut whatever you may do, as soon as it is set freethe creature will go back to its wallowing and be as filthy as the rest of the swine. It can never be cleanly, like the sheep, unless an Almighty hand shall transform the sow into a sheep and, in like manner, sinners are never really changed until they are born again!

It is a good thing for the sow to be washed, I have no doubt it is all the better for it. It is a good thing for the lantern to be cleaned though it has no candleit is all the better for it. And so, it is a good thing for the drunk to become a total abstainer. It is a right thing for the thief to become honest. It is a wise thing for the impure to become chaste. All these things are good, but, still, they fall short of what is needed to enable a man to enter Heaven. And there comes down, again, this great Nasmyth hammer which, at every blow, crushes all self-righteousness! You mustyou mustyou must be born again! There is no escaping from the bondage of sin except by that wonderful means which God has ordainedBelieve in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. There is no way of getting the power with which we can kill sin, the great adversary of our souls, except by laying hold upon the conquering Cross of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior!

That is the great Truth of God I shall try to enforce all through my discourse, but I intend just to light up portions of my text as I have sometimes seen, at illuminations, a few oil lamps lit up, and not the rest. I am going to select a few words here and there, and to try to illuminate them by the light of the Holy Spirit.

I. The first words I want to light up are but twoNO LONGER. That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

Those words, no longer, strike me as exceedingly suggestive to some of you. If God the Holy Spirit shall open your eyes to see Jesus Christ as having died for youand you shall look to Him and find life in that lookthen you will no longer be what you are! You will no longer wish to do what you have been doing. You will not even ask for an hours furlough or respite, but this will be your cry, No longer! No longer would I spend my time in the flesh to the lusts of men. It is near the end of the year, the last Sabbath evening in another year. My Heart, have you been living to please yourself and have your own passions been your master? Then, O my God, help me to say that it shall be so no longer!

For, first, it is a dishonorable thing for a man to let his body, which is his baser part, rule his spirit, which is his nobler part. It is a disgraceful thing for a man to live only for the pleasures of the day and never cast a glance into the future and think about his immortal soul which will outlive the stars. Say to yourself, Why should I act so dishonorably? Come, my spirit, wake yourself up! If you are, indeed, a man with intellect and soul within you, let your spirit take its right position and say to the body, You shall no longer rule, but you shall be a drawer of wood and a drawer of water to my mind and my spirit, which shall henceforth come to the front, for no longer will I seek after the lusts of the flesh.

And for this reason, also, because it is not only dishonorable, but it is wrong to live in the flesh to the lusts of men. Are you not conscious, you who have never lived unto God, that you are living altogether a wrong kind of life? I do not mean, necessarily, that you are leading a vicious life, but is your Maker, your Creator, getting glory out of you, or does this complaint of God apply to your caseHear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord has spoken, I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against Me. The ox knows his owner and the ass his masters crib, but Israel does not know, My people do not consider. Have I not often put it to you that you would not keep a dog if it never followed at your heel? You would not care to have an engine that never worked according to your will. You would soon say, I must get rid of this useless thing. Yet here is God who has created you and provided for youand preserved you in beingand all this while you have scarcely thought of Him! You have never loved Him, you have never truly worshipped Him and, whatever kind of outward homage you have rendered to Him, you have had no real delight in it. You have been a trembling slave, but you have never been an obedient servant to Him! Well, then, as this is all wrong, we must alter it! A man who is a man says, If this course is wrong, I am going no further in it. If this is a dishonest thing, I will have no more to do with it. No longer! No longer! No, not a moment longer will I continue as I have been! If I can have an alteration made, that alteration shall be made at once, for this is my motto, no longer.

Let me also say to you, dear Friend, that you ought no longer to live in the flesh to the lusts of men because the tendency is for you to get hardened in that evil state. Remember that text on which I spoke to you,

a fortnight ago? [Sermon #1821, Volume 31Cords and Cart Ropesread/download the entire sermon free of charge at http://www.spurgeongems.org .] Woe unto them that

draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin, as it were, with a cart rope. As cords of vanity grow into cart ropes, so little evil practices consolidate into dreadful habits which hold a man as with bands of steel! There are some of you who, if you mean to go to Heaven, must begin at once! I feel that there are some here to whom God seems to say, now, or never! I can hear the great pendulum of the clock of time and as it goes to and fro it says, Now, or never! Now, or never! Now, or never! Before, like Lots wife, you stiffen into a pillar of salt that can never move, I charge you, escape for your life! Run to the only refuge set before you! May God help you to do so, looking unto Jesus! Let the words, no longer, enter into your heart as they now come forth from my mouth!

No longer, for if, dear Friend, you have found out that Jesus has loved you, and that He gave Himself for you, you will say to yourself, No longer will I harbor His enemies. I pray the Holy Spirit to help me to lead you right away to Calvary where Jesus hangs bleeding on the Cross. Will you not sit down with me upon the ground and look up, and see Him die? Mark the precious blood flowing from His many wounds and hear Him cry, I thirst. My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Look unto Him! Oh, that you would look, as I now do! I am looking unto Jesus and trusting myself entirely with Him to save me. And I feel in my heart that He has saved me. Now I cannot live as I once lived. I cannot sin as I once sinned. I must have done with sin if I have, indeed, trusted in Christ. Do you not feel the same? I am sure that if you do, now, look to Him, and live by Him, you will not want to have your sins spared you even until the end of this year but you will say, No! Take them out! Hang them up! Let them all be put away forever. There is no darling sin that I would keep back. Let them all die, for no longer would I seek to find a perilous and poisonous enjoyment in them, but my delight shall consist in seeking to be holy and in endeavoring to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. If you have received the new life into your soul, then I know that you will say, No longer will I abide in sin. I have been charmed, this week, by some whom I have seen who have found the Savior just lately. And I am pleased to find that the Lord is at work in many ways bringing sinners to Himself. Why should He not bring you? And what better time could there be than just at the close of this year?

Remember that it must be short work with every sin. Your watchword must be, NO LONGER! There must be no parleying, no trifling. You have already parleyed too long and trifled too long. Now for the one deadly shot that shall penetrate the very heart of sin-love and make it fall slain within you. It will have to be sharp work with some of you, as well as short work. It will be like cutting off your right arm or tearing out your right eye, but it must be done! It must be with you as it was with John Bunyan, Will you have your sins and go to Hell? Or will you give them up and go to Heaven? There is no other alternative. As God lives, it must be one of these two! As it is short work and sharp work, it will be saving work, for, when you have parted with your sins, you will be joined to Christ! And when at Christs feet you have laid down your love of sin, then you may go your way hearing the Apostles comforting message, Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Trusting in Christ, you are saved, and you may sing of it, and bless the name of the Most High!

So much for these two words, no longer.   
II. Now I want you kindly to turn to my text, again, that I may light up five words in the second verse. They are these, THE REST OF HIS TIME.   
The rest of his time. I do not know how much there may be, but, in any case, it cannot be very long. The rest of his time, cannot be very long even with the longest-lived among us. Some have good constitutions and they are yet only in the beginning of their days, so they may live a considerable long time. Still, they cannot be sure that it will be so. God has been visiting this congregation very frequently of late. Every day, almost, somebody is taken away from us. Elderly persons have gone in immense numbers during the last two months. Some of our young friends are also going and we shall have to carry to the grave, this week, some who have scarcely reached middle life. The hand of God is at work among us in a very marked manner, taking away one and another from our midst. Wholl be next? Wholl be next? One who was here on Sabbath week has now gone into the world of spiritsI know of onethere may be many more besides. Well, then, dear Friends, it is clear that the rest of our time cannot be very long.   
The rest of his time. With some, it must be very shortpersons who are very sickly. Others who are very aged. And to some who are neither sickly nor aged, the bolt of death shall be let fly in a moment and they will be in the unseen world. Come, then, dear Friends, let us think this matter over! I would like to think it over myself. There is this consideration which we must not forgetwhile we are talking about the rest of our lifeit is already going. Every moment that we are here, we are traveling at an immense rate, speeding onward to the great goal of death. We had need be in earnest, for while we are making up our minds to be earnest, our time is slipping away! We say that we will find a firm foundation to build on for eternity and while we are thinking and talking of the foundation, the earth is crumbling from underneath our feet and we are gradually gliding away! It is time to live, said Anacreon, for I grow old. And surely we may each one of us say, It is time to live, since, whether old or not, my life is continually passing away.   
I should like to cheer up some of you who are not yet converted. With the belief that although the rest of your time for serving the Lord cannot be as long as it would have been if you had been converted earlier, yet, if you yield yourself to Christ at once, there may be enough time left to you to do good work for your Lord and Master. I have known an aged man converted to Christ long after gray hairs have been upon him, even when tottering to his grave. He has not been wholly uselesshe has still brought forth fruit in his old age to show that the Lord is upright. It has been the happy lot of some of us to be working for our Lord and Master ever since our boyhood, but we have not yet done enough. We feel, indeed, hungry to do much more, and we have the satisfaction of hoping that we may be spared, to do in the future, more than we have ever done up to the present. Who knows? God may give us fresh health and strength and we may be enabled to accomplish more than in the past we shall do so if it pleases Him. But if any of you are converted in your old age, if you are brought to Christ at a period when your years must be few, yet take care to redeem the time, because the days are evil. It is wonderful how God can use even youthere is a testimony for you to bearbear it and may God bless it very abundantly!   
Meanwhile, as for the rest of our life, it has immediate demands, and I beg to impress that thought upon everybody here. The way to do a great deal is to keep on doing a little. The way to do nothing at all is to be continually resolving that you will do everything. Let that grand dream of yours, baseless fabric of a vision as it is, go where dreams must go. And begin to do the days work in the day, yes, and tonights workthe work of the hour upon which we have entereddo that while the hour is here. I am sure that there are many of you professing Christian people who do not bring anybody to Christ because, although you know how it ought to be done, you keep on finding fault with those that do it. Now, just leave your fellow servants alone and get to your own work. Oh, you say, there is a person who is constantly trying to speak to others. He is really quite intrusive. Yes, I know him very well, but, instead of bothering your head about

him, would it not be as well for you to do the work better, yourself, if you can? If you tried to do so, you would then not have any inclination to find any fault with your fellow servant. If we were all determined to do what we could and to do it well, we should serve the Lord acceptably and be blessed in doing it.   
When I get home, says someone, I know what I can do. I am a nursemaid and I shall hear the children say their prayers. Yes, hear them say their little prayers, but be sure to tell them something about Gentle Jesus. Oh, but, says another, I have such a number of children around me that I hardly ever get out. It is only now and then, on a Sunday evening, that I can come here. It seems as if there is nothing that I can do for Jesus. My dear good soul, you are the very person who has much to do for Christ! You have a great and precious charge entrusted to youseek to bring all those dear children to the Savior. Well, says another, I really do not know what I can do. Now, for a person who lives in London to say that is really wicked! You know what Solomon says about our work, Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might. I should have thought that he would have said, Whatever your eyes can see that needs to be done. No, he seems to say, You may shut your eyes and put out your hand and do the first thing that comes within your reach. In such a city as this, there is so much to be done that you may just put out your hand and do the first thing that comes within your reachthat is the best thing for you to do!  
The rest of his time. I have tried to light up those words and I want every Christian and every unconverted person, also, to go away thinking in some such fashion as this, the rest of my timelet me use it, Lord, for You. Let me work at double-quick speed. Lord, help me to make forced marches for You. Lord, help me to do thoroughly what I do. Enable me to throw my whole soul into it and, by Your Divine Spirit, so inspire me, so fill me with Your own power and Grace, that what I do may be done effectually and efficiently. Know you not that you are laborers together with God, and that what you do aright, God does through you? If you can but realize this, how honorably and gloriously will the rest of your life be spent!   
III. Now, to close, I would throw the lamp-light on six words in the third verse. The words are theseTHE TIME PAST OF OUR LIFE.   
The time past of our life. Well, that has gone past recall. Oh, if you could only get your life back, again! But you cannotnot even a moment of it. What is done can never be undone   
Could **your tears forever flow,   
Could your zeal no respite know,**   
you cannot undo anything that is done. There your past life will always stand. If you are a believer in Jesus, the sin of your past life is forgiven. Still, it was your sin. The penalty of it will never be executed. Still, you did have that evil feeling, you did think that rebellious thought, you did say that word, you did commit that transgression, you did omit the keeping of that precept. There it is and it cannot be altered.   
And further, there is no way of making up for the past of your life. The duties of today are not the duties of 10 years ago. If I live unto myself during the first 20, 30, 40, or 50 years of my life, I had need to be doubly zealous in the ardor of my service for God in the future. But, still, that does not fill up the void in the past. That does not remove the fact that all those fields behind me lay untilled through many a year, bringing forth nothing but thorns and thistlesno acceptable harvest for my God. Ah, me, this makes the time past of our life appear very solemn. Certainly it is true that it has sufficed to have worked the will of the Gentiles. There is no man here whom God has converted by His Grace, who wishes that he had spent more of his life in sin. No doubt, it has given him a knowledge of the world, but it is a knowledge of the world which those who have, would be glad to be rid of. I know many a child of God who, when he is in prayer, will have suggested to him, even by the words he uses, some lascivious song. And even what the preacher says, though perfectly pure, may raise before the mind some impure thought, some unhallowed act. It is a blessed thing for a man who has been steeped up to his throat in the bogs of devilry, to be converted, but he who has never seen the world at all has seen quite enough of it. He who has never seen even the hoof of the devil, nor a print which he has made in the earth has seen enough of him. The time past may well suffice us to have worked the will of the Gentiles. If we were converted to God in boyhood, we had had quite enough of sin. Enough, did I say? Far too much, for a single drop of that burning acid will leave a scar upon the flesh even after it has no longer any power to destroy the spirit!   
The time past of our life seems to me to be a matter of humiliation to us all, without exception, but most of all to those who are newly converted. I never mind hearing a man tell that he is converted, but I must confess to feeling a kind of sickness come over me when I have heard some people tell what they used to do before they were converted. I have thought, I wish that Brother would get away in a corner somewhere and tell that story where nobody could hear it. I have heard some men tell the tale of their past lives as if it really was very grand and very creditable to them to have done such abominable things! A man gets up in a meeting and says, My dear Friends, I have done that which, if it had been known, would have brought me to the gallows. Then sit down, says someone, sit down! A very sensible thing to say, because perhaps the man might die on the gallows if he went on with his story. But some fellows will get up, and, under the pretense that they are going to glorify God, will tell of all manner of filthiness and vice which cannot do any good to anybody. Stand up and cry, Brother, that is the best thing you can do. Or else, sit down, and cover your face, and say, Concerning those things whereof I am now ashamed, I only pray God, as He has blotted them out of His memory, to put them out of mine, also.   
The time past of our life ought to also come before us as a matter of contrast. A Christian should say, I cannot do this or that. I used to do it, but that is the very reason why I cannot do it now. I cannot make the angry answer that I once would have done to a man who injured me. The time was when my blood would have been up and I would soon have let him know that he could not insult me in that fashion. But now he may insult me if he pleases, for I am changed, and, by His Grace, I have become a Christian. Time was when, in my business, I would not have minded how the weights went, but now I would far rather defraud myself than injure another. The Christian should recollect the time past to make his present converted life to be a strict contrast to it.   
And he should sometimes remember it that it may be a stimulus to him. I remember a man who came a considerable distance to worship with us in the House of God, as some of you do. I often notice, when you come to join the Church, if you have to walk five miles here and five miles back, and I say to you, It is a very long way, you exclaim, Oh, it is nothing, Sir! It does me good and I like a walk on Sundays. After you have been here a few years, if you get lukewarm or cold in spirit, those same miles grow terribly longdo they not? And you go somewhere nearer homethere is a great difference between a mile and a mileas much difference as there is between a heart and a heart. And when the heart changes, the length of the miles increases directly. Well, this man, of whom I was telling you, one day was going to this place of worship and he felt very tired and his legs said, dont go this morning. So he just pulled up and said, Ah, you old rascals, you used to go further than that to the theater, and I will make you go to the Tabernacle. So, on he walked.   
And, sometimes, it is a good thing to put it to yourself, Why, I have stood up in the gallery of the theater among the gods when it has been hot enough to bake me! And I will go, though the place is hot, or though the place is cold, to hear the Gospel! Some of you would have sat on a very bare seat in the days of your flesh to take your enjoyment, and paid your money down as freely as possible to see what only did you harm. But now it often happens that in a place of worship you must have a very soft cushion, be very comfortable and everybody must be very polite to you, or else you get sick and tired of it. O Friend, remember the past in order to chide yourself about the present, and say, I went through thick and thin for the devil and I will go through thick and thin for Christ! I was never ashamed to acknowledge my old master, I could swear and curse among the worst of his servants. And surely I will not be ashamed to acknowledge Christ, but I will sing to His praise and acknowledge that I belong to Him.   
I would like you all to take up these three threadsNo longer, The rest of His time, The time past of our life. Wind them round your finger and keep them in your memory, and may God grant that we may all start afresh from this time, to the praise of the glory of His Grace! Amen and amen.

EXPOSTION OF C. H. SPURGEON: **1 PETER 4**

Verse 1. Therefore since Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves, likewise, with the same mind. Accepting this great Truth of God, that it is well that the flesh should die that the spirit may triumph, even as it was with Christ.

1. For he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin. If he has, indeed, died with Christ, and the power of Christs sufferings has made him dead to sin, he has ceased from it.

2-4. That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God for the time past of our life may suffice us to have worked the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, drinking parties and abominable idolatries: wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you. For the very thing in which they ought to speak well of you, men will speak evil of you. If you will not drink as they do, if you will not follow after sinful pleasures as they do, if you will not sing their songs, or use their language, then straightway they will hate you and call you a hypocrite. It is a pity that if we are not willing to go into sin as they do, they should, for that reason, speak ill of us, yet this is what we must expect.

5. Who shall give account to Him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. There will be a day when those who are alive at the coming of Christ will be judged. And those who were dead long before that time will not escape the judgmentfor they shall be raised from their graves to appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ.

6 *.* For this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. Men who heard the Gospel and believed it, and are now dead. They have undergone the sentence of death like other men, but, still, they are living according to God in the spirit.

7. But the end of all things is at hand. We are never told the exact date of the times or seasons which are yet to come. It is the evident aim of the Holy Spirit to keep us on our tiptoes of expectation. We are always to be as men whose Lord may come at any minute of the day or night. The end of all things is at hand.

7. Be you, therefore, sober. Do not get intoxicated with anything, neither with pride, nor with covetousness, nor with the cares of this world. Maintain your equilibrium. Stand steadfast and firm. Be you, therefore, sober

7, 8. And watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves. For, when Christ comes, He will know you as His disciples if you love one another. But if there is an absence of Christian affection when He comes, He will say at once that you have missed the main mark of discipleship.

8 *.* For charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Not your own sins, but the sins of your friends, so that you will not see them. Where love is thin, faults are always thick. Wherever there is true love in the heart, we make many apologies and allowances for the weaknesses and infirmities of our friends. Often we cannot see the faults in them and when we know they are there, we go backward, like the godly sons of Noah, and cover the nakedness upon which we will not think of lookingfor charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

9 *.* Use hospitality, one to another, without grudging. Whenever saints of God traveled in those days, there were few public inns available for their accommodation, so they stayed with Brothers and Sisters in Christ as they went on their way.

10. As every man has received the gift, even so minister the same, one to another, as good stewards of the manifold Grace of God. Gods Grace takes many shapes, it is manifold, and He gives to one Brother one form of Grace, and to another quite a different form. And, to a third, yet another form of His blessing. Now, as nations increase their wealth by mutual commerce, so do Christians increase their Grace by a sweet fellowship in the good things with which God has entrusted them.

11 *.* If any man speaks. Let him speak thoroughly well, but, in order that he may do so, what shall be his model?   
11*.* Let him speak as the Oracles of God. As truthfully, carefully, solemnly, as the Bible, itself, speaks. If any man speaks, let him speak as the Oracles of God.   
11. If any man ministers, let him do it as of the ability which God gives. If any man ministers, or servesif he is called to serve the Church in any capacitylet him do it as of the ability which God gives.   
11*.* That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Note how Peter has the same spirit in him as that which burned in the breast of Paul, for he stops in the middle of a letter, lays down his pen, and lifts up his heart to God in an adoring strain of thanksgivingto whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen.   
12. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. In Peters day the Christians were called, not only to what might be metaphorically termed, the fiery trial, but they had literally to suffer thus for Christs sake. Nero had multitudes of Christians brought to his gardens and tied to stakes, that he might light up his midnight revelries by the burning of these godly men and women smeared with pitch. They had to bear even that fiery trial for the name of Christ. Many periods of martyrdom have passed, since then, in which the saints of God have willingly died rather than deny their Lord. We have fallen upon comparatively silken timesa jest, a slander, a calumnious observationthese are the only weapons with which our enemies can smite the most of us.   
13, 14. But rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christs sufferings, that, when His glory shall be revealed, you may be glad, also, with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you. Did not your Savior say, Blessed are you when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Mans sake. Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for, behold, your reward is great in Heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the Prophets. So, be glad about it.   
14. For the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified. Whenever they speak against you that which is not true, they think that they shall slander the name of God by slandering you, but they do no such thing. As far as they are concerned, God is evilly spoken of, but that is all you could have expected from such people. But on your partand that is the thing you have to look toon your part He is glorified.   
15. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other mens matters. A curious mixture thatis it not? A murderer is classed with a busybody in other mens matters. But, really, people of this latter sort are very obnoxious. There are some who seem as if they cannot mind their own business. I have heard that it is for two reasons. First, because they have not any business to mind and, secondly, they have no mind at all with which to mind their business! But these very people think they can mind other peoples business and the more is the pity. See how strongly Peter condemns them and asks that none of those to whom he writes may have to suffer because of such wrongdoing.   
16, 17. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God. Trial and testing must begin there. We must not expect to have our religion taken for granted and ourselves to be saved simply upon our own warranty. We must be triedThe Lord is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed. The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God.   
17. And if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? If the wheat is winnowed, what is to become of the chaff? If God puts even the gold into the fire, what is to become of the dross? If that which is really valuable has to be tested, what is to be done with the mire and the clay? Oh, that all who have no part or lot with Christ would consider this solemn Truth of God!   
18. And if the righteous scarcely are savedIf they are saved with difficulty   
18. Where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? If even men who live godly lives are often hard put to it to know whether they shall be saved or notif they raise the question again and again with a terrible seriousness, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?   
19. Therefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in doing well, as unto a faithful Creator. The whole run of the chapter is that we are to prefer any suffering of the flesh to the sin of the spirit and we are to be prepared to endure whatever trial or pain may come upon us for Christs sake, and to hear it joyfully, rather than to seek the pleasures of sin and to be plunged under the waves of the wrath of God. May He give us the Grace thus to glorify Him, for Christs sake! Amen.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. END OF VOLUME 43.  
Sermon #3047 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

IF SOWHAT THEN?   
NO. 3047

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 4, 1907.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 15, 1871.

If the righteous are scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?   
1 Peter 4:18.

SOME people suppose that it is a very easy thing to be saved, but our Lord said, Strive (Agonize is the original word) to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able. When men hear a simple Gospel sermon of which the pith and marrow is the great soul-saving message, Believe and live, they say, If it is such a simple matter, will not all believe? But the Prophet Isaiah spoke not so, for his sad inquiry was, Who has believed our report (our doctrine is the marginal reading)? Faith seems so easy that one might ask, Where will it not be found? But our Savior thought not so, for He asked, When the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith on the earth? He who knows where to look for it and who has the quickest eyes to discern it, asks whether He shall be able to find, anywhere on the earth, that scarce thing called faiththe faith of Gods elect. Believe me that though the way of holiness is so plain that the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein, yet on account of the hardness of our hearts, it is no easy thing for any of us to enter that way and to continue in it until it leads us to our everlasting Home above.

I do not intend to keep strictly to my text, but to give you the meaning of it in this way. First, here is a fact statedThe righteous are scarcely saved. Then, secondly, there is an inference drawn from that factif they are truly saved with great difficulty, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? When we have considered that inference, we shall take the liberty to draw

two other inferences which may afford us further instruction.

I. First, then, HERE IS A FACT STATEDThe righteous are scarcely saved. That is to say, they are only saved with great difficulty. This is not because there is any deficiency in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, or any lack of efficacy in His atoning Sacrifice, or in His intercession for transgressors. God be thanked that there is no difficulty there! It is not through any lack of power to save on the part of the Holy Spirit. Nor is it through any failure of Gods faithfulness that the righteous are only saved with great difficulty. But it is for two reasons which I will now give you.

The first reason is, because of the strictness of Divine rule. Read the first clause of the verse preceding our textThe time is come that judgment must begin at the House of God. And that judgment is so severe that even the righteous are scarcely saved. When Christ comes even to His own people, He comes to purge and purify them. The Prophet Malachi wrote concerning His first coming, He is like a refiners fire, and like fullers soap; and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. John the Baptist said, concerning Christ, He that comes after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire: whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Judgment must always begin at the House of God and there is, as good Archbishop Leighton very properly says, both equity and congruity in such an arrangement. There is equity in it, for Christians profess to be better than others and so they ought to be. They say they are regenerate, so they ought to be regenerate. They say that they are a holy people, separated unto Christ, so they ought to be holy and separate from sinners, as He was. It is right that where there is a high calling and an honored name, there should be a life proving the accuracy of these two things. So, when God begins to test that which professes to be gold and silver, who can say that He does not begin His testing at the right place, and with the right material? There is also a congruity or fitness in this arrangement. The Church of God is His houseand where does a man begin cleansing and reforming? Why, in his own house, of course! He might perhaps feel that he must have some filth in the farmyard, but not in his own sitting-room! There may be much evil abroad that he cannot remove, yet he can begin cleaning up at home. If we want to do any good in reforming the world, the very first duty for each of us is to begin reforming at home and the Lord, when He means to clear away the dross, begins at home by setting up His fire in Zion and His furnace in Jerusalem.

The tests to which God subjects those who profess to be His people are not easy ones. When His fan is in His hand, woe be unto those who are like the chaff which the wind drives away. The Lord says, by the mouth of the Prophet Amos, I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. Nor shall an atom of chaff be left in the sieve. When Omnipotence and Omniscience unite to sift the chaff from the wheat, you may depend upon it that the sifting will be thoroughly done! There is also the testing by fire. And if any are not able to endure that test, reprobate silver shall men call them because the Lord has rejected them. Then God will weigh uswe shall be put into the balances of the sanctuary and if we are found wanting, how terrible it will be! We often judge by appearances, but God looks at the heart. We may be deceived by the outward profession, but God sees what is within. He looks for the Truth in our inward parts and in our hidden parts there must be the true Wisdom or else we are not saved.

Now, dear Friends, as the tests are so severe, you see how it is that the righteous are only saved with difficulty. Oh, if I may but come out of that scale full weight, if I may but come out of that fire as pure gold, if I may but remain with the wheat in that sieve and not be blown away with the chaff, I shall bless God forever and ever that I was saved, even though it was with great difficulty!

Further, the experience of all Christians proves that the work of Grace in their hearts is not easily accomplished and that their pilgrimage to Heaven is full of difficulties. At the very beginning of the Christian life, some find it hard to lay hold on Christ. We truly sing or say

*There is life for a look at the Crucified One.* Yet there was a time when I felt that I would gladly give my life in exchange for that look! Easy as it seems to be to cast ourselves into the Saviors arms, there are Satanic doubts, evil questionings, and fierce temptations that cause even that simple act to be accomplished only with great difficulty. Indeed, wherever it is accomplished, it is a miracle of Divine Mercy and in every case saving faith is the gift of God.

Then, how difficult it is to overcome the flesh! Are you a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ? Then I need not ask whether you find it so. You love holiness, yet unholiness tries hard to make you its slave. Perhaps it is a fiery temper that is your thorn in the flesh, or some constitutional sin, or some lust that you thought had been subdued. You may have said, with David, My feet were almost gone; my steps had well-near slipped. And I know that if your life is that of a true child of God, you have to fight hard in order to put off the old man with his deeds, and to lead a godly life in the midst of this ungodly generation.

The temptations that assail you from without are equally hard to overcome. There are temptations of wealth and temptations of poverty temptations to turn aside to the right or to the leftand it is not easy to keep to the middle of the Kings highway and to walk in the footprints of Jesus who has left us an example that we should follow His steps. When the world, the flesh and the devil combine to assail usif the Lord does not cover our head in the day of battle, how can we gain the victory? With some Christians it is a very hard struggle from day to day, and even from hour to hourand then we are like Mr. Stand-Fast who, when he was in what Bunyan calls the Enchanted Ground, was assailed by Madam Bubble and who could do nothing but fall on his knees and cry to God for help! There are many of us who have felt like that and who, in the bitterness of our agony, have had to cry to God to help us, for it is only with difficulty that we are saved. I can say, with good John Fawcett

*Temptations everywhere annoy, And sins and snares my peace destroy. My earthly joys are from me torn, And oft an absent God I mourn. My soul, with various tempests tossed,*

*Her hopes overturned, her projects crossed, Sees every day new straits attend,   
And wonders where the scene will end.   
Is this, dear Lord, that thorny road   
Which leads us to the Mount of God?   
Are these the toils Your people know,   
While in the wilderness below?   
Tis even so, Your faithful love   
Does thus Your childrens graces prove   
Tis thus our pride and self must fall,   
That Jesus may be All-in-All.*

How difficult is it for a true Christian even to perform necessary duties in a humble and holy spirit! It is a simple matter to prayit is just going, like a child, to tell God all that you feel and all that you need. Yet I ask you, Christian, whether you do not sometimes find it hard work to pray? When you are on your knees, all sorts of cares come buzzing about you, like so many hornets. You want to wrestle with God as Jacob did, but you find that your wrestling has to be with the devil! I know what it is to long to pray when I cannot find a prayer in my soul! I make this confession because I believe there are many of Gods people who get into that state. And, moreover, I know that we often pray best when we think we are not praying. Perhaps those groans that come from the lowest depths of our spirit when we think we are not groaning at all are just the most potent prayers that ever reach the Throne of God! But there are seasons when one can only say, May the Holy Spirit feel for me what I cannot feel, and utter for me what I cannot speak, and do for me what I cannot perform!

And if such ordinary acts of devotion are so difficult, how much more difficult is it to reach gracious attainments in the Divine life! If any of your graces come to you very easily, suspect whether they are genuine, for in the Christian life, all that is worth having has to be fought for in stern conflict. So determined are the powers of darkness to prevent the Christian pilgrim from entering the Celestial City that all the way to Heaven will be more or less a Hill of Difficulty. You will have to go often upon your hands and knees because the road is so rough and the ascent is so steep that you cannot advance in any other way. We would be holy as God is holy, but there is another law in our members warring against the law of our renewed minds. God knows that we yearn after perfection but, alas, like the bird that would gladly fly, there is something that holds us down! Many of you have seen an eagle in a cage and you know how he looks up with those bright eyes of his that were made to gaze into the sun! If he stretches his wings and tries to fly, he only wounds himself against the bars of his cage and, oh, what wounds some of us have had when in our aspirations after better things, to will has been present with us, but how to perform that which we would, we found not! Often have I had to cry, with Paul, O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Yes, it is hard work for any of us to get to Heaven. God, the Eternal Spirit, helps us to overcome our infirmities, but we are often made to feel those infirmities and to confess that our weakness is no match for the strength of sinand to admit that were it not for God Himself, we should certainly perish after all. I delight to sing with holy John Newton

*Beyond a doubt, I rest assured   
You are the Christ of God!   
Who has eternal life secured   
By promise and by blood.   
The help of men and angels joined   
Could never reach my case,   
Nor can I hope relief to find   
But in Your boundless Grace!*

Do you not, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, sometimes feel how hard it is for you to be saved when you put your soul before the tribunal of your own enlightened conscience? Our own conscience, at the best, is a poor partial judge compared with the impartial and Infallible Judge who will, by-and-by, sit upon the Great White Throne. Yet I ask any Christian here who is really aware of his own frailties and infirmities when he comes seriously to take stock of himself, whether he finds any reason in himself for glorying? I have turned over my sermons and my many labors for the Lord, but there is scarcely one of them that I dare to think of without tearsthey are all marred by sin and imperfection! As I think of every act I have ever done for God, I can only cry, O God, forgive the iniquity of my holy things! But what about our unholy things? Brothers and Sisters, look well to the evidences of your new birth. And as you examine them, see if you do not have to say with the Prophet, We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. If so, then let each one of us pray with penitent David, Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. If we are really Gods people, it is a great consolation for us to know thatnotwithstanding our many infirmities and iniquities, our many anxieties and doubts and fears as to whether, after all, we have been self-deceived or devil-deceivedGod will never forsake us!

II. This must suffice concerning the fact that Christians are only saved with great difficulty. Now, secondly, let us consider THE INFERENCE FROM THAT FACT.

Peter says, If the righteous are scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? By which he means, I think, first, that if even the righteous are so severely tested, what short work will God make with the unrighteousif the wheat must thus be winnowed, how certainly will the chaff be destroyedif the gold must pass through the fire, how assuredly will the dross be consumed! The God who tries and tests the best will certainly not wink at the worst.

He means next, I think, that if the righteous only attain to felicity with great difficulty, the ungodly and the sinner can never attain to it. Suppose there has been a terrible storm on a rock-bound coast. The lifeboat has gone out and the men have nobly done their duty and saved many precious lives. But as each man leaps ashore, he says, I was never before out in such a storm. It is only by the merciful Providence of God that we were able to get back. When the people on the shore see that even the lifeboat so narrowly escaped destruction, they naturally ask, What must become of those poor leaky and unseaworthy boats that are hardly fit to be in a mill pond? Or imagine a river, full of sandbanks, with a channel that twists and turns in a tortuous fashionand there is a vessel on it with an experienced pilot on boardyet even he is very anxious and is constantly heaving the lead, and frequently going at halfspeed, or stopping altogether! Now, if a steamer with a good pilot on board can scarcely get up the river, what will happen to a small sailboat, in the charge of a reckless drunk, who scarcely steers at all, but lets the boat drift wherever it will? Why, it must be lost! So, if the vessels of mercy...before prepared unto glory, on which Christ is the Pilot, barely escape the rocks and quicksands, what must be the end of the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction which have no pilot on board and drift here and there at the mercy of winds and waves? If there is a great conflagration in the city and there is a massive stone structure with iron girders which the firemen can only save from destruction with great difficulty, what will be the fate of a wooden house, covered with pitch and tar and full of oil? If a man who has built for eternity upon Christ, the only true Foundationand who has built, not with gold, silver and precious stones, but with wood, hay and stubbleif such a man shall be saved, yet so as by fire, what will become of the sinner who is only like a dry log fitted for the everlasting burning?

My text does not tell us where the ungodly and the sinner will appear. This is one of the unanswered questions of ScriptureWhere shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? So I shall scarcely speak of that dreadful place where our Savior says, There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, where their worm dies not and the fire is not quenched. These metaphors, terrible as they are in their grim suggestiveness, are only faint images of the awful reality! And I again remind you that they are the words of Him to Whom we teach our children to pray

*Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,*

*Look upon a little child.*   
In Psalm 50:22 there is this dreadful Divine warning, Consider this, you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. If it is difficult for a Christian to be savedand I have shown you that it iswhere shall you who are not Gods people, you who have no Christ, you who have no Holy Spirit to guide youwhere shall you appear? The Apostle Paul wrote, I keep my body under and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. If Paul entered Heaven with difficulty, where will you be? Martin Luthers biography tells us that he was the subject of grievous doubts, depressions and soul anxieties. So, if he only reached Heaven as a sinner saved by Grace, where will you be who know nothing experimentally of the Grace of God? If John Knox, after serving his God so faithfully that his epitaph truly says, Here lies a man who in his life never feared the face of manif he, on his deathbed, found it hard to cherish a hope of Heavenwhat will you do who despise Christs mercy and riot in sin?

Before I close, I want to draw two other inferences. The first is thisIF THE RIGHTEOUS ARE ONLY SAVED WITH DIFFICULTY, WHAT ABOUT THOSE PEOPLE WHO ARE SAVED SO VERY EASILY? It looks as if they were not righteous, does it not? Perhaps there is a man here who is like Bunyans Formalist. This is his hopeI was christened when I was a child, I was confirmed as a youth, I attend my church and take the sacrament regularly. Or he may say, I regularly attend chapel. He says, Dont talk to me about anxieties as to my stateI have no such anxieties. No, I expect you have not, but if you have no doubts about yourself, permit me to have my doubts about you! And let me go a great deal further than doubts and solemnly tell you that a hope founded on ceremonies will lead to your everlasting destruction from the Presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.

There may be another who says, I have made a profession of religion, but I never have any questions about whether I am saved or not. I pray in a fashion. As to praising God, I always could sing and I believe I am about as right as I can be. I dont see any cause for distressing myself. Yes, Friend, but let me remind you that there is a great difference between presumption and full assurance of faith. There is also a very great difference between believing that you are saved and being really saved!

Possibly there is another who says, I believe I am one of Gods elect and that I am quite safe. Well, Friend, if it is so, no one is more thankful than I am. But if that is your only hope of salvation and you have never been born-again and know nothing of the new life with its anxieties and joys, I would not give a bent pin for your hope of Heaven! And the sooner you get rid of it, the better. A dead fish finds no difficulty in floating down the streamit is only the living fish that can swim against the current. The broad road is very smooth and there is a good deal of company on itbut it leads to destruction. There are few in the narrow way and many difficulties therebut it leads to eternal life. You say that you never know any changes. No, nor do the statues in St. Pauls Cathedral. There they stand, year after year, upon their marble pedestals because they are deadand you are the same. But I never have to fight that battle of which you have been speaking. No, of course not, because the world and you are friends! And because you are of the world, the world loves its own. If you were a stranger and a foreigner in this world, you would be treated as strangers and foreigners are in an inhospitable country.

I will draw only one more inference from our text and that is a very comforting one. THE RIGHTEOUS ARE ONLY SAVED WITH DIFFICULTYTHEN TEMPTED SOULS MAY BE SAVED. That Truth of God has given me comfort when I have thought, Well, it is difficult for me to be saved, then it appears that I am numbered with the righteous and that I am on the right road. Oh, Sir, says a poor sinner here, I am glad you said that. I hope I have cast myself wholly upon the Lord Jesus Christ and I thought I was going to have peace always, but, instead of that, ever since I have believed, or thought I had believed, I have had more fights in my soul than I ever had before. Well, the righteous are only saved with difficulty, so do not be depressed. But I have been more tempted than I ever was before and it seems, Sir, as if everybody is against me and tries to drive me back. I thought I should find cheerful companions who would help me on the road to Heaven, but I seem to be alone in an enemys land. My dear Brother, it is always so with the righteousno strange thing has happened to you. But, Sir, says one, horrible thoughts and terrible blasphemies arise in my mind even when I try to pray. And I say to myself, If I were a child of God, could it be thus with me? Dear Friend, be comforted! Satan is afraid of losing you, so he is putting out all his force to try to hold you. Now that you are a Christian, you are a target for all the devils fiery darts, so do not be astonishedthis is the lot of the people of God! When a man has been drowning, I have heard that his sensations have often been very pleasant, but when the circulation of the blood commences again, pain begins at once and the more pain he suffers, the more surely is he being restored to life! It is just so with the spiritual blood that is circulating in your soul. You are not dead, so you smart and suffer because you are alive. If you imagine that the moment you believe, your battle is over, you make a great mistakeyour battle has only just begun and because while really trusting in Jesus, you have battles, contentions, difficulties and troubles, conclude that,

therefore, you are a child of God!

Remember this, if the righteous are only saved with great difficulty, they would never be saved if they did not look right away from themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ. There lies the one hope for sinners and saintsin the finished work of the blessed Redeemer! I know what you are at, said a good man once to one who was doubting, Christ has finished the work of salvation, but you are not content with what He has done, so you want to patch it up with something of your own. Come sinners and come saints, back to the foot of that dear Cross where Jesus bought with His own blood the souls of all who believe in Him! let us throw ourselves prostrate before Him and say, You are all our confidence, our only hope and our full salvation forever and ever. Save us, O Savior! We are sinners and You are the sinners Friendsave us now and we shall be saved forever! Amen, so let it be!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **ZECHARIAH 8.**  
[See Note to Sermon No. 3045, on Zechariah 8:13.]

Verses 1, 2. Again the word of the LORD of Hosts came to me, saying, Thus says the LORD of Hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury. Because they worshipped idols instead of the living God, Jehovah of Hosts, who is a jealous God, was very angry with His ancient people and allowed them to be carried away into captivity. And it is well for us in these days to remember that we serve a jealous God and that if our hearts are not true to Him, He will soon send us sharp afflictions and make us feel the weight of His rod! It was Pauls anxious desire that he might be able to present the Church at Corinth as a chaste virgin to Christ and, certainly, our Lord Jesus Christ will not accept the professing Church of these days on any other terms. Let your heart be loyal and true to Him, or else you will stir up the holy jealousy of your God! Yet the same jealousy which makes God punish His people for their unfaithfulness, prompts Him to return to them in love as soon as He sees that He can justly do so. When their enemies have sorely vexed and oppressed them, then is the Lord jealous, not against them, but against their enemiesand He swiftly returns to His own people in love.

3. Thus says the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of Hosts the holy mountain. The first coming or the return of God to a Church, or to an individual heart, always promotes holiness. So, unless your piety is growing daily, do not imagine that God is in the midst of you, for wherever the Lord comes, He comes as a refiner and purifier. You will never find Jesus come except as John the Baptist pictured Him to the Pharisees and Sadducees of his daywhose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor. The coming of Christ into any soul, or into any Church, is the death of sin and the birth of holiness!

4, 5. Thus says the LORD of Hosts, There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. It is an indication that there is peace in the city when the children can play in the streets without fear. We may thus apply these verses spirituallywhen God greatly blesses a Christian Church, there are sure to be many aged persons in it, those who, by their long experience and their matured wisdom, are able to teach others the lessons which they have themselves learned at the feet of Jesus. Happy is the Church that has in it many fathers and mothers in Israel. At the same time, a Church that is largely blessed by God will also have in it many young converts who will be as full of life and joy as children playing in the streets of a city in time of peace. There is a text which is true both in its literal and its spiritual senseLo, children are a heritage of the Lord...Happy is the man that has his quiver full of them. There is no glory so great to a Christian minister and a Christian Church as that of having an abundance of spiritual children and multitudes of converts brought to Christ. So shall it be with any Church when God is in the midst of her.

6. Thus says the LORD of Hosts; If it is marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvelous in My eyes? says the LORD of Hosts. This is a very remarkable passage, warning us not to judge of God by ourselves. Though a thing may be difficult to us, there are no difficulties with God. No, even if we imagine anything to be impossible to man, the word impossibility has no relation to the Deity, for with God all things are possible. Are you in trouble today? Do you say that it is impossible for you to be delivered? It is an easy thing for God to deliver you, though the task seems so hard to you. Do you feel the weight of your sin and do you imagine that it is impossible for your sin to be pardoned? Would you look upon it as a miracle and because it seems so marvelous to you, do you think it is marvelous in Gods eyes? Remember what He said by the mouth of Isaiah, My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, says the Lord. Consider the infinite difference between God and manand look no longer at God through the misleading glasses of your own feebleness!

7, 8. Thus says the LORD of Hosts; Behold, I will save My people from the east country, and from the west country; and I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness. Mark Gods emphatic language, how full it is of, shalls and, wills. I will, and they shall, says He, again and again. And if God says, I will, who shall dare to say that it shall not be? What God declares shall certainly come to pass. Surely this is golden language of comfort to those who are bowed down! Then how great must be the sinfulness of that unbelief which dares to despair when God says, shall and, will! That one sentence in the eighth verse contains the whole Gospel in two short sentences They shall be My people, and I will be their God. This is the tenor of the Covenant of Grace. There is no if, nor but, nor perhaps in it. God does not say, I will be their God if they will be My people. Nor, I will love them if they will keep My Laws. That is the Old Covenant of works which has been broken forever! The Covenant of Grace runs thus, They shall be My people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.

9-11. Thus says the LORD of Hosts; Let your hands be strong, you that hear in these days these words by the mouth of the Prophets, which were in the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of Hosts was laid, that the Temple might be built. For before these days there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast; neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in because of the affliction: for I set all men, everyone against his neighbor. But now I will not be unto the residue of this people as in the former days, says the LORD of Hosts. The Jewish people had been brought into abject poverty. They were all so poor that there was not one who could hire his fellow man or even pay for the hire of a beast of burden. This was before the foundation of Solomons Temple was laid. But, as that wondrous structure grew, the State also grew and often the prosperity of a Church brings prosperity to the people around it. And to the residue of Gods people there comes a blessing, and not a curse.

12. For the seed shall be prosperous. It is a happy omen for a Church when the Word preached is with power.   
12. The vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase. Happy are the hearts that are like fruitful vines, and good and fertile ground yielding thirty, sixty, or a hundredfold increase.   
12. And the heavens shall give their dew. We cannot bring forth fruit unto God without the bedewing influences of the Holy Spirit. This is that womb of the morning of which David speaks in Psalm 110:3and out of which the precious fruit of the Spirit must come.   
12-15. And I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things. And it shall come to pass, that as you were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and you shall be a blessing; fear not, but let your hands be strong. For thus says the LORD of Hosts; As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked Me to wrath, says the LORD of Hosts, and I repented not: so again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear you not. Did you notice the repetition of the exhortation, Fear not, and then again, Fear you not? The Lord knows how much mischief, doubts and fears do to His people and, therefore, many a time in Scripture He aims a blow at them. Fear nots abound in Scripture! It would be well if you made every one of them into a gallows upon which to hang your unbelief until it died! What is your fear at this moment? What is the cause of your trembling? Fear you not, says God to you! Will you dare to fear after this?   
16, 17. These are the things that you shall do; Speak you every man the truth to his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: and let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbor. Some have wickedly said that thought is free and cant be condemned. But here we see that if it goes after evil, it is a wicked thing which God abhors.   
17-19. And love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, says the LORD. And the word of the LORD of Hosts came unto me, saying, Thus says the LORD of Hosts; The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and peace. God turns sad fasts to glad feasts when He visits His people in love! Is there one here who has been having a long fast? Has your soul been sorely afflicted? Have you been desponding and trembling so that you have had no joy and gladness? Ah, when the Lord Jesus Christ reveals Himself to you, He will soon change your sad state into something brighter and better! He will give you beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Look up, poor trembling Soul, to yonder hill of Calvary where Jesus bled and died for youand there let your joys begin and never, never end!

20, 21. Thus says the LORD of Hosts; It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of Hosts: I will go also. You see that in the latter days there is to be a great spirit of prayer and of seeking the Lord. This will include the hearing of the Word and the love of the Truths of God. And one good sign is that the people will say, Let us go speedily. They will not come in late, as so many do nowadays, just getting into their seats when the Scripture is being read, instead of being present at the opening prayer. I am sorry to say that some of you are getting later and laterand some morning I shall most certainly carry out my threat, and preach the sermon first unless you are more punctual! A little more thought and a little sooner start and you might all be at Gods House on time. David longed to be a doorkeeper in the Lords house and you know that the doorkeeper is always the first in and the last out. May you all have more of Davids spirit, though you cannot all be doorkeepers! These people are to say, Let us go speedily (the marginal reading is continually) to pray before the Lord and to seek the Lord of Hosts: I will go also. That is the best way of bringing others to Gods Houseto say, I will go also. I have read that Julius Caesar never said to his soldiers, Go, but, Let us go. So should we seek to get others to Gods House by saying to them, Let us go...I will go also.

22, 23. Yes, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. Thus says the LORD of Hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you. In the latter days, the Jews, who are still despised, oppressed and persecuted in many countries, shall be so highly honored by God that men of other nationalities will want to be in their company! But, no doubt, there is here a special reference to Jesus, the Jew, the Son of God who became the Son of Mary, too. Oh that this very day many Jews and Gentiles may take hold of His skirt by a living faith and so may receive blessing from Him and be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation!

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2610 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A WITNESS AND A PARTAKER   
NO. 2610

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1899.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 4, 1883.

The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.   
1 Peter 5:l.

KINDLY notice, dear Friends, the Apostles great gentleness. Peter was not always thus gentle, but the Spirit of God had rested upon him and now he writes with much tenderness. He does not say, As an Apostle, I command, but, As an elder, I exhort. It is always well to combine the suaviter in modo with the fortiter in re, that is, suavity in our method blended with strength in the thing, itself. There are some who are very blustering in their style of speech and there are others who, if they do not bluster, yet in the smallest matter always put forth their greatest force, or what they think to be so. They command and rebuke with all authorityyet here is Peter, who certainly was not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostlesand he speaks, not by way of command, but, addressing the elders, he tenderly exhorts them. Oh, that we may always manifest such a meek and gentle spiritnot drive men, but draw them to Christnot terrify and threaten, but entice and woo to the Savior those to whom we are speaking or writing!

Next, notice Peters humility. The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder. He was an elder, most truly, as are all those who, in word and doctrine, feed the flock of God and who, at Christs command, take the oversight of the souls of men. But Peter was much more than an elder, he was an Apostle. There were but few Apostles and those who were called to that high dignity were greatly favoredyet Peter does not mention his higher office, but, with true humility, he puts himself on a level with his Brothers. The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder. My Brother, if God has given to you extraordinary talent, do not exalt yourself on that account. If others willingly follow your leadership and you have the privilege of rendering to the Lord greater service than they can give, what have you that you have not received? And should not the chief among the saints be the servant of all? Is not he really the highest in Christs esteem who is willing to be counted the lowest? Therefore, let no man exalt himself, or think highly of himself, for this he ought not to do. We admire in Peterthe once headstrong, impetuous Peterthe gentleness blended with humility which leads him to say, The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder.

At the same time, let us especially note the wisdom of Peter, for it would have been an unwise thing for him to speak to the elders as an Apostle, for they might have replied to him, You do not know the worry and toil and trouble of our service. You labor in a higher sphere. You, sitting on the Apostolic benches, are far above us. We, poor plain elders, cannot hope to attain to such eminence as yours. No, my Brothers, says Peter, I am one of you, for I, also, am an elder and, as a brother speaks to brother, so I exhort you. Knowing all your travail of heart and all your hard service in the cause of the Master, I, sympathizing with you, and altogether one with you, speak from my heart to your heart. Exhorting you, the elders, I, who am also an elder, say to you, Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over Gods heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory that fades not away.

It will always be our wisdom, dear Friends, to put ourselves as much as we can into the position of those whom we address. It is a pity for anyone ever to seem to preach down to peopleit is always better to be as nearly as possible on the same level as they are. Paul knew this and, therefore, he became all things to all men. To the Jew, he was a Jew. Among Gentiles, he was a Gentile, for it so happened that he belonged to both classes. He was one with all men, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free. If he had to argue with the learned upon Mars Hill, he could be a match for them. If he had to speak with the rough and illiterate, he threw out all beauty of language and talked to them in the plainest style. And you and I, if we want to win men to Christ, must act after the same wise fashion. Dear Sunday school teachers, would you be the means of blessing to the children under your charge? Then, be yourselves, children! Keep a childs heart throbbing beneath a manly breast. If you are a mother, go to the girls in your class as though you were still a girl, yourself, and you shall soon find the key of their heart and enter into the innermost chambers of their spirit. A true man welcomes a fellow manhe sees that he is a member of the great family of mankind and he says to him, Come in. But if you, in your majestic greatness, speak to me like Jupiter thundering from a cloud, I shall not be likely to regard you. Or, if I do regard you, your message will be forgotten in the grandeur and glory of yourself! This is what never ought to happen, my Brothersthat people should think of us and forget our message! Let us belittle ourselves that we may magnify our God. Let the Truth of God be borne before us like a shield! And though we are the Lords armor bearers, let us hide behind the great shield which we lift up before the eyes of men. The elders which are among you I exhortnot as Peter, the head of the College of Apostles but as one who is a fellow elder with you. Therein, we see Peters gentleness, humility and wisdom combinedand we shall be wise if we imitate him in all those respects.

With this introduction, I now come to speak of the two great offices which Peter said that he filled. I cannot help calling them great, yet they are open to you and to meand I hope that, by Gods Grace, we have also, in our measure, been what Peter said that he wasA witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.

I. First, then, let us think of Peter as A WITNESS OF THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST. And, as far as possible, let us be witnesses with him.   
Peter was what we have not been, an eyewitness of the suffering of Christ. He actually and in very deed saw our Divine Master in His terrible griefs. Peter could never forget that he saw the Lord Jesus in His agony in the Garden. He was one of the three disciples who failed to watch with their Lord even for one hour and who, for very sorrow, fell asleep within a stones cast of the place where Christ was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death. Peter remembered how, when the Master rose from prayer, and said, He is at hand that does betray Me, he was there and saw the traitor imprint that cruel kiss upon the cheek of Him who still called him, friend. Peter was, about that time, drawing his sword and cutting off the ear of Malchusand he could not fail to remember the look upon his Masters face when he who had eaten bread with Him did lift up his heel against Him, and the Son of Man was betrayed with a kiss from the apostate Apostle. Peter was also an eyewitness of our Lords being hurried away to the bar of Annas where He underwent His preliminary examination. He remembered seeing one strike Him on the mouth. He could recall how they charged Him with blasphemy. He could remember how, after the first examination was over, Annas sent Him, bound, to Caiaphas. Peter was in the palace of Annas, warming himself by the fire, so he was an eyewitness of all that transpired. I do not quite know how far that witnessing went, for the time came when he denied his Master, but he could never forget that gaze of concentrated agony and pity when Jesus looked at himnot so much reproachfully, perhaps, as mournfully feeling in His own soul that sorrow which He knew that Peter must, before long, feel. A spark from the torch of the Saviors anguish set the heart of Peter on fire and he went out and wept bitterly.

I believeI cannot help believingthat Peter rallied, by-and-by, from his fit of cowardice and that he came to the front, again, and saw the Master in Pilates judgment hall. You know the story of our Saviors griefs and woes and I think that Peter and others of the Apostles were eyewitnesses of His sufferings. They saw Him after He had been scourged. They marked Him after He had been despised, flouted and mocked. They saw Him as the Cross-Bearer and heard Him say, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. They watched Him as He went in awful anguish along the Via Dolorosa to the Mount of Crucifixion. And they stood and saw Him nailed to the tree, to die there, like a felon, with no relief or succor, for God Himself forsook Him. And the bitterest pain of all was that He had to cry, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Possibly, Peter saw it all. Certainly he was an eyewitness of Christs sufferings and, I think, when he was writing to these elders, he seemed to say to them, Feed the flock of God, for I saw the Great Shepherd when He bought that flock. I was there when He purchased the sheep with His own blood. And, after He had risen from the dead, three times He said to me, Simon, son of Jonas, Do you love Me? And when I answered, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You, He said to me, Feed My lambs. Shepherd My sheep. Feed My sheep. Therefore, O my Brethren, by His agony and bloody sweat, by His Cross and passion, by His precious death and burial, by His glorious resurrection and ascension, I beseech you, feed the flock of God which He has purchased with Jesus own blood. I see great force in this exhortation by the eyewitness who is writing to his fellow elders.   
But, dear Brothers and Sisters, you and I, never having seen Christ in His sufferings, might never have had a participation in this part of our text if there had not been another kind of witnessing, namely, the faithwitness. I do not place this second in importance, though I put it second in order, for, indeed, it is of the very greatest importance. There were thousands who were eyewitnesses of our Lords sufferings who, nevertheless, saw not the true meaning of them. They saw the dear Sufferer besmeared with His own blood, but into His wounds they never looked by faith. Thousands saw the Savior die, but they simply went their way back to Jerusalem, some of them beating on their breasts, but none of them believing in Him, or really knowing the secret of that wondrous death. I trust that I am addressing many who could be grouped together as faithwitnesses of the sufferings of Christ. Speaking for myself, I remember well when my sins, like an intolerable burden, crushed me down. I dared not look up and I never would have been able to look up, or to speak to anyone of the joy which is now within my bosom if I had not, by faith,

seen *One hanging on a tree,   
In agonies and blood,   
Who fixed His languid eyes on me   
As near His Cross I stood.   
Sure never till my latest breath   
Can I forget that look!   
It seemed to charge me with His death,   
Though not a word He spoke.   
A second look He gave, which said,   
I freely all forgive.   
This blood is for your ransom paid,   
I die, that you may live.*

Then I saw not only that Christ Jesus died upon the Cross, but I also perceived who He was and why He diedand what He accomplished by that death. I was helped to learn that He loved me and gave Himself for me. I understood that He took my place that I might take His place that He took my sin that I might take His righteousnessthat He bore my woe that I might share His joy. And when I saw thatI do not mean when I heard about itI do not mean when I read of itbut when I saw it with my souls inner eyes and not only understood it, but perceived my share in my Saviors Sacrifice, and believed in Him to the saving of my soul, oh, it was a blessed day for me! Many of you, dear Friends, know well what I mean, for you also had just such a sight as I have described. You were faith-witnesses of Christs sufferings! With some of us, many days have passed since we had that first sight of our suffering Lord, yet that sight has been often renewed to us. Sitting at the Communion Table I have seen it most clearlythe bread and the wine have set forth Christs broken body and poured out bloodand my soul has realized within herself His Godhead and His Manhood, His perfection and His grief, His sinlessness and yet His sin-bearing, His suretyship and the way He smarted for it. And it has been a great joy to see it, and to be able

to sing *He bore on the tree the sentence for me,*

*And now both the Surety and sinner are free* for Jesus redeemed us completely and effectually when He died upon the Cross. Many of you, Beloved, have been in like manner, faith-witnesses of Christs sufferings.

There are some who depreciate this faith-witness, but, Sirs, it is faith that saves! You may be an eyewitness and yet perish as Judas did. You may be an eyewitness and yet be lost as Pilate was. You may be an eyewitness and still hate Christ as Caiaphas did. But if you become a faithwitness, then shall you be included among those of whom it is written, They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. Such a faith-view begets repentance, hope and loveand brings salvation to every soul that has it!

Peter, then, was an eyewitness, but, better still, he was a faithwitness. And this being the case, he went on to be a testifying witness. If a man sees anything happen, he is a witness of it. But he is more manifestly a witness when he comes and says that he saw itwhen he appears in court and bears a public testimony concerning it. I judge that the principal business of any minister of Christ, or of any elder of the Church of Christ, is to bear testimony to the sufferings of Christ. If the atoning sufferings of Christ are left out of a ministry, that ministry is worthless. The blood is the life thereof, is as true about sermons as it is about animals and sacrifices. A bloodless gospel, a gospel without the Atonement, is a gospel of devils and not the Gospel of God. Many are laboring hard, till their oars bend, to get away from the Gospel of Jesus ChristI mean hundreds of so-called ministers of Christbut in proportion as they forsake the Gospel, they cease to be what they pretend to be. They are not the ministers of God, or of His Christ! They are not ambassadors telling of reconciliation to men if in their teaching the sufferings of Christ are hazy and their cause and motive and objective are obscured. It is the glory of some of us that whatever else we bear witness to, we certainly are witnesses of the sufferings of Christ. We declare to men that there is no hope for them but in Christ who died! We testify to them that we have, ourselves, exercised faith in His death and have, thereby, received eternal life! We tell them that we know that what we say is true we are as sure of it as was that disciple who, when he saw the blood and water flowing from Christs side, bore witness to it, and addedHe knows that what he says is true, that you might believe. These things are not like dreams to us, they are part of our very being! We have believed in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ and our troubled conscience has therein found peace. Our soul has been filled with all the fullness of God and, therefore, we are and must be witnesses to the sufferings of the crucified Son of God, to the reality of the Atonement that He made on the Cross and to the effect of that Atonement upon the heart and conscience of all those who receive it.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, this is not only the ministers work, but it is your work, too. We are all to be constantly bearing our witness to Christ and saying, Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world. You know what the people said of John the Baptist when he was deadit is a kind of epitaph which any one of us might be glad to have put on our tombstoneJohn did no miracle, but all things that John spoke of this Man were true. He had no great talents. He was not noted for His eloquence. He was not s man of commanding presence. He had no recondite knowledge. He had no profound logical power, but all that he said concerning Christ was true! I would like to have John the Baptists epitaph as my own and I would be glad for you to have it, too that in life and death we might be known as true witnesses to the sufferings of Christ, the power of which we have felt in our own souls.

There is one other view of this witness-bearing, and that is that Peter was, to a very large extent, a partaking witness in the sufferings of Christ. He does not say so in our text, but in the 13th verse of the fourth Chapter he wrote, Rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christs sufferings. And he could write like that because of what he had, himself, endured for Christs sake. He had been mocked, despised, persecuted. His life had been sought and he knew that he would have to suffer a painful death, for His Master had said to him, When you shall be old, you shall stretch forth your hands, and another shall gird you, and carry you where you would not. Putting all these things together, Peter could truly say that he was a witness of Christs sufferings because he had, in a measure, participated in them.

I hope I am addressing some who can also saythough to a far smaller degree than could the saints of oldYes, for Christs sake we have been accounted fools. We have been reckoned among those who have not the courage to advance with the times. We have been willing to be mocked in the workshop, or in the pulpit, or wherever our lot has been cast among men. And we would cheerfully have borne far more if it had been imposed upon us. As the persecuted Believer looks up to his Lord, he can truthfully say

*If on my face for Your dear name,   
Shame and reproaches be,   
All hail reproach, and welcome shame,   
If You remember me.*

Thus you see how Peter was a witness of the sufferings of Jesus Christ. May each of us be appointed to the same high and honorable position!

II. The second thing which Peter says of himself is, perhaps, more remarkable than the first. He says that he was A PARTAKER OF THE GLORY THAT SHALL BE REVEALED.

I like to see that word, partaker, coming after the word, witness, for I do not think that any man can really be a useful witness for Christ unless he is a partaker. Can you go and talk to others about the bitterness of sin when you have never wept over it or repented of it, yourself? Can you speak of the sweets of Divine mercy of which you have never tasted? Will you magnify precious faith when you are, yourself, a stranger to the faith of Gods elect? Will you set forth Christ, evidently crucified among men, when you have never seen Him, yourself? Can you describe the love which has never cheered your own heart? Will you tell of communion with Christ when you know nothing of its blessedness? Unhappy man! Your office would be, indeed, terrible if you were called to such a work! It were better for you to perform the most menial labor with the most grievous sweat and wear and tear of your very marrow and bones, than have to occupy a pulpit to talk of things which you have never tasted, handled and felt yourself. I would sooner not exist than be a preacher of the Truths of God which I had never believed in my own soul! The old writers used to speak of men who served in the shambles and butchers shops and who saw and handled and sold the meat, but who, themselves, died of hunger. And they spoke of wretched folk who prepared dainties for their fellow men, but who did not, as they expressed it, get so much as a lick of their own fingers, but died of famine while they were feasting others.

Oh horrible, horrible, must it be to be sick unto death and yet to be selling medicines that will heal! Oh, dreadful must it be to be hammering away building an ark, as Noahs carpenters did, and yet never to enter it, but to die in the deluge while the ship which you helped to build bears others over the wild waste of waters! Get home, minister! Tear off your gown and lay aside the very name that makes you appear to be a servant of God! Get down on your knees and cry, God be merciful to me, a sinner, and forgive me for ever having dared to assume an office whose duties I could not fulfill! For how can I, who am blind, be the guide of others? And how shall I, who am spiritually deaf and dumb, make others hear? And how shall I tell of God and of His Covenant, and of His Grace, while I know not God experimentally and have no evidence that I am in the Covenant and have never tasted of His Grace? That is right, Brotheryou are getting on the right linesif you would be a witness, you must first be a partaker! And you who teach in the Sunday school, you who preach at the street corners, you who go from house to house with your tractswhoever you are who profess to be witnesses for Christ, take care that you are both witnesses and partakers. Join the two togetheryou cannot witness if you do not partake, or if you witness and do not partake, you only witness to your own condemnation!

Very strangely, Peter here writes of himself as a partaker of the glory. Did he mean that he was on the holy Mount of Transfiguration and saw the splendor of that sight when Christ was all aglow with a white light which gathered up all brightness and beauty into its solitary ray? Was he thinking of that memorable scene? I know not. It may have flitted across his mind but, in this passage, he says that he is a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Not the glory that had been revealed, but that shall be revealed. Is that possible? Can a man be a partaker of a glory that, as yet, is not revealed?

I answer that he may, first, by the closeness of his union with the glorified Christ. If I am, by faith, indissolubly one with Christ, then in His Glory I am glorified. On His Throne I am enthroned. By His victory I am more than conqueror. If we are one with Him, then we are raised up together with Him and made to sit together with Him in the heavenly places. Oh, it is grand when a Believer does not so much think of himself as himself, but as part and parcel of his Lord! This is a very high attainment, yet Peter had reached itand if you are vitally joined to Christ, you may reach it, too. If you have been, indeed, planted with Him in the likeness of Hs death, you shall also share the likeness of His resurrectionand you even now share it with Him, for as He is, so are you in this world! Was He humbled? Every saint underwent humiliation in Christ. Is He glorified? All His elect are virtually glorified in the glorification of their Covenant Head. It is indeed a blessed thing to know your union with Christ so completely that you are made a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed as far as you are personally concerned, but which is already revealed to Christ and, therefore, is already yours.

I am sure that Peter also means that he had become a partaker of this glory to be revealed by the absolute certainty which he felt in his own soul that he should be ultimately, in very deed, a partaker of it. When a man knows that he has such-and-such a possession in reversion, if he is very poor, he discounts it and begins to live upon its present worth. It is a very blessed thing when a child of God knows that because he is in Christ by faith, therefore, whatever things God has laid up for His people in general, He has laid up for him in particular! Whatever Christ has prepared for His redeemed, He has prepared for this redeemed one. Often his faith does, as it were, appropriate the future glory, and cry, It is mine. The Believer begins to glorify God for it, though as yet he has not actually partaken of it, for faith brings him the substance of things hoped for, and is to him the evidence of things not seen. Brothers and Sisters, the next best thing to being actually in Heaven is to be assured that you will be there, and also to have this thought at the back of the assurancethat you may be there within the next five minutes! Oh, how speedily may you and I be in Glory! Before the clock ticks again, I may see the face of the King in His beauty, in the land that is very far off, in some respects, but very near in others. You know how John Newton puts

it *In vain my fancy strives to paint   
The moment after death,   
The glories that surround the saint,   
When yielding up his breath.   
One gentle sigh the fetter breaks   
We scarce can say, Theyre gone!   
Before the willing spirit takes   
Her mansion near the Throne.*

Well, since this glory is certain and may be so near, let us sit down and look at the golden gateslook until we see themuntil they seem to come nearer and nearer and nearer, until the vision becomes so vivid that it ceases to be a vision and we are actually where we were thinking that we should soon be! It has so happened to many a child of God. There is one whom God favored with great wealth and to whom a friend said, What a paradise this lovely garden is! Yes, he replied, and I bless God for the assurance that, when I leave it, I shall go from one paradise to another and a better one. Some have said to a poor Christian, What an ill-furnished place your room is! How scanty are your worldly goods! Ah, the man, has answered, but I have enough to last me till I get Home, for I have the promise that bread shall be given me, water shall be sure and then I shall have Heaven to crown it all. When we have faith like that, then are we partakers of the Glory that shall be revealed!

There is a step even beyond this when we advance from faith to positive enjoyment. There is such a thing as anticipating the glory to be revealed with such a full, realizing faith that we begin to enjoy it even now! Surely, you have, at times, sat down with your fellow Believers, when the Word has been preached in the demonstration of the Spirit, and you have said, Well, Heaven must be glorious, indeed, to be any better than this! My soul is all ablaze with love to Christ and even while my poor body is lingering here

*My heart is with Him on His Throne,   
And ill can brook delay.   
Each moment listening for the voice,   
Rise up, and come away.*

And when the service has been over, you have said, My soul was like the chariots of Amminadibwhether I was in the body or out the body, I could not tell. On your bed, sometimes, or in the chamber of sickness, or sitting alone in quiet meditation after you have been enraptured with a vision of your Lord, has it not seemed as if God had taken some dainty dish from off the table of the angels and passed it down to His waiting child below? Have you not heard stray notes of which you could almost say, I am persuaded that is the angels song? And sweet sounds have reached your ears, like the music of harpers harping with their harps, making you impatient of your exile here, but, at the same time, making you unspeakably happy until you shall be called up to join in the grand chorus of the Church of God above! Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever!

Yes, Beloved, Peter could truly say that he was a partaker of the Glory yet to be revealed. I have no doubt that, sometimes, when he preached the Word, his soul was all aglow with holy fervor. I know that, often, I have been so graciously helped by the Holy Spirit to uplift my Lord and Master from this platform, that I have not wanted to go up those stairs any more. I would have liked to just finish up my discourse and say, Amen, on earth, and at once begin to sing the everlasting song above! Have not you, dear Friend, also reached that blessed state? I am sure that Peter was often in that condition. And when he was persecuted, despised, imprisoned and his own brethren cast him out, there was often within his own bosom a company of the angels of God, Christs sacred hosta very Mahanaimand, still better, there was the Prince of Princes, the Angel of the Covenant, the Lord and Master of all the angels, speaking deep bliss into His servants soul and filling him with unspeakable joy and glory!

Now, my Brother or my Sister, if you get that Presence of Christand I pray that you mayyou will be qualified to be a witness for Christ. People will say, What makes those eyes so bright? What causes that man to be so happy? What is it that produces that calm, quiet spirit in the house? How is it that that man is not troubled as others are? He does not seem to have much cause for joy, but he is very serene and placid in spirit. They will perhaps say to you, What is the secret of it all? Then you will have an opportunity of saying, I am a witness of Christs sufferings, but I am also a partaker of the Glory that shall be revealed. Come with me, in thought, to Calvary, that you may learn the meaning of His sufferings, that you may afterwards be taught how you may share His Glory.

I wish I could speak right to the very soul of some of you who do not know my Masterhow I wish you did know Him! I cannot imagine what some of you have to comfort you which you can, for even a moment, compare with the bliss of knowing my Lord! I have seen your joys. I know something of what mirth can do and what relief laughter may be able to bring, but I also know that these things are of little use in the time of sickness, or when one is near death. It is just at such times that true joy in Christ becomes more deep, more sweet than ever! The less there is of the creature, the more room is there for the Creator. The more of suffering and sorrow we have to endure, the more of content and bliss can we enjoy. And oftentimes, when the body is weak and the head is aching, and the soul is faint, there is, as it were, a sweet swoon of Divine delight which comes over the spirit, which has more strength in it than strength, more joy in it than joy, and almost as much of Heaven in it as there is in Heaven! May you know this, for the sake of Him who has loved us and given Himself for us! God bless you all! Amen.

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

I am going to speak about the testimony of the Apostle Peter concerning his Lord, but we will first read together part of the writings of his Beloved brother Paul, that we may see how these eminent servants of Christ agreed in their witness-bearing.

Verses 1-3. Paul, called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. So this is a message to us, also, who call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

4-9. I thank my God always on your behalf, for the Grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in everything we are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that you come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Paul was going to blame them for some things that were not right, but he began by commending whatever good was in them by Gods Grace.

10-12. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that everyone of you says, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. So that, at the least, there were four parties in that one little Church which ought to have been knit together in unbroken harmony! This is only one instance of what has happened hundreds of times since. These Corinthians had a great many speaking Brothers among them and they held services in which it was open to anybody to speak as he felt inclined. There was no reason why they should not do so, but what was the result of it? This Christian liberty of theirs, by-and-by, tended to mischief. They became divided into factions. They did not practice discipline as they ought to have done and, therefore, this community at Corinth is a beacon to all other churches, warning them not to carry on their worship in a similar style. It is a very curious thing that some people have taken these Corinthians as an example instead of a warning and, having copied their methods, the very same result has followed until there is no section of the Church of Christ that has become such a scandal, through its divisions and its intestine quarrels, as that which has imitated the Corinthians in their mode of worship! I suppose that while human nature is what it is, the same causes will produce the same results to the very end of the chapter. Paul does not tell them that their mode of worship was wrongperhaps it was notfor great liberty is allowable to Christians, but he does lay the axe at the root of their divisions.

13, 14. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius. They were such a quarrelsome set of people that he could not have taken any comfort from having baptized them. He was glad that they could not quote his name as having done so and thus it may be, have added still more to their division and strife.

15-18. Lest any should say that I have baptized in my own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanus: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. I suppose that in that Church, with its many eloquent speakers and men of knowledge, there came to be a spirit of emulation among them as to which should speak best. And some were tempted to find novel meanings in the Word, and to come to the meetings to tell of their wonderful discoveries. The Apostle says that he did not so preachhe kept to the Cross of Christ, which some counted to be but foolishness. We know all about that, they said. Ah, but, replied the Apostle, unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

19-21. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wiser, where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. God, in His infinite wisdom, raised up a number of philosophers just about the time of the coming of Christ and a little before that great event. If ever there were great minds upon the earth, it was thenyet these men, with all their schools of thought, knew not Godand the people did not follow after them, so that the earthly wisdom turned out to be a failure.

22-29. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men for you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are: that no flesh should glory in His Presence. And, at this day, it is a great snare to the Church when she glories in her education, when she puts any confidence in the learning, or the wit, or the eloquence of her ministers, when she relies in any degree, whatever, upon an arm of flesh. The sword of the Spirit, if it is put into a velvet and embroidered scabbard, is all the worse for that. Pull it out! The Word of God cannot cut while it is hampered with human wisdom and human learning half as well as when its keen edge, alone, is used! It is the Lord, by the power of His Spirit, who must make the Word effectual. Oh, for more faith and truer faith in Him!

30, 31. But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, he that glories, let him glory in the Lord. There is no one else in whom we may glory! Away with every form of boasting except that of making our boast in the Lord, and especially of glorying in the great atoning Sacrifice of His dear Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

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ON HUMBLING OURSELVES BEFORE GOD   
NO. 1733

BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.   
1 Peter 5:6.

PRIDE is so natural to fallen man that it springs up in his heart like weeds in a watered garden, or rushes by a flowing brook. It is an all pervading sin and smothers all things like dust on the roads, or flour in the mill. Its every touch is evil as the breath of the cholera-fiend, or the blast of the Sahara wind. Pride is as hard to get rid of as charlock from the furrows, or the American blight from the apple trees. If killed, it revives; if buried, it bursts the tomb. You may hunt down this fox and think you have destroyed it, but lo, your very exultation is pride! None have more pride than those who dream that they have none! You may labor against vainglory till you conceive that you are humble and the fond conceit of your humility will prove to be pride in full bloom. It imitates humility, but is most truly pride!

Pride is a sin with a thousand lives! It seems impossible to kill it, it flourishes on that which should be its poison, glorying in its shame. It is a sin with a thousand shapes and by perpetual change it escapes capture. It seems impossible to hold itthe vapory demon slips from you, only to appear in another form and mock your fruitless pursuit. To die to pride and self, one would need to die himself. Pride was mans first sin and it will be his last. In the first sin that man ever committed, there was certainly a large mixture of pride, for he imagined that he knew better than his Makerand even dreamed that his Maker feared that man might grow too great!

It has been questioned whether pride was not the sin by which the angels fell when they lost their first estateI will not go into any controversy upon that subjectbut there was certainly pride in the sin of Satan and pride in the sin of Adam. This is the torch which kindled Hell and set the world on fire! Pride is a ringleader and captain among iniquitiesit attains unto the first three of Satans champions. It is a daring and Goddefying sin, arraigning Divine justice as Cain did; challenging Jehovah to combat as Pharaoh did; or making self into God as Nebuchadnezzar did. It would murder God if it could, that it might fill His Throne. While it is first to come and first in horrible supremacy, it is also last to go. As Paul said, The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

I think I might say that the last enemy but one is pride, for even at our deathbed pride will be found in attendance. In his last moments, John Knox had a sharp conflict with self-righteousness though he had preached against it with all his might and knew, with a clearness seldom given to men, that salvation is of the Lord alone. Even within an hour of Glory he had to make a stand against that vile thing, the pride of the human heart! Many others of the Lords valiant ones have been sorely assailed by the same crafty foe which shoots with feathered flatteries, shafts of destruction. In the most quiet minds the deadly calm of self-conceit may be found. Our hearts are deceitful above all things and in nothing less to be trusted than in this matter of pride.

Even while we breathe out our souls unto God it will attempt to puff us upyes, it will puff up poor dying worms! Brothers and Sisters, for certain you and I are in danger of pridepossibly we are even now victims of it! Let us be on our guard, for it may be ruining us without our knowledge, even as the moth in secret eats up the garment, or as unseen rust cankers the hidden treasure. Let pride lodge where it may, it does its entertainer great mischief, for it bars out the favor of God, God resists the proud. It must be sent adrift before God can visit us with favor, for no Grace comes to the proud, but He gives Grace unto the humble. Humility is the Grace that attracts more Grace! As money makes money, so humility increases humility and, with it, every other spiritual gift.

If you would have much Grace, have much humility. God has assistance for the humble, but resistance for the proud. You know how He fought Pharaoh. What blows He struck at the haughty monarch! He would have him down from the pinnacle of defiance, one way or another, and make him learn, in bitterness, the answer to his own insolent question, Who is the Lord? Remember how Nebuchadnezzar had to eat grass like an ox because he spoke with a haughty tongue? Wherever God sees pride lifting itself on high, He resolves to level it in the dust! He draws His bow, He fits His arrow to the stringand pride is the target that He shoots at. The more pride enters into the Christians heart, the less Grace will enter thereand the more opposition from God will comefor pride is never so hateful to God as when He sees it in His own people.

If you see disease in a stranger you are very sorry, but if you discover its symptoms in your own child, your grief is much more deep. A viper is loathsome anywhere, but how it would make you start if you saw the head of one of those creatures peeping out from the bosom of a beloved friend! So pride is detestable anywhere, but it is worst in those whom the Lord loves best. If God sees pride in a David, He will smite him till he ceases from his high thoughts. Or if it is in a Hezekiah, he will abase himand you can be sure that if the Lord sees pride in you, he will smite you! Yes, smite you again and again till you wait humbly at His feet!

All this I have given by way of preface, but I think it is also an argument which may run before the words of the text and strengthen them. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God! I shall handle the text, not at any great length, but for practical purposes in three or four ways. May the Holy Spirit bless the discourse!

I. First, our text is evidently intended to bear upon us IN OUR CHURCH LIFE. We will use it in that respect. Observe that Peter has been speaking to the elders and telling them how they should behave themselves in the flock over which they are set as overseers. Then he speaks to the younger members and says, Submit yourselves unto the elders. He says to all Church members, All of you be subject, one to another, and be clothed with humility. And it is in the same context that he writes, Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God. I am, as a member of a Church, not to seek honor for myself, but I am to walk humbly. I am not to make it in any respect the objective of my Christian life to be esteemed among my fellow Christians so as to have influence over them and to take the lead among them.

I am to have far humbler motives than that. I am to think very little of myself and to think so much of others that I admire all that I see of Gods Grace in themand am glad to learn from them as well as to help them in their progress to Heaven. Each one of us should think little of himself and highly of his Brothers and Sisters. I cannot say that all of us, as Christians, are clothed with humility as we should be. I am afraid that from the preacher down to the most obscure member, we may, everyone of us, listen with awe to the injunction, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God. And I am afraid that all of us can confess that we fall short of this command. Yet I may honestly add that in this Church I have seen more submissiveness, deference to others and less of ambitious selfesteem than anywhere else in the world. I have spoken nothing less than bare justice when I have said this.

Let all the world know that as a pastor I can, in this point, praise the people of my charge beyond any that I have ever heard of! I am not apt to judge too favorablyI speak as I have seen and this is my honest testimony. We owe our union and prosperity under God to the readiness of most of the Brethren to do anything and everything for Christ, without considering ourselves. Now, true humility in our Church relationship will show itself in our being willing to undertake the very lowest offices for Christ. Some cannot do little thingsthey must be ordained to great offices or they will sulk in indolence. Genuine humility makes a man think it a great honor to be a doorkeeper in the house of God, or to be allowed to speak a word to a little child about Jesus, or even to wash the saints feet. I am sure, Brothers and Sisters, that those who are not willing to fulfill the lesser offices will never be used by Christ to mind the greater duties.

Humility is a qualification for greatness. Do you know how to be little? You are learning to be great. Can you submit? You are learning to rule. My symbolic sketch of a perfect Christian would be a king keeping the door, or a prince feeding lambs, or, better still, the Master washing His disciples feet! The next point of humility is that we are conscious of our own incompetence to do anything right. He who can do all things without Christ will end in doing nothing! The man who can preach without Divine aid cannot preach at all. The woman who can teach a Bible class without the Holy Spirit cannot teach a Bible class. Human ability without the Grace of God is puffed-up inability! Those of you who, apart from supernatural help, feel quite sufficient for any kind of holy service, are miserably deluded. Self-sufficiency is inefficiency. The fullness of self is a double emptiness. He that has no sense of his weakness has a weakness in his sense!

I believe, Brothers and Sisters, that any man whom God uses for a great purpose will be so emptied out that he will wonder that God uses him in the least degreeand he will be ready to hide his head and long to get out of public notice because he will feel himself to be utterly unworthy of the favor which God manifests towards him. I do not believe that God ever fills a cup which was not empty, or that He ever fills a mans mouth with His Words while that man has his mouth full of his own words. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God! If you desire that the Holy Spirit should bless you, be purged from your own spirit. The way to rise into God is to sink in your own self. As our Lord Jesus descended into the depths, that He might rise above all things and fill all things, so we, in our imitation of Him, must descend to the uttermost that we may rise to the highest.

This humility will show itself, next, in that we shall be willing to be ignored by men. There is a craving in the heart of many to have what they do written upon tablets and set up in the market places. I once heard a professing Christian complain bitterly that he had been ignored. He had been a Sunday school teacher for years and yet he had never been publicly mentioned by anyone. Did he make that a complaint? He might far rather have rejoiced in his quietude! The fierce light of public notoriety is not much valued by those upon whom it falls. I wish some people would ignore meat least all next week, so much as not to call to see me, or write me a letter, or name me in the papers! I would be as happy as all the birds in the air to be ignoredif I might be left alone and allowed peacefully to work for God with His sweet smile to cheer me in my loneliness! Oh, to be a little ant, allowed to labor on at Gods bidding, receiving nothing of men but the high privilege of being left alone!

A saintly soul was known to pray, Grant me, O Lord, that I may pass unnoticed through the world! It seems to me to be one of the highest delights of life for people to permit you to work for God without being interrupted by their praises or censures. When I have seen a certain great artist at work, I have peeped at him from a corner and have kept out of his sunshineI am quite sure he did not want me to express my valueless opinion about his glorious creations! To have people forever talking about you, for you and against you is one of the wearinesses of mortal lifeand yet some people sigh for the attention that others would be glad to be rid of! Yes, so it is. It is but a little thing that certain friends have done, but they would like much made of ittheir slender alms must be published at the corners of the streetstheir prosy speech must be reported in all the papers!

Oh, Brothers and Sisters, do not let us care about its being known that we have done our part! Let it be done as to God and in Gods sight! And then, as to what our fellow mortals shall say, let us have scant concern, for, if we live on human praise, we shall grow not only proud, but vain, which, if it is not more wicked, is certainly more silly. Serve God and do not wish to have a trumpet blown before you. Never cry with Jehonadab, Come, see my zeal for the Lord of Hosts. Go on serving God year after year, though you are altogether unknown, feeling it quite sufficient that you have, by the Grace of God, served your generation and honored your Redeemer. This would be a great attainment in our Church life if we could reach to it. Brethren, we need humility, all of us, in our Church life, in the sense of never being rough, haughty, arrogant, hard, domineering, lordlyor, on the other handunruly, quarrelsome and unreasonable.

We should endeavor to think very carefully of those who are poor, for fear we should hurt their feelings. And we should be very noticeable of those who are obscure, lest we should seem to despise them. It is ours never to take offense and to be most cautious never to cause it even by inadvertence. He that is set as a leader in the Church of God, let him be the person that is most ready to bear blame and least ready to give offense let him say, You may think what you please of me, but I shall lay myself out to do you good and to be your servant, for Christs sake. The lower you can stoop, the greater is your honor. In the eyes of wisdom, no piece of furniture in the house of God has greater dignity than the doormat. If you are willing to let others wipe their feet on you, then shall Christ Jesus take pleasure in you, for you are a partaker of His lowly mind.

Even for your own sake it will be wise to occupy a humble place, for in the valleys the streams of peace are flowing. The mountains are the playgrounds of the storm, but in the quiet villages the dove finds her shelter. If you would escape from ill will and live peaceably with all men, practice the maxims of an influential man, who, when asked, after the Revolution, how he managed to escape the executioners axe, replied, I made myself of no reputation and kept silent. I am speaking to a number of young men who have begun to speak for Jesus Christ in the Churchlet me earnestly entreat them to take great notice of my textHumble yourselves under the mighty hand of God. Remember, you cannot do any good unless the mighty hand of God is with you! Therefore be humble and look to His hand for all success.

Feel it to be a wonderful thing that the mighty hand of God should ever use you and, therefore, lie very low in that hand, and beneath that hand, for then you may claim the promise that He will exalt you in due time. If you are willing to look after a few poor people in a village and to do your duty thoroughly well among a lowly company, you shall have a larger sphere before long. If you are satisfied, young Brother, to stand in the corner of the street and talk about Jesus Christ to a few rough folk, you shall find hundreds of hearers, by-and-by. If you are willing to be nothing, God will make something of you! The way to the top of the ladder is to begin at the lowest rung.

In fact, in the Church of God, the way up is to go downand he that is ambitious to be at the top will find himself, before long, at the bottom. He that exalts himself shall be abased but he that humbles himself shall be exalted. Suffer, my younger Brethren, this word of exhortation.

II. And now, secondly, I will use the text in quite another wayin reference to OUR BEHAVIOR IN OUR AFFLICTIONS. Here let every tried Believer listen to the counsel of the Holy Spirit. Certain of us are never long together without affliction and trial. Like salamanders, we live in the flame, passing from fire to fire. As by a succession of shafts we descend into the heart of the earth, going down from woe to woewe need to learn the way of these dark places! Frequently our heavenly Fathers design in sending trial to His children is to make and keep them humble. Let us remember this and learn a lesson of wisdom. The advice of Peter is that we should humble ourselves. Many people have been often humbled and yet they have not become humble. There is a great difference between the two things.

If God withdraws His Grace and allows a Christian man to fall into sin, that fall humbles him in the esteem of all good menand yet he may not be humble. He may never have a true sense of how evil his action was. He may still persevere in his lofty spirit and be far from humility. When this is the case, the haughty spirit may expect a fall. The rod will make blue wounds when pride ignores gentler blows. The most hopeful way of avoiding the humbling affliction is to humble yourself. Be humble that you may not be humbled! Put yourself into a humble attitude and draw near to God in a lowly spiritand so He will cease from His chiding. And do this, first, by noticing whether you have been guilty of any special sin of pride. You are sufferinglet the rod point out to you in which way you have erred through pride. I believe that David was afflicted in his children because he had been proud of his children and had indulged them.

When there is a breakage in the house, it is generally the idol that is broken. Usually our sins lie at the roots of our sorrows. If we will repent of the sin, the Lord will remove the sorrow. Have you been tried in your worldly possessions? Were you ever puffed up by them? Is your health failing? Did you ever glory in your bodily strength? Are you deceived? Were you ever boastful of your own wisdom? Are you mourning over a failure in character? Did you not once dream that you were past temptation? Look into your affliction till you see, as in a glass, what was the thing you were proud ofthen take the idol down from its pedestal, humble yourself before Godand from then on worship only Him! In your affliction, humble yourself by confessing that you deserve all that you are suffering. Is it poverty? Then, dear child of God, admit that you deserve poverty because of your love of the world!

Is it physical pain? Then acknowledge how every erring member deserves to smart. It is a great thing to have wrung out of us the confession that our chastisement is less than we deserve and that the Lord is not dealing with us according to our sins, but rewarding us according to our iniquities. Is there a bereavement in the house? Then, I pray you, acknowledge that if God were to visit you, as He did Job, and take all your children away in a stroke, you deserve it at His hands! Confess that the chastening hand is not dealing too severely with you. Humble yourself and then you will not quarrel with your grief.

But, more than that, humble yourself so as to submit entirely to Gods will. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you in this act of self-humiliation while you meekly kiss the rod. Bow yourself before the mighty hand of God, ready to receive harder blows if God so pleases, for when your will entirely yields to the will of God, it is highly probable that either the affliction will be removed, or else the sting of it will be taken away. Down, Brothers and Sisters, down in the dust as low as you can get! God is evidently dealing within you as with a child and a childs wisdom lies in cheerful submission to parental discipline. When a child is under his fathers chastening hand, it will not help him to kick, quarrel and say anythinghis best hope lies in submitting absolutely to his fathers good pleasure. When that is done, the chastisement will soon end.

Humble yourself, therefore, under the mighty hand of God. Yield up your will so as to have no suit-in-law against the Lordno difference as to His goodness, not even if the evil you dread should actually come and come in the worst form! Submit to the Lords will as the rush bends to the wind, or as the wax yields to the seal. Pray against the calamity which moves you to fear, but let your petition always end with, Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will. Ask that you may not be obliged to drink the bitter drink, but do not upset the cup, nor push it away. There let it stand, while you, for the moment, supplicate for its removal. And when there comes no answer to your prayer, then take it up meekly, put it to your lips resolutely, and drink right on, even as your Master drank His cup and drained it to the dregs.

This needs the help of the Holy Spirit and truly He waits to help usHe delights to aid us in such holy acts of submission! Nothing is better for us in our time of tribulation than to bow ourselves in lowliest obeisance before the hand of God. Dear Friend, what can be the use of striving against the hand of the Lord? It is a mighty handwe cannot resist it, even if we are wicked enough to attempt rebellion! If affliction is to come, it will come, and come with all the greater sharpness because we refuse to yield. If God appoints a trial, we cannot escape it. What can be the use of our striving against Divine decrees? It will only make our sorrow more severe. When the ox kicks against the goad, the iron enters deeper into its flesh, but when the bullock hastens on its way, sensitive to the least touch, the driver scarcely urges it again.

The tender, sensitive horse scarcely receives a stroke from the whip; he feels it too much. But the mule that will not move is struck again and again for his obstinacy. So will it be with us. We can make rods for ourselves by willfulness. Oh foolish fingers which prepare thorns for our own pillows! Humble yourself, therefore, under the mighty hand of God and, by-and-by, Brothers and Sisters, you shall be exalted to consolation and prosperity. Your affliction shall bring forth the comfortable fruits of righteousness. You shall come out of the furnace purified and refined. You shall have more knowledge, more Grace, more zeal, more of every excellence as the result of sanctified trialbut all this must come by obedient resignation.

A rebellious heart comes out of affliction worse rather than better. Submit, and you shall be so exalted by your affliction that you shall bless God for it, and feel that you would not have missed the trouble for 10,000 pounds if you could have done so! Heavy tribulation shall bring with it unspeakable preferment. You shall be exalted to a higher degree in the peerage of Christianity by putting up with adversities. Therefore, I pray you, humble yourselves under the hand of God.

III. Thirdly, I am going to use the text in another way. IN OUR DAILY DEALINGS WITH GOD, whether in affliction or not, let us humble ourselves under His hand, for only so can we hope to be exalted. It is a blessed thing whenever you come to God, to come wondering that you are allowed to come, wondering that you have been led to comemarveling at Divine election, that the Lord should ever have chosen you to come wondering at Divine redemption, astonished that such a price should have been paid that you might be brought near to God! It is well to draw near to God weighed down with gratitude that the Holy Spirit should have ever deigned to work effectual calling upon you. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of Divine Grace which has brought you into the family of loveconstantly say, Why me, Lord? Why me?

A grateful walk is a gracious walk and there is no gratitude where there is no humility. Never trace the difference between yourself and others to your own free will, nor to any betterness of your natural disposition, but entirely to the mercy and Grace of God which have been freely bestowed on you! Let Grace be magnified by your grateful heart! When you are doing this, be very humble before God because you have not made more improvement of the Grace that He has given you. You are chosen, but you are not as choice as you ought to be! You are redeemed, but you are not so much your Lords as you ought to be! You are called, but you are still too deaf to the Divine call! You are blessed, enriched, instructed, adopted, comfortedwith Heaven before you and everything prepared on the road but what a poor return you have made! Always feel thus humbled in reference to your God and His Grace.

When you are doing most and God is using you most, always feel that if you had been fit for it, He might have done much more by youthat if you had been meet to be used, He might have used you far more extensively. Thus you will always see cause for humility, even when you discern abounding reason for gratitude. Walk always so with God that when you stand on the highest point you still feel, I might have been higher but for my own fault. I have not, because I have not asked, or because I have asked amiss. I have not become as rich as I might have been in spiritual things because I have not been as diligent in my Lords business, or as fervent in spirit, or as abundant in serving God as I ought to have been.

Next, humble yourself, dear Brothers and Sisters, under the hand of God by feeling your own need of knowledge whenever you come to God. Do not think that you understand all Divinity. There is only one body of Divinity and that is Christ, Himselfand who knows Him to the fullest? When even His love, which is the most plain point about Him, passes knowledge, who shall know Christ in all His fullness? Come before God to be instructed in the knowledge of your God and Savior. Do not think that you understand Providence, for I am sure that none of us do. We sometimes think that we could manage things a great deal better than they are managed. Many farmers would not have appointed that heavy shower for this afternoon and yet that downpour was essential to the general wellbeing of the universal kingdom. I cannot tell why, but it is so. Everything that comes by Gods appointment is a cog in the wheel of Providenceand if that cog were gone, the machinery would be out of order. The Lord does all things wiselyonly a vile pride will suspect otherwise.

Consider, O man that you do not knowonly God knows! Little children sometimes think they are wise but they know nothing. Wisdom is with their father, not with them. Let us be content to humble ourselves under the hand of God as poor know-nothings, satisfied that He knows what is best for us. This humility is the vestibule of knowledge, the cornerstone of true philosophy. Commence with a confession of ignorance, or you will never be taught of the Lord! It cannot be hard to confess this when the mighty hand of the Lord is seen and felt. One point concerning which I should like everyone of us to humble ourselves under the hand of God is about our little enjoyment of Divine things. The elder brother in the parable said, Lo, these many years do I serve you! Neither transgressed I at any time your commandment: and yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends.

So have I known certain sincere Christian men fall into a horribly legal state of mind. They have always been very regular in their giving, constant in their religious observances, persevering in their prayers and yet they have never had much joy. But they see a poor soul, just saved from sin, full of delight, and they envy him and cry out, Why is a fuss made over such a sinner, when I have been all these years a Christian and my Brethren have never made any rejoicing over me? There is no music and dancing about me! You never gave me a kid that I might make merry with my friends. I do not know how we could make a fuss over some of the elder Brothersthey would not allow itthey would be angry and enquire, in hard and surly tones, what these things meant! Music and dancing are things too trivial for their solid souls. They stand outside and grumble and we cannot warm them into a revival spirit! They are freezing outside the door of our happy home. Must they always stand there?

How divinely sweet was the fathers answer to that naughty elder brother! He said to him, Son, you are always with me and all that I have is yours. That is to say, You live in my house. You are with me as my own dear son. Everything I have is yours by heirship. Your brother had his portion and he spent it, but all that remains to me is yours. Hence his short commons had been of his own appointing! If he had not made merry with his friends, it was his own fault. Is it not much the same with us if we have been dull and melancholy? I mean those of us who are Believers. Are not all things ours? Come, let us humble ourselves under the hand of God because we have not made merry with our friends! You growling Christiansif you growl it is because you will growlthere is nothing to growl at!

You who never have a happy day, who never have any of the fervor and enthusiasm of young beginnerswhose fault is that? It is your own! You might have anything in the Fathers house. You have a right to rare music and dancing, for you are always with God, and all that He has is yours. It is meet that we should make merry and be glad! And if we are dull at the business of holy merry-making, let us humble ourselves under the hand of God because of our despondency and mistrust! O my Soul, if your ceilings are painted with black instead of vermilion, blame only yourselfnot your God!

I am sure, dear Friends, if any of us will go over our daily lives, we shall find plenty of reasons for humbling ourselves under the hand of God. It is really dreadful how a man can serve God nobly and do great things and yet, in a certain matter, he may sadly fail. A grand old Prophet is that Jonah, going through the streets of Nineveh and bravely delivering the Lords warning. Whoever did the same? Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown are the words which he hurls into the face of princes. Grand man! One, yet a conqueror of myriads! Yes! But look at him a day or two later! Call that a grand man sitting there crying because the cucumber that grew up over his head is withered? He is fretting because a worm has devoured a gourd! He is angry and he says that he does well to be angry about a couple of melon leaves! Dear me, that a man can be so great in noble things and so little in a trifling matter!

How many have the same cause to be humble before God? Observe that good manhe bore the loss of his property with holy resignation, but he lost his temper because a button was undone from his linen! Such a thing has often happened. Do I put it so that you smile at it? It would be better to weep over it! As you think about yourselves, my Brothers and Sisters, remember the causes that you have to be humble under the hand of God because of the gross weakness by which you have shown the natural depravity of your heart and the faultiness of your nature apart from the strengthening Spirit of God. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the hand of God as creatures under the hand of the Creator. We are the clay and You our potter, O Lord! It becomes us to be lowly.

Humble yourselves under the hand of God as criminals under the hand of their judge. Cry, Against You, You only, have I sinned and done this evil in Your sight, that You might be justified when You speak and be clear when You judge. Humble yourselves under the hand of God as chastened children under a fathers rod, for He chastens us for our profit and right well do we deserve each smarting blow. Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, lastly, as servants under their Lords Word. Ask no questions about your Masters command, but go and do it! And when He rebukes you for shortcomings, answer not, but accept the reproof with bowed head and tearful eyes, acknowledging that His rebuke is well deserved. Humble yourselves thus, dear Brothers and Sisters, in your daily lives and God will exalt you in due time.

IV. I finish by using my text with all the earnestness my soul can feel in reference to the unconverted part of this audience IN OUR SEEKING FORGIVENESS AS SINNERS. Oh, tender Spirit of God, help me! The text was not originally meant for the ungodly, but it may fitly be applied to them. If you would find Grace in Gods sight and live, dear unconverted Hearers, you must humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God. So you want to be saved, do you? The way of salvation is, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. But, you say, I do not understand it. Yet it is very simpleno hidden meaning lies in the wordsyou are simply bid to trust Jesus.

If, however, you feel as if you could not do that, let me urge you to go to God in secret and admit the sin of this unbelief, for a it is great sin! Humble yourself. Do not try to make out that you are good. That will be fatal, for it will be a falsehood which will shut the gate of Grace. Confess that you are guilty. When a man is clearly and manifestly guilty, it is of no use his standing before the judge and beginning to urge his own merithis best course is to cast himself upon the mercy of the court. It is your only course, dear Soul, the only one that can be of use to you. Know that you have transgressed and feel that it is so. Sit down and think over the many ways in which you have done wrong, or failed to do right. Pray God to break you down with deep penitence. It is no waste of time to dig out foundations when you build a house, and it is no superfluity to labor after a deep sense of sin.

When your sin is confessed, then acknowledge that if justice were carried out towards you, apart from undeserved Grace, you would be sent to Hell. Do not quibble at that fact! Do not entertain skeptical questions as to whether there is a punishment for sin and as to what it will be, but acknowledge that whatever it is, you deserve it. Do not fence with God or quarrel with Scripture, but as His Word declares that the wicked shall be cast into Hell with all the nations that forget God, admit that you deserve to be so dealt, for you deserve it. When this is acknowledged, you are on the road to mercy. You have almost obtained mercy when you have fully submitted to justice. You have, in a measure, received Grace when you are brought to admit your sin and the justice of its penalty.

Then, next, accept Gods mercy in His own way. Do not be so vain as to dictate to God how you ought to be saved. Be willing to be saved by Free Grace through the blood of Jesus Christ, for that is Gods way. Be willing to be saved by faith in Jesus Christ, for that, also, is Gods way. If your unbelief begins to ask, How can it be and why should it be? cease from such questions! Humble yourself and say, God says it is so and, therefore, it must be so. If God says, Believe and be saved, I will believe and be saved. And if He says, Trust Christ, and live, I will trust Christ and live! If a man had forfeited his life, but should be told by the court that he shall have pardon freely given to him if he will freely accept ithe would be a fool if he began to enquire, But is this according to law? Is this according to precedent? What may be the effect of this pardon? and so on. These enquiries are for the court, not for the prisoner! My dear Sir, you do not want to hang yourself, do you?

Yet some men argue against their own souls and labor to find out reasons why they should not be saved! If this perverse ingenuity could but be taught right reason and men would strive to find out why they should at once yield themselves to Gods way of salvation, they might enter into comfort and rest much sooner. O quibbling Sinner, let your artful doubts and reasoning be nailed with Jesus to the Cross! Be a little child and come and believe in the salvation which is revealed in Jesus Christ. Trust Christ to save you and He will do it, as He has saved so many of us to the praise and glory of His Grace. Ah, you say, I have done this, but I cannot get peace. Then dear Friend, sink lower down! Sink lower down! Did I hear you say, Alas, Sir, I need to get comfort? Cease from that! Do not ask for comfortask for forgivenessand that blessing may come through your greater discomfort. Sink lower down! Sink lower down! There is a point at which God will surely accept you and that point is lower down!

Oh, you say, I think I have a due sense of sin. That will not do! I want you to feel that you have not a due sense of sin and come to Jesus for it! Oh, but I think that I have been brokenhearted. I should like to see you lower than that, till you cry, I am afraid I never knew what it was to be brokenhearted. I want you to sink so low that you cannot say anything good about yourselfno, nor see an atom of goodness in yourself! When you look inside your heart and can see nothing but that which would condemn you. When you look at your life and see everything there that deserves wraththen you are on the road to hope! Come before God a criminal, in the prison dress, with the rope about your neck! You will be saved, then! When you confess that you have nothing of your own but sin. When you acknowledge that you deserve to die and to be cast away foreverGod, in infinite pity, will let you live through faith in Christ Jesus!

Many years ago a certain prince visited the Spanish galleys where a large number of convicts were confined, chained to their oars to toil on without relief. I think nearly all of them were condemned to a life sentence. Being a great prince, the King of Spain told him that he might, in honor of his visit, set free any one of the galley slaves he chose. He went down among them to choose his man. He said to one, Man, how did you come here? He replied that false witnesses swore away his character. Ah! said the prince and passed on. He went to the next, who stated that he had done something that was certainly wrong, but not very much, and that he never ought to have been condemned. Ah, said the prince, and again passed on. He went the round and found that they were all good fellowsall convicted by mistake.

At last he came to one who said, You ask me why I came here? I am ashamed to say that I richly deserve it. I am guilty, I cannot for a moment say that I am not. And if I die at this oar, I thoroughly deserve the punishment. In fact, I think it a mercy that my life is spared me. The prince stopped and said, It is a pity that such a bad fellow as you should be placed amongst such a number of innocent people! I will set you free. You smile at that, but let me make you smile again. My Lord Jesus Christ has come here, at this time, to set somebody free! He has come here, at this time, to pardon somebodys sins!

You that have no sins shall have no pardon. You good people shall die in your sins! But, you guilty ones, who humble yourselves under the hand of God, my Master thinks that it is a pity that you should be among these self-righteous people! So come right away and trust your Saviorand obtain life eternal through His precious blood! And to Him shall be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #3273 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A SERMON TO MINISTERS AND OTHER TRIED BELIEVERS   
NO. 3273

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1911.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,   
DURING THE SUMMER OF 1881.

Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7.

THIS season of depression in trade has brought great care to many a house and heart, especially to village pastors and their flocks. Their troubles have been heavy and I am afraid their cares have not been light. Few have escaped the pinch of these hard timesthe most prosperous have to watch the ebbing tide and askHow long shall these things be? The subject will be seasonable to us all.

A very good preface to any sermon is the connectionlet us look at the passage before us. The verse preceding it is, Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time. If we are truly humble, we shall cast our care upon God and, by that process, our joy will be exalted! We are slow to submit to the hand of God and oftentimes our care is fretful rebellion against our heavenly Fathers will. We determine to carve for ourselves, and so we cut our fingers! I saw upon a cart only yesterday the name of a tradesman who calls himself, Universal Providerdo we not aspire to some such office? There is a Universal Providerand if we are humble under His hand, we shall leave our matter in His hands. Oh, for more humility, for then shall we have more tranquility! Pride begets anxietytrue humility gives birth to patience.

The verse which follows our text is thisBe sober, be vigilant because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about seeking whom he may devour. Cast your care upon God because you need all your powers of thought to battle with the great enemy. He hopes to devour you by care. Cast all your care upon God, for if you are worried you cannot be sober or watchful. Satan rides on the back of carnal care and so obtains entrance into the soul. If he can distract our minds from the peace of faith by temporal cares, he will get an advantage over us.

The preface allowed of expansion, but I have compressed it with stern economy of time. I must condense with equal rigor all through my discourse. We will first expound the text and then enforce it.

I. First, let us EXPOUND THE TEXTCasting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.   
It is noteworthy that in the Greek, the two words for, care, are different. Hence the Revised Version reads, Casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you. The care which you are to cast upon God is wearing you out and you are to cast it upon God because, in quite another sense, He cares for you. The word used in reference to God is applied to caring for the poor and in another place to the watchfulness of a shepherd. Our anxiety and Gods care are two very different things. His care, though tender and comprehensive, causes no anxiety to Him, for His great mind is more than equal to the task. But our care ferments within us and threatens the destruction of our narrow souls. You are to cast your care, which is folly, upon the Lord, for He exercises a care which is wisdom! Care to us is exhausting, but God is All-Sufficient. Care to us is sinful, but Gods care of us is holy. Care distracts us from service, but the Divine Mind does not forget one thing while remembering another!

If our care is to be cast upon God, we are hereby led to make a distinction, for there is a care which we could not dare to cast upon Godit would be blasphemy to attempt it! Anxiety to grow richcan we impart that to God? Anxiety to be famous, to live in luxury, to avenge an injury, to magnify myselfcan I ask the Most High to bear such an anxiety for me? If any of you are vexed with such care, I charge you to fling it off, for it is like the poisoned tunic of Hercules, and unless you can tear it away, it will burn into your very soul! All cares of covetousness, anger, pride, ambition and willfulness must be cast to the windsit would be criminal to dream of casting them upon God! Do not pray about them, except that God will redeem you from them. Let your desires be kept within a narrow circle and your anxieties will be lessened at a stroke.   
Casting, says the Apostle. He does not say laying all your care upon Him, but he uses a much more energetic word. You have to cast the load upon the Lordthe act will require effort. It is no childs play to cast all our care upon our Lord when there are six little children, shoes worn out, cupboard empty, purse bare and the deacons talking of reducing the scanty salary! Here is a work worthy of faithyou will have to lift with all your soul before the burden can be shifted and the anxiety cast upon the Lord! That effort, however, will not be half as exhausting as the effort of carrying your load yourself. Oh, the burden of watching and waiting for help which never comes! Depending on the help of man who is altogether vanity! Oh, the weariness of carrying a heartbreaking anxiety and yet standing up to preach! We have all seen statues of Atlas bearing the world on his shoulders, but we can hardly conceive of his preaching in that attitude! It would be better to make one tremendous effort and have done with it, rather than groan under a perpetual weight. If the fox is eating into our heart, let us pluck it from our bosom and kill it at once!   
Note, next, the words, upon Him. You may tell your griefs to others to gain their sympathy, for we are bid to bear one anothers burdens. You may ask friends to help you and so exercise your humility, but let your requests to man be ever in subordination to your waiting upon God! Some have obtained their full share of human help by much begging from their fellow Christians, but it is a nobler thing to make known your requests unto God! But somehow, those who beg only of God are wondrously sustained where others fail! What a pleasant story is that in which we recount the loving kindness of the Lord and tell how this poor man cried and the Lord heard him. Quiet, patient Believers have come under my notice who have carried their cross in silence, waiting alone upon the Lord. How they endured their trial, I cannot tell, save that they endured, as seeing Him who is invisible. But their necessity became known, it leaked out, they knew not how, and they were helpedand helped better than they would have been if their appeal had been to man! I am condemning no appeal to our fellow Believers! Many are willing to help, but they cannot do so if the need is unknownbut do not place anyone in the office and throne of the great God who alone is the Caretaker and Burden-Bearer of His people! I am afraid that, sometimes, in our care not to alienate this great man who does so much for the cause, or that excellent lady who takes half-a-dozen sittings in the chapel, we may grieve the Lord and lose our true Helper. Cease, then, from man and cast all your care upon Godand upon Him only!   
Certain courses of action are the very reverse of casting all your care upon God, and one is indifference. Whatever virtue there may be in stoicism, it is unknown to the true child of God. I dont care, may be an appropriate expression for an atheist to use, but it is not suitable for a Christian! It may sound well and the man who utters the defiant words may think himself some great one, but it is an evil utterance for all that. I am afraid some Brothers I dont care, is very sinful, for they get into debt and dont care. They break their promises and engagements and dont care. Brothers, such men ought to care! Every man is bound to care about his life duties and the claims of his family. He that cares not for his own household is worse than a heathen! Casting care upon God is the very reverse of reckless and inconsiderateness!

It is not casting care upon God when a man does that which is wrong in order to clear himself. Yet this is too often tried. Under pressure, some men do very unjustifiable things. We ought to be slow to condemn since we ourselves also may yet be tempted in the same way and may err in like manner. Still, faith ought to be able to win every battle. He who compromises truth to avoid pecuniary loss is hewing out a broken cistern for himself. He who borrows when he knows he cannot pay, he who enter into wild speculations to increase his income, he who does anything that is ungodly in order to turn a penny is not casting his care upon God! An act of disobedience is a rejection of Gods help so that we may help ourselves. He who does the right thing at all hazards practically casts his care upon the Lord. Acts are with us, but their consequences are with God! Our main care should be to please Godand all other care we may safely leave to Him.

How, then, are we to cast all our care upon God ? Two things need to be done. It is a heavy load that is to be cast upon God and it requires the hand of prayer and the hand of faith to make the transfer. Prayer tells God what the care is and asks God to help, while faith believes that God can and will do it. Prayer spreads the letter of trouble and grief before the Lord and opens all its budget. And then Faith cries, I believe that God cares, and cares for me! I believe that He will bring me out of my distress and make it promote His own Glory.

When you have thus lifted your care into its true position and cast it upon God, take heed that you do not pick it up again. Many a time have I gone to God and have relieved my care by believing prayerbut I am ashamed to confess that after a little time, I have found myself burdened again with those very anxieties which I thought I had given up! Is it wise to put our feet into fetters which have once been broken off? My Brothers, there is a more excellent waya way which I have tried and proved. I have at times been perplexed with difficulties. I have tried my best with them and I have utterly failed. And then I have gone with the perplexity to the Throne of God and placed the whole case in the Lords hands, solemnly resolving never to trouble myself about the aforesaid matters any more, whatever might happen. I was quite incapable of further action in the matter and so I washed my hands of the whole concern and left it with God. Some of these cares I have never seen againthey melted like hoar frost in the morning sunand in their place I have found a blessing lying on the ground. Other troubles have remained in fact but not in effect, for I have consented to the yoke and it has never galled my shoulder again. Brethren, let the dead bury their dead, and let us follow Jesus! Henceforth let us leave worldlings to fret and fume over the cares of this lifeas for us, let our conversation be in Heaven, and let us carefully abstain from carelessness, being anxious only to end anxiety by a childlike confidence in God!

II. Accept this little contribution towards an exposition, and let us now proceed to ENFORCE THE TEXT. I will give you certain reasons, and then the reason why you should cast all your care upon God.

First, the ever-blessed One commands you to do it. We need no other reason. The precept is akin to the Gospel command, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a blessed privilege and it is also a command. He who bids us cease from idolatry, also bids us cease from care. The Law of Sabbath-keeping is not more Divine than that of resting in the Lord. He whom we call Master and Lord bids us take no anxious thoughtHis bidding has all the authority of Law. Say to yourself, my anxious Brother, I may roll my burden upon the Lord, for He bids me do so. If you do not trust in God, you will be distinctly sinfulyou are as much commanded to trust as to love.

Next, cast all your cares on God because you will have matters enough to think of even then! There are sacred cares which the Lord will lay upon you because you have cast your care upon Him. When He has broken your painful yoke, you will have His easy yoke to bear. There is the care to love and serve Him better, the care to understand His Word, the care to preach it to His people, the care to experience His fellowship, the care to walk so that you shall not vex the Holy Spirit. Such hallowed cares will always be with you and will increase as you grow in Grace. In a sense, we may cast even these upon God, looking for His Holy Spirit to help us, for it is He that works in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure yet not without our care and zeal does He operate upon usand this is one reason why you are not to allow lower ends and designs to inundate your mind. Your spirit has another vineyard to keep, another capital to put out to interest, another Master to please and it cannot afford to yield its thought to meaner pursuits. Ministers are shepherds and must care for the sheep! The hireling flee because he is a hireling, and cares not for the sheep. But you have the care of churches laid upon you daily, and it is peculiarly necessary that you should not be occupied with carnal care.

And, next, you must cast your care upon God, because you have Gods business to do. It is a dangerous thing for a merchant to employ a man who has a business of his own, because sooner or later the masters business will suffer, or else the mans own concern will die out. No man that wars, says Paul, entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who has chosen him to be a soldier. There is sure to be a clashing of interests when a Brother goes into business, unless he does it as Paul didthat he may not be chargeable to the Churchfor then he attains to double honor. Paul carried his needle and thread with him wherever he went, for everybody had a tent in those days, and he was ready for work at any moment either upon small family tents, or tents to cover a great assembly. When he had finished preaching, he could turn to mending tents and so earn his own living and preach the Gospel freely. Paul did not make his preaching a stalking-horse to his trade, but he made his handicraft a packhorse to his ministry, so that he could say, These hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. That is a very different thing from a minister deserting his charge to make a larger income by some other calling. The less we have to do with other business the better, for all our care is needed by the Church.

Queen Elizabeth bade a notable merchant in the City of London go to the Continent on royal business. Please, Your Majesty, he said, who will attend to my business while I am away? The queen replied, If you will go abroad and see to my business, I will see to your business. I will be bound to say that it would not suffer if such a queen took it in hand! Just so the Lord says to us, You attend to My work and I will take care of you and your wife and children. The Lord pledges Himself to do it bread shall be given us, our water shall be sure! The testimony of many among you will bear me out in this. I come of a line of preachers and though some of them have had to endure straitened circumstances, yet none of them were forsaken, nor have their seed been seen begging bread. The Lord has cared for us and we have lacked nothing.

You ought to do it not only for this reason, but because it is such a great privilege to be able to cast your care upon God. If I am plunged in a lawsuit and some eminent lawyer would offer to undertake it all, out of love to me, how glad I would be! I would worry no longer. I would say to all who troubled me on the matter, You must go to my solicitor. I know nothing about the matter. Do this to your cunning enemy, the devil, who is always glad to see you anxious and fretful. Let us say to him, The Lord rebuke you, O Satan, even the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you. What a file that is for the old viper to break his teeth upon! Chosen! CHOSEN! And if chosen, shall we not be cared for?

Let me add that you ministers ought to cast all your care upon God because it will be such a good example for your hearers. Our people learn much from our conduct. And if they see us fretting, they will be certain to do the same. You preach faith, do you not? How sad it will be for you to be convicted of unbelief! Our own words may condemn us if we are anxious. Once when I was unduly depressed, my good wife said to me, I have a book here which I should like to read to you. It did me good to hear her read, but I felt myself rebuked by every word! I half suspected what was coming when she said, That is your own, remember? She had been giving the doctor some of his own medicine! What a many things you have said, my Brothers, that will condemn you if you do not trust God! Is it, after all, mere talk? Did you mean what you said and is it true? Or have you merely been repeating official dogmas in which you have no personal confidence? Is the Providence of God a myth, or a living, bright reality? Here, said a quack in the market, is a medicine that will cure coughs, colds, consumptions [the fellow coughed horribly at this point]. It is of such efficacy that it would almost restore the dead. [Here he coughed again.] Nobody need remain a suffererhe has only to buy a box of the pills [here the quacks own cough prevented him from speaking.] Ah, laugh on, laugh on, Brothers, only find that nobody laughs at you for doubting while you extol faith! We must show in ourselves that faith in our God is a healing medicine, or man will not believe us! We shall make Christ, Himself, seem to be a pretender unless we practically prove that we have been healed by Him. Let your people see in you what comes of trusting Christ! Let them see what cheerfulness, what hopefulness, what buoyancy of spirit come to those who trust Christ and cast all their cares upon Him!

But the reason of reasons is that contained in our text, He cares for you. After all, what a small matter it must be to God to care for us, since He provides for the commissariat of the universe, the feeding of the cattle on a thousand hills and the wild beasts of the plains! Think of those myriads of fish, those armies of birds, those enormous multitudes of insects! What a God must He be who cares for all! Compared with the demands of all these, our little needs are soon supplied. We need but little and that little is scarcely a crumb from the table of the Lord our God. Surely if God says, I will care for you, we need not give another thought except to sing, The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. It does not need two of us for this small matter, and certainly not two when One is Infinite in wisdom and power! Even if we were wise, the Lord would not need our help. With whom took He counsel and who instructed Him when He created the earth, piled the mountains and spanned the sky? Let us, therefore, stand still and see the salvation of God! The Lord thinks about us, plans for us, arranges for us, studies to make things right for usthese are poor words with which to describe His care, for He does more than thatHe loves us. That great, boundless, mighty heart loves us! This is fit matter for a heavenly song! Because He has set His love upon us, we can surely cast our care upon Him. He has given us Christwill He not give us bread? See, He has called us to be His sons will He starve His children? See what He is preparing for us in Heaven will He not enable us to bear the burdens of this present life? We dishonor God when we suspect His tenderness and generosity! We can only magnify Him by a calm faith which leans upon His Word.

There, dear Brothers, there is my word from the Master for you. I should like to have hammered out that little grain of gold so that you might have gilded your lives with it, but please do it for yourselves. Now will you carry your cares away, or will you bow your heads in silent prayer and throw them all off? Holy Spirit, the Comforter, lighten our darkness, we beseech You!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **2 TIMOTHY 1; 2:1-13.**

Verses 1, 2. Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I would again remind you, as I have often done before, that the Apostle Paul, when he is writing to a minister, invariably begins his Epistle with the triple greeting, Grace, mercy, and peace, but when he is writing to a Church, he commences with the double benediction, Grace and peace. You will find that this is his wish for the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians, Grace be unto you and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. This is also his form of greeting to Philemon, who was a private Christian, not a minister. But when the Apostle is writing to Timothy and Titus, his own sons in the faith, and his fellow ministers of the Gospel, he says, Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. It seems as though, guided by the Holy Spirit, he thought that the office of the Christian ministry is of so weighty and responsible a character that the man who rightly fills that honorable position not only needs the Grace and peace that are necessary for all Believers, but that he must in addition have a special supply of mercy. And truly, no one needs mercy more than the preacher of mercy! Note, too, that the Grace, mercy, and peace are to come from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. Father and Son are united in the gracious act of bestowing Grace, mercy, and peace. The Father is the great eternal Fountain of all these blessings, but the Son is the Divinely appointed Channel through whom they flow down to us!

3. I thank God whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of you in my prayers night and day. Thank God that Paul had such a sympathetic spirit and that Timothys needs so continually rose before his supplicating eyeand that Paul was able to pray for Timothy, not with anxiety, not in doubtfulnessbut with thankfulness. Oh, that all young Christians might be such consistent Christians that those who have brought them to Christ might always be able to pray for them with thankfulness!

4. Greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy. I suppose that Timothy was very tender-hearted and that he had been grieved because of Pauls many afflictions. And on his part, the Apostle greatly missed his dearly-beloved son in the faith. In the latter part of this Epistle, Paul writes, Do your diligence to come shortly unto me: for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world. And again, Do your diligence to come before winter. Looking forward to his impending martyrdom, Paul longed for the companionship of the one who was so specially dear to him.

5. When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in you, also. Grace does not run in the blood, but it often runs side by side with it. The grandmother Lois and the mother Eunice had the true Grace of saving faith dwelling in them, and Paul was persuaded that it dwelt in the son and grandson Timothy.

6. Therefore I put you in remembrance. Paul had been speaking of his own remembrance of Timothy and of Timothys faith, and now he says, Therefore I put you in remembrance

6. That you stir up the gift of God, which is in you by the putting on of  
my hands. [See Sermon #1080, Volume18OUR GIFTS AND HOW TO USE THEM Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] The best of

fires sometimes need stirring and the best gift of God, even the sacred fire of the Holy Spirit, may sometimes burn low in the heart so that we have need to stir up the gift of God that is within us. There are some Brothers, also, who have more God-given gifts within them than they know of. They have never searched for them, so they allow them to lie hidden away unobserved and useless. We have need to stir up our gifts as well as our Graces and to use to Gods Glory all the powers with which He has entrusted us.

7. For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. What a gift this is to all who can truly say with Paul, God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind!

8. Be not you, therefore, ashamed of the testimony of our LordThere is need to say this today, for many are becoming ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, that old-fashioned Gospel which Paul received by direct Revelation from his Lord, and for which he laid down his life. It is fashionable, nowadays, to put on the ruffles of modern philosophy rather than to be robed in the snow-white garment of the Truth of God. Paul says to Timothy, Be not you, therefore, ashamed of the testimony of our Lord

8, 9. Nor of me, His prisoner: but be you partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the power of God who has saved us, and called us with an holy calling. Salvation comes first, and calling afterwardsat least, so it is in the great plan of Redemption. We are saved by the death of Christ before we are effectually called by His Grace. The great work of our salvation was worked for us on Calvary and now we are made to know and to partake of that salvation by the effectual calling of the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Gospel!

9. Not according to our work, but according to His own purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. What a blessed Doctrine this is! Some people cannot endure even to hear or read of it, but it is full of comfort and joy for the Spirit-taught people of God! Gods Grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began [See Ser

mon #703, Volume 12SALVATION ALTOGETHER BY GRACERead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

10, 11. But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel: whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an Apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. How Paul gloried in this triple Divine appointment! He commenced this Epistle by writing, Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and here he says of the Gospel, whereunto I am appointed a preacher. I see that some tradesmen put up a notice over their shops stating that they are so-and-so by appointment to Her Majesty, but Paul had the highest honor under Heaven in being appointed a preacher, and an Apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

12. For which cause I also suffer these things. And I expect that his eyes glanced round on the walls of his dungeon, and that he rattled the chains that bound his hands to those of the soldiers who had him in their charge.

12-15 . Nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day. Hold fast the form of sound words, which you have heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. What good thing which was committed unto you, keep by the Holy Spirit which dwells in us. This you know, that all they which are in Asia have turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. Probably these were leaders who ought to have acted differently and to have stuck by the Apostle. But when he was in prison and likely to be put to death by Nero, many who had been his former companions forsook him, and were ashamed to acknowledge himfor which we also are ashamed of them. It is the same, nowif the servant of God shall fall into the disfavor of the great ones of the earth, many will be ashamed of him. Paul mentions these who turned away from him, for their unfaithfulness evidently grieved him sorely. But he also mentions another case of quite a different sort

16, 17. The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chains: but, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. He did not know exactly where the Apostle wasin which prison he was confinedbut he went from place to place until at last he lighted upon him! And then he was not ashamed to be seen ministering to the poor chained prisoner. We read of various corporations spending a great deal of money in buying chains of office for their mayors, but this chain, worn by the Apostle in his prison cell at Rome, was far more valuable than any of them. What an eternal honor it will be to him, and how sad it is that anyone should have been ashamed of his fetters when he was so bravely suffering for Christs sake! There was more value in those chains on Pauls wrists than in all the chains that were ever worn on the necks of the great ones of this world!

18. The Lord grant unto him, that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day. I have no doubt he came to Paul and talked with him and probably sang with him, and prayed with him. He often refreshed the Apostle in Rome. And then Paul added

18. And in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, you know very well. This happy Onesiphorus was a true servant of the Lord Jesus Christ who loved to minister to the Apostle when he was in suffering and sorrow.

*2 Timothy 2:1-13*

Verses 1, 2. You, therefore, my son, be strong in the Grace that is in Christ Jesus and the things that you have heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit you to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. This is the true Apostolic successionone minister brings another to Christ and then charges that other to train other preachers and teachers to carry on the blessed work of evangelization!

3, 4. You, therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that wars entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who has chosen him to be a soldier. The man who has given himself wholly to the service of Christ must not undertake any other business that would prevent his giving his whole strength to his Masters work.

5-8. And if a man also strives for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. The husbandman that labors must be first partaker of the fruits. Consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to My Gospel. [See Sermon #1653, Volume 28THE RESUR

RECTION OF OUR LORD JESUSRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] The Resurrection of Christ is the cornerstone of the glorious Temple of Truth, the keystone of the arch of Revelation. Paul tells us, in that great chapter, 1 Corinthians 15, how hopeless our case would be if Christ was not raised from the dead. But he also proves most conclusively that he was raised the third day, according to the Scriptures.

9. Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evildoer, even unto bonds; but the

Word of God is not bound. [See Sermons #1998, Volume 33NOT BOUND YET and #1453, Volume 25ETERNAL FAITHFULNESS UNAFFECTED BY HUMAN UNBELIEFRead/download both sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Thank God that it is not yet

bound though many have tried to fetter it! When they think that they have manacled it, it breaks loose again and so it always will. However low this heavenly fire may burn, it soon blazes up again and so it shall to the worlds end. Immortal as the Christ who is the sum and substance of it is the everlasting Gospel of the blessed God!

10-13. Therefore I endure all things for the elects sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal Glory. It is a faithful saying: For if we are dead with Him, we shall also live with Him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He will deny us: if we believe not, yet He abides faithful: He cannot deny Himself.Blessed truth, God grant us the Grace to mediate upon it until we also shall become faithful to Him and to His Truth!

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #428 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A CURE FOR CARE   
NO. 428

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 12, 1862, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Casting all your care upon Him. For He cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7.

No one precept contains the whole of a Believers duty. But usually in Scripture the precepts rise one above the other, like those stone steps by which the traveler in Egypt ascends to the pinnacle of the pyramid. You must first plant your feet firmly upon the preceding duty, before you shall be able fully to climb to the next command.

Let me, then, call your attention to the precept which precedes my textHumble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time. You know, Beloved, that there are some selfish, carnal cares which we must not cast upon God. It were an insult to Him. It were an act of infamy on our part if we should venture to ask for His assistance in them. Those are cares which would never molest us at all if we were obedient to the preceptHumble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God.

This cuts off the head at once of many of those anxieties into which Christians sometimes fall. For instance, covetous caresif I desire to get and grasp more than is absolutely necessary, that I may hastily grow rich, I cannot, on my knees, ask God to carry this care for me, because it is none of His sending. He has taught me to say, Give us this day our daily bread, and He has given me a blessed example in Agur, that I may pray, Give me neither poverty nor riches. But I cannot go on my knees before God, honestly, as a miser and ask that He would enable me to add house to house and field to field. That care I never ought to indulge and I never should endure it if I attended to the precept, Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God.

There is, also, the care of ambition, when men desire to attain honors, eminence and fame. To stand foremost, to be exalted upon the pinnacle, to be looked up to by all and to be almost adored by some. But if we allow ambition to creep into our minds, we cannot go to God with it. It is a care which we dare not cast on God, for that were to empty the filth of our house upon the altar of Gods sanctuary. But then, I say, it is a care which would never fret us, if our souls were lowly before the Lord.

There are those cares, too, which we make for ourselvesthose anxieties which anticipate the futurethose foolish fears which are only created in our brain and which vex the head and then fret the heart. We cannot ask God to take those upon Himselfcares which have no existence except in our own fancieswe can scarcely cast on God. For, Beloved, we should never have them if we humbled ourselves under the mighty hand of God. Then, in such a state of subjection to the Divine will and of resignation to the eternal purpose, our soul would sit quietly and be stilland our spirit would not agitate itself with frivolities which it has

itself imagined, with fancies which have no origin but in our own imagination.

Oh that you may have Divine Grace to obey the preceding command, and then I think, without any limitation, I may address you in the words of the textCasting all your care upon Him. For He cares for you. I repeat, sinful cares we cannot cast on God. But then, obeying the precept, Humble yourselves, would uproot such vexations. He that is down, need fear no fall. He whose soul is even as a weaned child will fret and cry no more.

In addressing you this morning from so rich a text as this, I would pray rather that the Holy Spirit may deliver you from anxiety, than attempt to deliver you from it myself, for I am not even able to obey this precept myself, much less shall I enable you to do it. Only when the Spirit of God is upon the preacher can he cast his cares upon his God and he is convinced by experience, that only as the Holy Spirit shall enable you, will you be able to do the same.

However, that our word may be the means of your comfort and of your strengthening, let us speak on this wise. First, for a few minutes, let us expound this disease of care, giving some description of it. Secondly, let us manifest the blessed remedy of the text, endeavoring, in Gods name, to apply it. And lastly, let us hold out the sweet inducement of the second part of the sentence, in order that Believers may be led to attempt the practicing of the precept, He cares for you.

I. First, then, LET US ENDEAVOR TO DESCRIBE THE DISEASE OF CARE. The care mentioned in the text, even though it is exercised upon legitimate objects, (and in this it differs from the cares of which I spoke just now, which were cares concerning wrong objects)care, even when exercised upon legitimate objects if carried to excess, has in itself the nature of sin. This will be clear if you think for a moment that anything which is a transgression of Gods command is sin, and if there were no other command, the one in our text being broken would involve us in iniquity.

But it is a precept earnestly repeated by our Savior many times. It is one which the Apostles have reiterated again and again, and one which cannot be neglected without involving transgression. Besides, the very essence of anxious care is the imagining that we are wiser than God and the thrusting of ourselves into His place, to do for Him that which we dream He either cannot or will not do. We attempt to think of that which we fancy He will forget. Or we labor to take upon ourselves that burden which He either is not able or willing to carry for us.

Now, this impertinence, this presumptionwhat if I say, this audacityhas in it the very nature of sin, to attempt to know better than God, to snatch from His hand the helm by which He guides affairs, to attempt to correct His charts, to re-map His Providence. This, indeed, is such an impertinence that as the guardian Scripture pushes back the intruder, it demands of him, Are you also one of the Kings counsel? What are you doing here? He took no counsel with you when He made the heavens and the earth and balanced the clouds and stretched out the skies like a tent to dwell in, how dare you come here and offer advice to perfect Wisdom and aid to Omnipotent Strength? There is in anxious care the very nature of sin.

But, further, these anxious cares very frequently lead to other sins, sometimes to overt acts of transgression. The tradesman who is not able to leave his business with God, may be tempted to indulge in the tricks of the trade. No, he may not only be tempted but he may be prevailed upon to put out an unholy hand with which to help himself. The professional or literary man, if he has no firm trust in Providence, may lend his skill to indirect and unlawful ends. And each man, if he has no other snare, will be tried with thisto forsake prayer and to forget the promise in order to trust to the wisdom of a friend, or to the natural sagacity of some mentor in whom he puts confidence.

Now this is forsaking the fountain to go to the broken cisternsa crime which was laid against Israel of olda wrath provoking iniquity. Even if it led to no other act except this sin of preferring the counsel of man to the direction of God, excessive anxiety were to be reprobated and detested. But think, my Brethren, of the many sins which our anxieties engender in our heartsunbelief which makes us doubt our God. Want of love which is proven by our distrust of love. Want of hope which puts out our eyes so that we cannot see the clear shining after the rain.

Think, my Brothers and Sisters, how we fret and mistrust and thus vex the Spirit of God and often cause Him to depart from us, so that our prayers are hindered, so that our example is marred, so that we give ourselves rather to self-seeking than to seeking God. All these things are sins, the grapes of Gomorrah which grow on the vines of our cares. These baseborn cares are the plentiful mothers of transgressions. Distrust is the egg out of which many a mischief is hatched. We indulge in these cares and think, surely we are doing no wrongwhereas the indulgence in them is in itself a crimeand is besides a tempter which guides us onward to the commission of other iniquities. The man that full of care, is ripe for any sinbut he who has cast his care on God stands securelyneither shall the Evil One be able to touch him.

To proceed further in uncovering this diseaseas it is in itself sin and the mother of sin, we note again that it brings misery. Where sin is, sorrow shall soon follow. He who would have his spirit bowed down even to the very earth, has only to fix his thoughts upon himself and his circumstances, instead of looking to God and His promises. Some of you are placed in a very happy position in life but, my dear Brethren, you can make yourselves miserable if you please. Others of you are put in what the world considers unhappy circumstancesbut if God enables youyou can be supremely blessed.

Poverty does not necessarily involve sorrow, nor do riches in themselves bring peace or happiness. If any of you wish for misery you need not go out of your own housethere is no need to travel far for causes of discontent. You can be surfeited with plenty and be poor. You can dwell in the midst of peace and be disturbed. You can possess the richest prosperity and yet be afflicted. We, to a very great extent make our own position. God ordains Providence and either Divine Grace makes us happy, or sin racks us with pain. God does not make our misery. The cause of our trouble

lies at our own door, not at His.

Do you see that Christian, there with the sparkling eyes and the light footstepsthe man who is swift to run upon his Masters errands? That man has many troubles but when he wakes in the morning, if he retains remembrance of them, he bows his knee and leaves them with his God. He goes home and the day has had much of sorrow in it, but he shakes the weight from his own shoulder and leaves his burden upon God. That man, with all his troubles, is more blessed than yonder professor. He is the one who has very little to vex him except that he vexes himself, by making every little thing a ground for fretfulness, magnifying every small mischance into a strange calamity and by losing all patience, when all things suit not his proud will and dainty taste.

Oh Brethren! It is an ill thing for Christians to be sad. Let them rejoice, Rejoice in the Lord always, but they never can, so long as they indulge in anxious cares.

Besides this, these anxious cares do not only lead us into sin and destroy our peace of mind but they also weaken us for usefulness. When one has left all his cares at home, how well he can work for his Master! But when those cares tease us in the pulpit, it is hard preaching the Gospel. When cares buzz in the ear, the music of Divine Grace is hard to hear. What would you say of your workman who should come to you in the morning with a heavy piece of family furniture upon his back? He calls himself your porter, he is about to carry your goods and you see him going out of the door with your load, which is properly proportioned to his strengthbut beside that he is carrying a heavy piece of his own upon his shoulders.

You say to him, My good man, what are you doing there? Oh Sir, I am only loaded with household stuff. I think you would say, Well but you are not fit to do my work which you are engaged to do. I do not employ you to carry your own load, I had you here to carry mine. But Sir, says he, I am so weak, I cannot carry both. Then leave yours alone, you say, and carry mine.

Or to use another simile. There was a great king who once employed a merchant in his service as an ambassador to foreign courts. Now the merchant, before he went away, said to the king, My own business requires all my care and though I am always willing to be Your Majestys servant, yet if I attend to your business as I ought, I am sure my own will be ruined. Well, said the king, you take care of my business and I will take care of yours. Use your best endeavors and I will answer for it that you shall be nothing the loser for the zeal which you take from yourself to give to me.

And so our God says to us, as His servants, Do My work and I will do yours. Serve Me and I will serve you. Like PeterPeter is fishing, Christ needs a pulpit to preach in. He borrows Peters boat and preaches in it. What about Peters fishing? Oh, the Master will take care of that, for no sooner is the sermon done than He says, Launch into the deep and let down your nets for a catch. And Peter gets more in ten minutes through having lent his boat to his Master, than he might have done in ten weeks, if he had been fishing on his own account. Leave your cares with God and care for Him

**Make HIS service your delight,**   
Your **wants shall be HIS care.**

The subject would not be complete if I did not add that these little cares, of whose guilt, perhaps, we think so little, do very great damage to our blessed and holy cause. Your sad and miserable countenances hinder souls who are anxious, and they present a ready excuse for souls who are careless. Look, they say, look, that man is a Christian man, the whole of the winters of a century have left their storm rifts on his forehead, and all the winds of ages seem to have ruffled his brow. He has no peace, no joywho would be a Christian to be so miserable?

Thus the careless man says he will not have Hell here, he will leave that for hereafter. Even anxious spirits say, It cannot be that this religion is true, for if it were really true, one would think it would be able to support its followers in the troubles of life. If Gods Word is true, that God will sustain His people. Then Christians would be sustained and Believers would be cheered and comforted. But I see that they are as much fretful as other men, as impatient as they are and that So-and-So, who makes a profession, is quite as weak, quite as easily bowed before the storm as yonder man who has no God in whom to trust and no promises on which to lean.

Ah, let it not be said so, Christian, through you. Open not the enemys mouth to blaspheme! Let not the dragon find food through you, who are of the seed of the Woman, but rather seek, casting your care on God, to disentangle yourself of all personal hindrances that you may be avenged upon your Masters adversaries as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

I close the description of this matter by saying that in the most frightful manner, cares have brought many to the poisoned cup, the halter, and the knife, and hundreds to the madhouse. What makes the constant increase of our lunatic asylums? Why is it that in almost every country in England new asylums have to be erected, wing after wing being added to these buildings in which the imbecile and the raving are confined? It is because we will carry what we have no business to carryour own cares. And until there shall be a general keeping of the Day of Rest throughout England, and until there shall be a more general resting of our souls and all we have upon God, we must expect to hear of increasing suicides and increasing lunacies.

So long as the present system of competition in business shall continueand there seems no hope that it will ever ceasethe signs of the times suggest that the battle will grow sterner every day. It will become a more stern duty with each of us to cast our care on God, unless we would see reason reel and would be howling maniacs in our cells. Oh, for your own sake, and for your childrens sake, for Christs sake and for His Churchs sake, I pray you spoil not the fair house which God has built! Cast not out the lovely tenant, leave not the temple of the Lord to be the prison of madness. Away with evil cares if you would still be a man.

II. I shall now want your attention to the second part of the subject, THE BLESSED REMEDY TO BE APPLIED.

Somebody must carry these cares. If I cannot do it myself, can I find any who will? My Father who is in Heaven stands waiting to be my burden-bearer. With broad shoulders, with omnipotence as His strength, He says My child, roll your burden upon your God. Blessed privilege, dare I neglect it? Can I be wicked enough to reject it and to bear my cares myself? Here is the blessed remedy, Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you.

Now in order, rather to apply this remedy, than to describe it, by the help of Gods Holy Spirit I will mention some of those fears, those cares, which are legitimate enough in their objects but which can only be relieved by leaving them with God. One of the first and most natural cares with which we are vexed is the care for daily bread. I should be content, says one, with food and raiment. If I can but provide things honest in the sight of all men and see my family cared for, I shall then be happy. But says one, what shall I eat, what shall I drink, with what shall I be clothed?

I am without a job, having, therefore, no opportunity to earn my livelihood. I am without substance, having, therefore, nothing to look upon by which I may be supported without labor. I am without friends or a patron who might give me his generous assistance. What shall I do? You are a Christian, are you? You must use all diligence, that is your dutybut oh, if God shall help you, mingle no fretfulness with the diligence, no impatience with your suffering, and no distrust with your trials. Noremember what Jesus has said so sweetly to the point, Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns. Yet your Heavenly Father feeds them.

Are you not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take you thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Why, if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore, take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, With what shall we be clothed? (for after all, these things do the Gentiles seek): for your Heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. But seek you first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. And all these things shall be added unto you.

Such a care as that, I say, is natural enoughand to bid a man shake it off when he is in actual needis cruelly absurd, unless you have a sure consolation to offer him. But you can say, Cast your trial upon God. Use your most earnest endeavors, humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. If you cannot do one thing, do another. If you cannot earn your bread as a gentleman, earn it as a poor man. If you cannot earn it by the sweat of your brains do it by the sweat of your brow. Do something for an honest livingsweep a crossing if you cannot do anything else. If a man will not work, neither let him eat. But having brought yourself to that, if still every door is shut, Trust in the Lord and do good, so shall you dwell in the land and verily you shall be fed.

Business men, who have not exactly to hunt for the necessities of life, are often tormented with the anxieties of large transactions and extended commerce. The failures of others, frequent bad debts, changes in the markets, monetary pressures, and sudden panics, cause a world of trouble. Through our fashion of credit in this age, it is very hard for a Christian to conduct business in the sober, substantial fashion which a tender conscience would prefer. Owe no man anythingif that could be interwoven into the system of trade, it would, I do not doubt, cure tens of thousands of ills which now grow out of that credit system which seems to be unavoidable, but which, I am sure, involves many of the crimes which are committed and very much of the care which racks business men.

Well, through the present high-pressure system of trade there is naturally much care. If any man here can say that he can go into his office having many in his employ and never at all have care, I should think he must be a rarity in the world. Surely he might walk till he dropped with weariness before he would meet with another of the same order. But if there is a Brother here who has a business so extensive that he does not sleep at night. One that lies there tossing on his bed, thinking about this servant who may have robbed him, or about that vessel that is out at sea, or about the low prices of a certain article which has gone down since he laid in a large stock and all those little things which all of you know.

Then I say, Brother, wait a minute! What are you doing? What are you doing? Are you sure that in this you have used your best prudence and wisdom, and your best industry and given it your best attention? Yes. Well then, what more have you to do? Suppose you like to weep all night? Will that keep your ship from going on the Goodwin sands? Suppose you could cry your eyes out? Will that make a thief honest? Suppose you could fret yourself till you could not eat? Would that raise the price of goods?

One would think if you were just to say, Well, I have done all that is to be done, now I will leave it with God, that you might go about your business and have the full use of your senses to attend to it. Whereas now you fritter away your senses and then commit blunders, and so you multiply your troubles by that very fretfulness by which you hoped to remove them. Therelet them alone! We say, Leave well enough alone. But I say, Leave ill alone, leave them both alone and with both your hands. For you will want both hands to honor your Masterwith the hand of prayer, In everything by prayer and supplication, making known your wants unto God. And with the other hand, the hand of faith, trusting in Godlift your load right off from your own shoulders and let the whole crushing weight be left with your eternal God, for He will sustain you, He will never suffer the righteous to be moved.

Another anxiety of a personal kind which is very natural, and indeed, very proper if it is not carried to excess, is the care of your children. Blessed be God for our children! We do not sympathize with those who look upon them as afflictions, for we believe them still to be a heritage of the Lord. But what anxieties they involve! How shall we bring them up? How shall they be provided for? Will they honor their parents, or will they bring disgrace upon the name they bear? A child may be the greatest curse his parents ever had, while he may be their choicest comfort. All

these, as an old Puritan said, are doubtful blessings and may be certain curses, yet I will not have it that there is any doubt about their being blessings, as God sends them.

A Christian parent must have care about his children and all the more because he is a Christian, since he will not be satisfied with their getting on in business, he will never be content till his children walk in the Truth of God. Mother, Father, you have prayed for your children. You trust you have set them a holy example. You labor day by day to teach them the Truth as it is in Jesus. You have travailed in birth for their souls till Christ is formed in them. It is well. Now let your souls quietly expect the blessingleave your offspring with Godcast your sons and daughters upon their fathers God. Let no impatience intrude if they are not converted in your time. Let no distrust distract your mind if they should seem to belie your hopes.

I met yesterday with a few verses which sound like the warbling of an American song writer. They exactly suit my subject and in reading them in private they have touched my heart. Excuse me therefore, if though I never read a sermon, I should for once read a part of one

*The Master has come over Jordan,   
Said Hannah, the mother, one day.   
He is healing the people who throng Him, With a touch of His finger, they say.   
And now I shall carry the children,   
Little Rachel and Samuel and John   
I shall carry the baby, Esther,   
For the Lord to look upon.  
The father looked at her kindly,   
But he shook his head and smiled   
Now, who but a doting mother   
Would think of a thing so wild?   
If the children were tortured by demons,   
Or dying of fever it were well.   
Or had they the taint of the leper,   
Like many in Israel.  
No, do not hinder me, Nathan.   
I feel such a burden of care   
If I carry it to the Master,   
Perhaps I shall leave it there.   
If He lays His hand on the children,   
My heart will be lighter, I know   
For a blessing forever and ever   
Will follow them as they go.   
So, over the hills of Judah,   
Along by the vine-rows green,   
With Esther asleep on her bosom,   
And Rachel her brothers between.  
Among the people who hung on His teaching, Or waited His touch and His word,   
Through the row of proud Pharisees listening, She pressed to the feet of the Lord.   
Now, why should you hinder the Master,   
Said Peter, with children like these?   
See not how, from morning till evening,   
He teaches and heals disease?   
Then Christ said, Forbid not the children, Permit them to come unto Me!   
And He took in His arms little Esther,   
And Rachel He set on His knee.   
And the heavy heart of the mother   
Was lifted all earth-care above,   
As He laid His hands on the brothers   
And blessed them with most tender love.   
As He said of the babes in His bosom,   
Of such are the kingdom of Heaven.   
And strength for all duty and trial   
That hour to her spirit was given.   
Thus do you and thus inherit the blessing.*

But each Christian will in his time have personal troubles of a higher order, namely, spiritual cares. He is begotten again unto a lively hope but he fears that his faith will yet die. He hopes he has some spark of spiritual joy, but there are dark and dreary nights which lower over him and he fears that his lamp will die out in darkness. As yet he has been victorious but he trembles lest he should one day fall by the hand of the enemy.

Beloved, I beseech youcast this care upon God for He cares for you. I am persuaded that He that has begun a good work in you will carry it on and perfect it unto the day of Christ. He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you. The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed. But My kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the Covenant of My peace be removed, says the Lord that has mercy on you. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you. And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you: when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon you. No good thing will I withhold from them that walk uprightly. I give unto My sheep eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.

Why, one might keep you all this morning and this afternoon and evening too, repeating the precious promises of God and we might close them all by saying

*What more can He say than to you He has said, You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?*

Away, then with dark suspicions and anxieties! Is it care about past sin? The blood of Jesus Christ, Gods dear Son, cleans us from all sin. Is it present temptation? There has no temptation happened to you but such as is common to men: but God who is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able. But will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.

Is it future peril? O leave that with Him, for neither things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. If you begin to think always of yourself, you will be miserable. Why, it is Christ that makes you what you are before the eyes of God. Look, then, to Jesus in order to find out what you are in Gods esteem. Soul, I say again, look at Christ and not at yourself. Never let anxieties about sanctification destroy your confidence of justification.

What if you are a sinner! Christ died to save sinners. What if you are undeserving! In due time Christ died for the ungodly. Divine Grace is free. The invitation is still open to yourest the whole burden of your

souls salvation where it must rest. Do not be an Uzzalay no hasty hand upon the ark of the Lord. Above all, do not be an Uzziahattempt not to offer sacrifices or usurp the priesthood, for Christ must stand for you you cannot stand or do for yourself. Cast, then, your care on Him, for He cares for you.

I shall want your patient attention two or three minutes more, while trying to apply this remedy. I notice that there are many cares not of a personal, but rather of an ecclesiastical character, which often insinuate themselves and plead for life, but which must nevertheless be put away. I am sorry to confess, that if I do not preach to anyone else this morning, I shall now be preaching to myself. There are cares about how Gods work is to be carried on. I know a foolish young man who lies awake many nights thinking about that, and who sometimes by day makes himself foolishly sad, because with large purposes of heart and with great designs in his soul, he sees not the way by which they are to be carried out and has not yet attained the faith which

*Laughs at impossibilities,   
And says, It shall be done.*

If any of you are suffering from the same sad disease, let me exhort you from the words of Peter, to cast the care about Gods work upon God. He never sent us a warfare at our own charge. He never did require us to do His workthat He will attend to Himself. And we ought to feel that if God does not enable us to do as much as we would, it is a blessed thing to be enabled and permitted to do as much as we can. If we think there are few men to work, or little means with which to work, we must not be fretful about where the means, or the men shall come from. We may properly pray, Lord, send laborers, and with equal propriety we may ask that He who has the silver and the gold, may give them for His own work.

But after that, we must cast our care on God. Then, if we get over that, there will be another anxietyone which frets me often enoughthe success of Gods work. Oh, when there are souls converted, how our heart leaps for joy. When the Church keeps continually increasing, how glad we are! But if there is even a little lull, we feel so sad. If we do not see Gods arm always bare, we are ready to lie down and say, Lord, let me die, I am no better than my fathers. When we are in a low state of body and heart, too, that weakening sickness of unbelief, like the womans issue of blood, comes over us and we feel that life is ebbing as success decreases. Now, this is a care we must cast on God.

Preacher, your Great Employer sent you out to sow the seedbut if no grain of it should ever come upif you sowed the seed as He told you and where He told you, He will never lay the blame of a defective harvest to you. It is ours to preachbut to convert souls is Gods. It is ours to laborbut the success depends alone on Him. They that go through the valley of Baca make it a wellthat is their business, to dig wells. The rain also fills the poolsit is not their business to fill the wells. And the wells do not get full from the bottom as they do in our countryit is the rain that fills the pools. The blessing comes from on Highif we have dug the wells and we have prayed six times and as yet the rain has not descended, go again seven times and the rain shall yet descend and the pools shall be filled to the brim. Do not, therefore, let us have cares about success.

And sometimes there is another care. It is the care lest some little slip made by ourselves or others should give cause to the enemy to blaspheme. There are devils besides those in Hellthere are some on earth. And some of these are too glad to find an opportunity, if there is a word that is ever so fitly spoken, to wrest it out of its connection and make stock and capital for blasphemy out of it. It is an easy task and one which any fool can accomplishthis world is full of fools who are glad to find dirt to eat, and then having eaten it themselves, to cram it down others throats.

One is sometimes afraid to walk for fear of breaking something in such a frail world as this. Afraid to speak, lest we should say something which might open the enemys mouth. A careful jealousy is very well if it leads to cautionbut very ill if it leads to a worrisome, weak anxiety. What have you and I to do with what the enemy may do? If the Lord does not chain the devil, I am sure we cannot. And if He does not shut the mouths of liars, I do not know that we ought to wish He would, for if He lets them open their mouths I have no doubt they are best open.

Many a time, as Christ rode into Jerusalem on the back of an ass, the truth has ridden into the midst of Jerusalem in triumph on the back of its most despicable enemies. Beyond doubt, Christ has been lifted up even on the point of the spear and the light of the Gospel has beamed like a beacon from the stake where the martyr perished. Well, let us leave our enemies to do what they will and only stand fast to the Lord and cast our care on Him.

And then, one is so afraid of being unfaithful at the last, lest the blood of souls should be on our garments. Oh, that thought has dashed me on my forehead on the floor many and many a time. This heavy burden crushes me into the most pitiable state, until the body sympathizes with the mind so fully, that if you could see me with the tears running from my eyes and the cold sweat starting from my head, you would say, What a creature is that to go forth and preach? The thought of having all of you to address and that I must be faithful, or else your blood shall be required at my hands, is so awful a one that in private I never dare to think of it, for it utterly unmans me.

But oh, blessed be God, if He has enabled us to do all we can by His Spirit, we must leave it there. We know that He will not ask more of us than He has given to us and if He has helped us so far, His shall be the glory. But if we have failed, even that, too, shall be washed away through His precious blood and with all his weight of responsibility the minister shall yet enter Heaven and find a place among the sanctified.

III. M y last point and only a word, of THE SWEET INDUCEMENTS TO CONVINCE YOU TO LEAVE YOUR BURDENS WITH HIMHe cares for you.

Believe in an universal Providence, the Lord cares for ants and angels, for worms and for worlds. He cares for cherubim and for sparrows, for seraphim and for insects. Cast your care on Him, He that calls the stars by their names and leads them out by numbers, by their hosts. Why do you say, O Jacob, and think, O Israel, my way is passed over from God

and He has utterly forgotten me? Let His universal Providence cheer you.

Think next of His particular Providence over all the saints. Precious shall their blood be in His sight. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose. Let the fact that while He is the Savior of all men, He is specially the Savior of them that believe. Let that cheer and comfort you, that special Providence which watches over the chosen, The angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear Him.

And then, thirdly, let the thought of His special love to you be the very essence of your comfort. I will never leave you, nor forsake you. God says that as much to you, as He said it to any saint of old. Fear not, I am your shield and your exceeding great reward. Oh, I wish, Beloved, that the Holy Spirit would make you feel the promise as being spoken to you! Out of this vast assembly, forget the rest, and only think of yourself, for the promises are unto you, meant for YOU. Oh, grasp them. It is ill to get into a way of reading Scripture for the whole Churchread it for yourselves and specially hear the Master say to YOU this morning, Let not your heart be troubled, you believe in God, believe also in Me.

Think that you hear Him say, I have prayed for you that your faith fail not. Think you see Him walking on the waters of your trouble, for He is there, and He is saying, Fear not, it is I, be not afraid. Oh, those sweet words of Christ! Lord, speak them to me! Speak them to Your poor sorrowing child yonder! Speak them to each one of us! Speak them to us, and let us hear Your voice and say, Jesus whispers consolation, I cannot refuse it, I will sit under His shadow with great delight.

Sinnersungodly persons hereyou know not God. I send you away when I have said this one thing. What a blessed thing it is to be a Christian, to have Someone who will take your cares for you! Why, you know you will have your cares whether you are Christians or notyou are sure to have troubles even in the worldbut then you have no Christ to comfort you, no God to sustain you, no promise to cheer you. You have the darkness without the lamp, you have to die without the immortality to follow. Oh that you knew what a Christian is, and your mouths would be watering to know the Christians privilege!

I say to you, cast your sins upon Christ. Jesus Christ can take them. If you believe on Him there is proof that He did take them of old, did carry them and suffered for them in His own Person that you might go free. Oh may we each this morning, saint and sinner, come to the Cross and to the Throne of Grace and say, Lord, unload us of our burdens of guilt and care and give us now to go on our way rejoicing, because God, allsufficient, has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you.

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THE ROARING LION   
NO. 419

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 17, 1861, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.   
1 Peter 5:8, 9.

SATAN, who is called by various names in the Scriptures, all descriptive of his bad qualities, was once an angel of Godperhaps one of the chief among the fiery ones

*Foremost of the sons of light,*

*Midst the bright ones doubly bright.*   
Sin, all-destroying sin, which has made an Aceldama out of Eden, soon found inhabitants for Hell in Heaven itself, plucking one of the brightest stars of the morning from its sphere and quenching it in blackest night.

From that moment this evil spirit despairing of all restoration to his former glories and happiness has sworn perpetual hostility against the God of Heaven. He has had the audacity openly to attack the Creator in all His works. He stained creation. He pulled down man from the throne of Glory and rolled him in the mire of depravity. With the trail of the serpent he despoiled all Edens beauty and left it a waste that brings forth thorns and briersa land that must be tilled with the sweat of ones face. Not content with thatinasmuch as he had spoiled the first creationhe has incessantly attempted to despoil the second.

Man once made in the image of God, he soon ruined. Now he uses all his devices, all his crafts, all the power of his skill and all the venom of his malice to destroy twice-made man created in the image of Christ Jesus. With ceaseless toil and untiring patience he is ever occupied in endeavoring to crush the Seed of the woman. There is no believer in Christ, no follower of that which is true and lovely and of good repute, who will not find himself, at some season or other, attacked by this foul fiend and the legions enlisted in his service.

Now, behold your adversary. Yes, though you cannot see his face, or detect his form, believe that such a foe withstands you. It is not a myth, nor a dream, nor a superstitious imagination. He is as real a being as ourselves. Though a spirit, he has as much real power over hearts as we have over the hearts of others, no, in many cases far more. This is, I repeat it, no vision of the nightno phantom of a disordered brain. That wicked one is as sternly real this day as when Christ met him in deadly conflict in the wilderness of temptation. Believers now have to fight with Apollyon in the Valley of Humiliation.

Woe to the professors of godliness who are defeated by this deadly antagonist. They will find it a terrible reality in the world to come. Against this prince of darkness we utter afresh this morning the warning of the Apostle, Whom resist steadfast in the faith.

I shall now speak to four points. First of all, Satans incessant activity He walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Secondly, we will dwell awhile upon his terrible roaring. Thirdly, upon his ultimate aim, seeking to devour Gods people. And then, lastly, let us take up the exhortation of Peterand show how Satan is to be overcome.

I. First then, SATANS PERPETUAL ACTIVITY. Only God can be omnipresent, hence, Satan can only be in one place at one time.   
Yet, if you will consider how much mischief he does, you will easily gather that he must have an awful degree of activity. He is here and there and everywhere tempting us here and anon scattering his temptations in the countries which are antipodes to ushurrying across the sea or speeding over the land. We have no means of asserting what are his means of flight. But we may easily infer from his being so constantly in all places that he must travel with inconceivable velocity. He has, besides, a host of fallen spirits who fell with him. This great dragon drew with his tail the third part of the stars of Heavenand these are ready to execute his will and obey his behests, if not with the same potency and force which belongs by hereditary right to their great leader, still with something of his spirit, his malice and his cunning.  
Think for awhile how active he must be! We know that he is to be found in every place! Enter the most hallowed sanctuary and you shall find him there. Go where men congregate upon the Exchange and you shall lack no signs of his being present there. Retire into the quietude of the family circle and you will soon detect in bickerings and jealousies that Satan has scattered handfuls of evil seed there. No less in the deep solitude of the hermits cave might you find the impress of his cloven foot. You shall sail from England to America and find him there amidst the clashing of swords.   
You shall come back and journey across the mighty empire of Russia and find him there in the tyrants heart and perhaps, too, even in the enmity which is excited in the breasts of those who are oppressed. You shall go into the wilds where foot of Christian missionary never trod, but you shall find that Satan has penetrated into the far interior and tutored the untutored barbarian. You shall go where the name of Jesus is as yet unknown, but you shall find Satan having dominion there. He is the prince of the power of the air. Wherever the breath of life is inhaled the poisonous miasma of temptation is a thing familiar. They that dwell in the wilderness bow before himthe kings of Seba and of Sheba offer him gifts yes and the dwellers in the isles acknowledge him too often as their king.

Then remember, that as he is found in all places, so you have often found him in all your duties. You have sought to serve God in your daily avocations but strong temptationsfurious suggestions of evil have followed you there. You have come home from your business almost brokenhearted with your slips. You have come into the family and sought to magnify your Master in the social circlebut perhaps in the best moment, when you seemed about to achieve the greatest work, you were clipped up by the heels. Your easily besetting sin overturned you and Satan exulted at your fall. You found him even there.   
You have said, I will go to my bed, but in your tossing at midnight you have found him there. You have risen and said, I will go into my closet and shut the door. But who among us has not met the foul fiend even there in solitary conflict? When we wished to be wrestling with the angel of God we have had to contend with the fiend of Hell. Look upon any of your duties, Christian and will you not see upon them marks of sinand on some not only marks of sinbut marks of Satans presence, too? Satan is not in all sin. We sin of ourselves. We must not lay too much upon Satans shoulders. Sin grows in our hearts without any sowing just as thorns and thistles will grow in fallow furrows. But still there are times when Satan himself must have been present and you have had to know it and feel it.   
On some of the old bricks of Egypt and of Babylon there has been found the mark of a dogs foot. When the brick was made, while it was left to dry, the creature passed over it and left the imprint of his foot upon it. And now thousands of years afterwards when we pull down the wall we find the dog mark. Thus has it been often with us. While our duties were in such a state that they were yet impressiblebefore they were yet sunburned and dried and ready to be built up for real practical purposethat dog of Hell has passed over them and left the footprint on the best things that we ever did. As we look back years afterwards we perceive what we might not have seen at the timethat he really marred and stained the best performance of our most willing hands.   
Ah, when I think how Satan follows us in all places and in all duties I am sometimes almost ready to apply to him the language of David when he spoke of the omnipresent GodWhere shall I go from Your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your presence? If I ascend up into Heaven, You are thereif I make my bed in Hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Your hand lead me and Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. But glory be to God, if I climb to Heaven Satan is not there. There I can escape him. Beyond the reach of his roaring my spirit shall find her rest in God.   
We must observe also how ready Satan is to vent his spite against us in all frames of heart. When we are depressed in spiritperhaps some bodily illness has brought us low. Our animal spirits have ebbed and we feel ready to sinkthen that old coward Satan is sure to attack us. I have always noted as a matter of experience that he prefers rather to attack some of us when we are in a low and weak state than at any other time. Oh, how temptation has staggered us when we have been sick! We have said Ah, if this had but come when I was well then I could have caught it on the shield at once. In fact I would have laughed at it and broken it in pieces. But Satan avails himself of our sad and weak frames in order to make his fiery darts find their mark more effectively.   
On the other hand, if we are joyous and triumphant and are something in the frame of mind that David was when he danced before the ark, then Satan knows how to set his traps by tempting us to presumptionMy mountain stands firm, I shall never be moved. Or to carnal security Soul, take your ease, you have much goods laid up for many years. Or else to self-righteousnessMy own power and goodness have exalted me. Or else he will even attempt to poison our joys with the spleen of evil forebodings. Ah, says he, this is too good to hold, you will soon be cast down and all these fine plumes of yours shall yet be trod like the mire of the streets.   
He well knows how, in every frame of mind to make our condition minister to his devouring purposes. He will follow you, Christian, when your soul is all but despairing and he will whisper in your earsGod has forsaken you and given you over to the will of your enemies. And he will track your upward course, riding as it were on cherubs wings. When you tread the starry pathway of communion he will dog your footsteps even upon Tabors summit and climb with you to Pisgahs brow. On the temples pinnacle he will tempt you, saying, Cast yourself down, and on the mountains highest peak he will attack you with, Bow down and worship me.   
And ah, remember how well he knows how to turn all the events of Providence to our ill. Here comes Esau, hungry with huntingthere is a mess of pottage readythat he may be tempted to sell his birthright. Here is Noah, glad to escape from his long confinement in the arkhe is merry and there is the wine-cup ready for himthat he may drink. Here is Peter, his faith is low but his presumption is high. There is a maiden ready to sayYou also were with Jesus of Nazareth. There is Judas and there are thirty pieces of silver in the priestly hand to tempt him, yes, and there is the rope afterwards for him to hang himself with.   
No lack of means. If there is a Jonah, wishing to go to Tarshish rather than to Nineveh there is a ship ready to take him. Satan has his providences as if to counterfeit the Providence of God. At least he knows how to use Gods Providence to serve his own ends. One of the greatest mercies God bestows upon us is His not permitting our inclinations and opportunities to meet. Have you not sometimes noticed that when you had had the inclination to a sin there has been no opportunityand when the opportunity has presented itself you have had no inclination towards it? Satans principal aim with believers is to bring their appetites and his temptations togetherto get their souls into a dry seared state and then to strike the match and make them burn.   
He is so crafty and wily with all the experience of these many centuries that man, who is but of yesterday, can scarcely be thought of as a match for him. Did he not drag down the wise man, even Solomon, whose wisdom was more excellent than any of the sons of men? Did he not lay the Royal Preacher like a helpless victim at his feet? Did he not cast down the strong man, Samsonwho could slay a thousand Philistines, but who could not resist the dallying of Delilah? Did he not bring down even the man after Gods own heart by a most sorrowful fault? Let us sorrowfully remember that we have hardly met with a perfect and an upright man against whom Satan has not vented his spleen and over whom Satan has not in some degree triumphed.   
Well I have thus spoken of Satans terrible activityof his following us into all places and attending us wherever we may go. I am sure that no Christian heart here thinks this to be a mere trifle. Of course there are skeptics. There are some who will not believe in the existence of this evil spirit. Too generally I have noticed that when a man has no devil he has no God. Usually when a man does not believe there is a devil, it is because he never experiences his attacks and probably never willfor the devil does not take the trouble to go and look after those he is sure of. Oh, no, he says, let them take their ease. I do not need to tempt them.   
But I say this, if a man has ever met Satan, as John Bunyan describes Christian meeting Apollyon in the Valley of Humiliation, he will have no doubt of the existence of a devil. When I have stood foot to foot with that arch-tempter in some dire hour of conflict, I could no more doubt his being shown struggling and wrestling within than a soldier who has been cut and scarred and groundedwhile bleeding and faintdoubt that there must have been an antagonist to indict those wounds. Experience will be to man, after all, the best proof of this and we cannot expect that those who have never known the joys of the Holy Spirit will know much about the attacks of the Evil Spirit.   
Nor that those who doubt that there is a God can ever be much tormented with the devil. Oh, says Satan, let them alone, they will fall into the ditch of themselves. There is no need that I should go abroad after them. I think I remember telling you of Mr. Beechers illustration. When the Negro went out with his master to catch wild ducks, one of the ducks being a little wounded, the master made the most desperate efforts to get it. But he observed that when it was dead and had fallen down, his master did not bother much about it because he could pick it up at any time. And so it is with dead souls. The devil can pick them up at any time. It is those that are woundedthat have some life left that he is afraid of losing. Such as these he is sure to pursue. He will be ever striving to get them safe in his grasp.   
II. And now we turn, secondly, to SATANS ROARING.   
The Destroyer has many ways of mischief. Here in the text he is compared to a roaring lion. In some passages of Scripture you will remember he is compared to a fowler. Now a fowler makes no noise. It would altogether defeat his end if he were to frighten the birds. But as quietly as possible he sets his lure and with sweet notes he seeks to enchant his victim till it is taken in the trap. That is quite a different thing from the roaring lion of the text. In another passage it is said that he knows how to transform himself into an angel of light and then, plausibly and smoothly, he teaches false doctrine and error and all the while appears to have a holy zeal for Truthand the most earnest love for that which is delicate and lovely and of good repute.

We have plenty of specimens in these days of the devil teaching morality. You sometimes take up a newspaper and read of the skeptic or scorpion school, whose writers hate all true religion as much as the devil hates virtueand you find a most unctuous article upon the indelicacies of some honest preacher, or a very pious lamentation over the presumed follies of an earnest minister. Never let the devil accuse Christians of cant and hypocrisy againlet him find his answer in his own dear allies who can plead for the sanctity of places which they abhor and for a solemnity which they despise. Of all devils the most devilish is the saintly hypocrite loving sin and yet pleading against it in order to promote it.   
In this text, however, he is not an angel of light, but a roaring lion. I think it was Rutherford who said that he liked the devil best in this shape. I remember in one of his letters he thanks God that He had given him a roaring devil to deal with. Now what is the peculiar temptation which is intended under the metaphor of a roaring lion? Again we repeat itnot the slouching gait of a prowling lion who is seeking after its prey and will only roar when it ready to lungebut a lion that roars till he makes the very forest startle and shakes the hills which gird the prairie.   
These roaring of Satan are threefold. Perhaps Peter here alluded to the roaring of persecution. How Satan roared with persecutions in Peters days. He roared and roared and roared again till none but stout hearts dared to show themselves valiant for Christ. There were the underground prisons filled with frogs and serpents and toads, where breath or fresh air never chased away the noxious smell and pestilential vapor. There were racks and gibbets. There was the sword for beheading and the stake for burning. There was dragging at the heels of the wild horse. There was smearing over with pitch and then setting the body still alive to burn in Neros garden. There were torments which must not be describedthe very pictures of which are enough to make ones eyes weep blood as you look upon them.   
There was nothing for the Christian then but banishment and imprisonmentthese were the lowest penalties. They were stoned, they were sawn in sunder, they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted, tormented. These were the roaring of the lion in good Peters day. Since then, from his old den at Rome, what roaring has Satan given forth, like thunders indeed to all except the men who knew the difference between the mimic thunders of Hell and the real thunder of the God of Heaven! Let Smithfield testify to the roaring of this lion! Let our cemeteries and graveyards which still bear the memorial of our myriad martyrs testify how the lion has roared at us!   
And let our denomination especially, persecuted alike by Protestant and Romanist, hunted both by good and bad upon the face of the earthlet the thousands that have been drowned in the rivers of Holland and Germanylet the multitudes who have there been put to the most exquisite torture merely because they would hold Gods holy ordinance and would not prostitute it at will of the Pope or prelatelet all these speak and tell how Satan has roared in days of old! He has not half the roar in him now that he had then! Why, he can do nothing at all against us! His roars nowa-days are like the hissings of some angry cat. All he can do is but to use cruel mockings.   
Now and then a wicked slander, or a jeer, or a caricature, or a witty sentence. What are these? Oh, if we cannot bear these, what would we have done when the lion used to roar in real lion-like style? Well, well, he may growl again yet before some of us have gone off the face of the earth, for we know not what may happen. But let him roar. We know, blessed be God, that He who is for us is more than all they that is against us.   
But there is another kind of furious attackthe roaring of strong and vehement temptation. This some of us have felt. Do you know what it is, ChristianI hope you do notdo you know what it is sometimes to be caught hold of by the clutch of some frightful temptation which you hate, loathe, detest and abominate? And yet the clutch of the hand is seconded by an arm so terrific in its strength that it drags you right on against your will. You look at the sin, look it in the very face. You feel you cannot do this great wickedness and sin against Godand yet the impulse strong and stern, mysterious and irresistibledrags you on till you come to the edge of the precipice and look down upon the yawning gulf which threatens to swallow you up. And in the last moment, by Gods grace, as by the very skin of your teeth, you are delivered and your foot does not slip neither do you fall into the hand of the Destroyer. You have had reason to sayMy steps had almost gone, my feet had well-near slipped.   
Have you known what it is to have this temptation come again and again and again, till you were in agony? You felt that you had rather die than thus be perpetually assaulted for you feared that in an evil hour you might leave your God and turn unto perdition. You have been like good Mr. Stand-Fast in Bunyans Pilgrim, when tempted by Madam Bubble he fell at last down upon his knees and with sighs and cries to God he begged Him to deliver him. And He that comes to the help of the feeble at last delivered His servant. Have you ever known this? This is one of Satans roaring at youthrusting his temptation against you like the torments to which they put some of the early martyrswhen they laid them down and poured filthy water down their throats in such immense quantities that they were at last killed. Though they loathed the filthy liquid yet their enemies continued to pour on and on.   
So has Satan done with uspouring down his filthcramming us with his mire, constraining us as much as possible to yield to temptation. My peculiar temptation has been constant unbelief. I know that Gods promise is true and that He that said it will do it. He that has performed of old changes not and will be firm and faithful even to the end. Yet does this temptation incessantly assail meDoubt Him. Distrust Him. He will leave you yet. I can assure you when that temptation is aided by a nervous state of mind it is very hard to stand day by day and say, No, I cannot doubt my God. He that has been with me in days gone by is with me still. He will not forsake His servant, nor put him away. That perpetual assaulting, that perpetual stabbing and cutting and hacking at ones faith is not so easy to endure. O God, deliver us, we pray You and make us more than conquerors by Your Spirits power!   
Once moreSatan has another way of roaring. I do not suppose that one in ten of Gods people knows anything about thisand they need not wish toSatan can roar also in the Christians ears with blasphemies. I do not allude now to those evil thoughts which spring up in the minds of men who, in their childhood and their early youth went far into sin. I know that you will sometimes, when in prayer, be troubled with the snatch of an old song which you once used to sing. And perhaps, when you would be most free from every unhallowed thought, some coarse expression which you heard in your former haunts will return again and again and again. Why the verse of a hymn may suggest to you some unholy thing or a text of Scripture bring up some of those old recollections which you have longed to forget.   
I allude now more especially to those yet more ferocious attacks of Satan when he will inject blasphemous thoughts into the minds of believers who never thought such things before. You know how Bunyan describes itGood Christian had to pass through the valley of the shadow of death. About the midst of this valley he perceived the mouth of Hell to be and just when he was come over against the mouth of the pit, one of the wicked ones got behind him and stepped up softly to him and whisperingly suggested many grievous blasphemies to him which he verily thought had proceeded from his own mind. This put Christian more to it than anything he had met with beforeeven to think that now he should blaspheme Him that he so much loved before. Yet, if he could have helped it he would not have done it. But he had not the discretion either to stop his ears or to know from where those blasphemies came.   
Seldom does the ministry allude to these matters. But, inasmuch as they trouble some of the people of God I believe it to be the duty of a faithful shepherd of the flock to minister to those who are called to pass through this dark and dismal state. Oh, the horrors and terrors which Satan has sometimes caused Gods people, by the thoughts that were not theirsbut proceeded from himselfor from some of his fiends! First, he suggested the thought so vividly that they cried with DavidHorror has taken hold of me, because of the wicked that keep not Your Law. And then when the thought had flashed for a moment upon the soul, he gave a second horror by saying, Ah, you are not a child of God or you would not have so vile a nature.   
Whereas you never thought it at all. It was his suggestion, not yours. And then, having laid his sin at your door, he has turned accuser of the Brethren and has sought to cast down your faith from its excellency by making you imagine that you had committed the unpardonable sin. Now if he roars against you, either with persecution, or with temptation, or with diabolical insinuationstake the language of our Apostle herewhom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.   
III. I now turn to my third point which is SATANS ULTIMATE AIM Seeking whom he may devour.   
Nothing short of the total destruction of a believer will ever satisfy our adversary. Nothing less than the perfection and complete salvation of a Christian is the hearts desire of our Savior. He will never see the full fruition of the travail of His soul till all His people are completely saved. The reverse is true of Satan. He can never be content till he sees the believer utterly devoured. He would rend him in pieces and break his bones and utterly destroy him if he could. Do not, therefore, indulge the thought that the main purpose of Satan is to make you miserable. He is pleased with thatbut that is

not his ultimate end. Sometimes he may even make you happy for he has dainty poisons sweet to the taste which he administers to Gods people.   
If he feels that our destruction can be more readily achieved by sweets than by bitters, he certainly would prefer that which would best effect his end   
*More the treacherous calm I dread   
Than tempests rolling overhead,*   
said Toplady. And much in the same spirit said a Puritan Divine of old There is no temptation so hard to bear as not being tempted at all.   
Indeed, it is a stern temptation to be left at ease. When we think we have no occasion for our sword we begin to unbuckle it from our side. We strip off our armor piece by piece and then it is that we become most exposed to the attack of our enemies. Satan will be glad enough, no doubt, to see your faith weakened, but his aim is to destroy that faith so that you may not believe in God to the saving of your soul. He will be pleased enough if he can throw mire into the eyes of your hope so that you can no more look to the goodly land that is beyond Jordan. But he will never be satisfied till he puts those eyes out altogether and sends you, like Samson, to grind at the mill.   
Let us take this for our comfort. If it is Satans desire that we may be utterly destroyedin that at least he is certain to be defeated. When it comes to a question who shall have the victory, Christ, the Eternal Son of God, or Satan, the prince of the power of the airwe need have no doubt as to which shall succeed. The devil is but a creature, finite in his nature and limits are laid upon his prowess. If the battle were between Satan and man, then, indeed, woe the day to us! We might quit ourselves like men and be strong but before this giant all the host of Israel must flee. But the battle is not ours. It is the mighty Gods. He that once broke this serpents head still wages war with him.   
Yes and Christ Himself must be defeated. The glory of His Cross must be dimmed. His arm must be broken, the crown of sovereignty must be snatched from His headand His Throne must reel beneath Himbefore one of those for whom He died and on whom He set his love, should ever be cast away or be given up to the power of His adversary. In this, then, tried Believer, count it your joy that Satan may worry, but he cannot rend. He may wound, but he cannot kill. He may get his foot upon you to make a full end of you, but you shall yet start up with fresh strength and say, Rejoice not against me, O my enemywhen I fall, I shall arise. When I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me.   
IV. With the fourth point, we now draw to a closeWHAT WE SHOULD DO IN ORDER THAT WE MAY OVERCOME THIS ADVERSARY?  
Whom steadfast in the faith. This is our first means of defense. When Satan attacks us as an angel of light we need not so much resist by open antagonism as by flight. There are some temptations which are only to be overcome by running away from thembut when Satan roars we most raise the shout and the war-cry. To run then would be cowardice and must entail certain destruction. Suppose now that Satan roars with persecution, (and it is a poor roar that he can raise in that way now) or, suppose you are slandered, vilified, abusedwill you give way? Then are you undone. Will you say, No, never. By Him that called me to this work, I will see this battle out and in the name of Him who has been my Helper up to now, I set up the banner. And I cryJehovah-Nissithe Lord of Hosts is our Banner, the God of Jacob is our Refuge. You have done wellyou have resistedand you will win the day.   
Has he assailed you with some temptation obnoxious to your spirit? Yield an inch and you are undone, but become more watchful and more vigilant over yourself in that particular sin and resistance must certainly bring victory. Or has he injected blasphemy? Resist. Be more prayerful every time he is more active. He will soon give it up if he finds that his attacks drive you to Christ. Often has Satan been nothing but a big black dog to drive Christs sheep nearer to the Master. Often has he been like a tremendous crested billow which has just lifted the poor shipwrecked mariner on to the Rock and from very fear has made him cling the more tightly there. If he thrusts you thus, match him by turning even his temptations to good account and he will soon give up that mode of warfare and exchange it for another.   
Resist him. But how resist him? Steadfast in the faith. Seek to obtain a clear knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel and then get a good grip of them. Be ready to die sooner than give up a particle of Gods revealed Truth. This will make you strong. Then take hold of the promises of God which are yes and amen in Christ Jesus. Be ready for every attack of Satans commencing with, Is it written?answer Satan with Thus says the LordSteadfast in the faith. Remember all the water outside of a ship cannot sink it. It is the water inside that perils its safety.   
So, if your faith can keep its hold and you can still say, Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him, Satan may batter your shield, but he has not wounded your flesh   
*Amidst temptations sharp and long,   
My soul to this dear Refuge flies;   
Hope is my anchor, firm and strong,   
While tempests blow and billows rise.   
The Gospel bears my spirits up;   
A faithful and unchanging God   
Lays the foundation for my hope,   
In oaths and promises and blood.*   
The conflict may be long, but the victory is absolutely sure. Oh poor Soul! Do but keep near to the Cross and you are safe. Throw your arms around the dying Savior. Let the droppings of His blood fall on your sins and even if you can not see Him, still believe Him. Still say, I know that He came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief, and I will cling to the sinners Savior as my only hope and trust. Then let Satan roarhe cannot hurt. Let him ragehis fury is in vain. He may but show his teeth, for he certainly cannot bite. Whom resist, steadfast in the faith.   
But there is another word added for our comfortKnowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. This is well sketched by John Bunyan in that picture I have already alluded to, in the Valley of the Shadow of Death. As Christian was going along the exceedingly narrow pathway, with a deep ditch on one side and a dangerous quay upon the other, he came to a stand and he had half a thought to go back and then again he thought he might be half-way through the valley so he resolved to go on. And while he pondered and mused, he heard the voice of a man as going before him, saying, Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me.   
Then he was glad and that for these reasons. He gathered from thence that some who feared God were in this valley as well as himself and that God was with them though they perceived Him not. He hoped to have company by-and-by so he went on and called to him that was before, but he knew not what to answer for that he also thought himself to be alone. Here honest John has our experience to the life. It is likely enough that as I am speaking this morning some of you will say, I did not think that anybody ever felt as I feel. And though I tell you these things and know that many of you have heard Satan roar, I am compelled to confess that I have frequently said in my own heart, I do not believe that any other man ever had this temptation before me.   
Well, this text stands to refute our suppositionThe same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. Martin Luther was wont to say that next to Holy Scripture the best teacher for a minister was temptationhe put affliction nextbut temptation he kept first in his view. When we have been tempted and tried ourselves we know how to succor others. I grant you it is hard to have the conviction on ones mind that you are standing in a perilous place where never man stood before and tempted as never man was tempted before you. Come, Believer, we will talk this matter over for two or three seconds. Certainly your Lord has been there before for He was tempted in all points like as you are. Scripture says that all your Brethren have had some participation in your trials.   
Now markas they suffered as you sufferno temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man. As they came through the temptation safe and unharmed, so shall you. As they testified that their light afflictions worked out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of gloryso that shall be your testimony. As they have overcome and now circle the Throne of God clothed in pure white garmentsso will you. And inasmuch as their temptations have left no tears upon their brow, no stains upon their robes, no rent in their royal mantlesso neither shall Satan be able to disfigure or to mutilate youyou shall come out of every trial and of every struggle, losing nothing therein save that which it is well to loseyour dross and your tin, your chaff and your bran. You shall come forth from the deep waters washed, cleansed and purified. God grant that so it may be with youbut it can only be so by your resisting Satansteadfast in the faith.   
And now I am addressing some this morning whom the precept does not reach for they have no faith in which to stand fast. If you knew what a blessed thing it is to be a Christian you would weep your eyes out that you are not Christians yourselves. Oh, you say, but you have described to us the temptations of Satan. Just so, but it is a blessed thing to be a Christian in his very worst state. As I look sometimes upon those pictures which are drawn by the artist to illustrate the Pilgrims Progresseven when I have seen poor John up to his neck in the mireI have thought I would sooner be Christian in the Slough of Despond, than Pliable on the dry land on the other side.   
I would sooner be Christian when the dragon hurled all his darts at him though he smiled not all the day longsooner be Christian then, than be Hypocrisy or Formality climbing over the wall to go by some other way. It is a good thing to be a Christian even in his very worst state and what must it be in his best? Young men and young women, as one of your own age, I bear my testimony that to follow Christ is the most blessed and pleasant thing, even in this present evil world

*I would not change my blessed estate   
For all the world calls good or great;   
And while my faith can keep her hold,   
I envy not the sinners gold.*   
But who am I, that I should say this? Why nothing but a poor miserable sinner who looks for all in Christ. With nothing in my hand, I simply cling to His Cross. Nor am I an inch forwarder than I was twelve years ago in this respect. My cry then was, None but Jesus, none but Jesus, and it is my cry now and shall be my cry even to the end. And what are you today but a lost, guilty sinner? But do not despair. Trust Jesus! Trust Jesus!and the joys and privileges of the Christian are yours. Nowthis momentcast yourself on Him. Look to his agony and bloody sweat, His Cross, His passion, His death, His burial, His resurrection, His ascension and you shall find a balm for every fear, a cordial for every distress. All that you want and all that your heart can ever desire is most surely to be found in Christ Jesus your Lord.   
May God grant us to be partakers of that grace which is in His most blessed namethat we may not be destroyed by the Destroyer!

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1721 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GLORY!

NO. 1721

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, MAY 20, 1883, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Who has called us unto His eternal glory.   
1 Peter 5:10.

A FORTNIGHT ago, when I was only able to creep to the front of this platform, I spoke to you concerning the future of our mortal bodies [Sermon #1719The Tent Dissolved and the Mansion Entered]We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. On the next Sabbath, [Sermon #1720Christ in You], we went a step further and we did not preach so much about the resurrection of the body as upon the hope of Glory for our entire nature, our text being, Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Thus we have passed through the outer court and have trod the hallowed floor of the Holy Place. And now we are the more prepared to enter within the veil and to gaze, a while, upon the glory which awaits us. We shall say a littleand oh, how little it will beupon that glory of which we have so sure a prospect, that glory which is prepared for us in Christ Jesus and of which He is the hope! I pray that our eyes may be strengthened that we may see the heavenly light and that our ears may be opened to hear sweet voices from the better land. As for me, I cannot say that I will speak of the glory, but I will try to stammer about itfor the best language to which a man can reach concerning Glory must be a mere stammering.

Paul did but see a little of it for a short time and he confessed that he heard things that it was not lawful for a man to utter. And I doubt not that he felt utterly unable to describe what he had seen. Though a great master of language, yet for once he was overpoweredthe grandeur of his theme made him silent! As for us, what can we do, where even Paul breaks down? Pray, dear Friends that the Spirit of Glory may rest upon you, that He may open your eyes to see as much as can at present be seen of the heritage of the saints! We are told that eye has not seen, neither has ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him.

Yet the eye has seen wonderful things! There are sunrises and sunsets, Alpine glories and ocean marvels which, once seen, cling to our memories throughout life! Yet, even when Nature is at her best, she cannot give us an idea of the supernatural Glory which God has prepared for His people! The ear has heard sweet harmonies. Have we not enjoyed music which has thrilled us? Have we not listened to speech which has seemed to make our hearts dance within us? And yet no melody of harp nor charm of oratory can ever raise us to a conception of the glory which God has laid up for them that love Him! As for the heart of man, what strange things have entered it! Men have exhibited fair fictions, woven in the loom of fancy, which have made the eyes sparkle with their beauty and brightnessimagination has reveled and rioted in its own fantastic creations, roaming among islands of silver and mountains of gold, or swimming in seas of wine and rivers of milkbut imagination has never been able to open the gate of pearl which shuts in the city of our God.

No, it has not yet entered the heart of man. Yet the text goes on to say, but He has revealed it unto us by His Spirit. So that Heaven is not an utterly unknown region, not altogether an inner brightness shut in with walls of impenetrable darkness. God has revealed joys which He has prepared for His beloved, but mark you, even though they are revealed of the Spirit, yet it is no common unveiling and the reason that it is made known at all is ascribed to the fact that the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. So we see that the glory which awaits the saints is ranked among the deep things of God and He that would speak, thereof, after the manner of the oracles of God must have much heavenly teaching. It is easy to chatter according to human fancy, but if we would follow the sure teaching of the Word of God, we shall have need to be taught of the holy Spirit, without whose anointing the deep things of God must be hidden from us. Pray that we may be under that teaching while we dwell upon this theme.

There are three questions which we will answer this morning. The first is, what is the destiny of the saints?Eternal glory, says the text. Secondly, in which does this glory consist? I said we would answer the questions, but this is not to be answered this side the pearl gate. Thirdly, what should be the influence of this prospect upon our hearts? What manner of people ought we to be whose destiny is eternal glory? How should we live who are to live forever in the glory of the Most High?

I. First, WHAT, THEN, IS THE DESTINY OF THE SAINTS? Our text tells us that God has called us unto His eternal glory. Glory! Does not the very word astound you? Glory! Surely that belongs to God alone! Yet the Scripture says, glory, and glory it must mean, for it never exaggerates. Think of glory for us who have deserved eternal shame! Glory for us poor creatures who are often ashamed of ourselves! Yes, I look at my book, again, and it actually says, glorynothing less than glory! Therefore it must be so.

Now, since this seems so amazing and astonishing a thing, I would so speak with you that not a relic of incredulity may remain in your hearts concerning it. I would ask you to follow me while we look through the Bible, not quoting every passage which speaks of glory, but mentioning a few of the leading ones. This glory has been promised. What said David? In the 73rd Psalm and 24th verse we meet with these remarkable words You shall guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. In the original Hebrew there is a trace of Davids recollection of Enochs being translated and, though the royal Psalmist did not expect to be caught away without dying, yet he did expect that after he had followed the guidance of the Lord here below, the great Father would stoop and raise up His child to be with Himself forever.

He expected to be received into Glory. Even in those dim days, when as yet the light of the Gospel was but in its dawn, this Prophet and king was able to say, You shall afterward receive me to glory. Did he not mean the same thing when, in the 84th Psalm, verse 11, he said, The Lord will give Grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly? Not only no good thing under the name of Grace will God withhold from the upright, but no good thing under the head of Glory. No good of Heaven shall be kept from the saints; no reserve is even set upon the throne of the great King, for our Lord Jesus has graciously promised, To Him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me on My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father on His throne. No good thing, not even among the infinitely good things of Heaven, will God withhold from them that walk uprightly.

If David had this persuasion, much more may we who walk in the light of the Gospel! Since our Lord Jesus has suffered and entered into His Glory, and we know that we shall be with Him where He is, we are confident that our rest shall be glorious! Brothers and Sisters, it is to this glory that we have been called! The people of God, having been predestinated, have been called with an effectual callingcalled so that they have obeyed the call and have run after Him who has drawn them! Now, our text says that He has, called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus. We are called to repentance, we are called to faith, we are called to holiness, we are called to perseveranceand all this that we may afterwards attain unto glory!

We have another Scripture of like import in 1 Thessalonians 2:12 Who has called you unto His kingdom and glory. We are called unto His kingdom according to our Lords words, Fear not, little flock; for it is your Fathers good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. We are called to be kings, called to wear a crown of life that fades not away, called to reign with Christ in His Glory! If the Lord had not meant us to have the glory, He would not have called us unto it, for His calling is no mockery. He would not, by His Spirit, have fetched us out from the world and separated us unto Himself if He had not intended to keep us from falling and preserve us eternally. Believer, you are called to glorydo not question the certainty of that to which God has called you!

And we are not only called to it, Brothers and Sisters, but glory is especially joined with justification. Let me quote Romans 8:30Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified. These various mercies are threaded together like pearls upon a string there is no breaking the thread, no separating the precious things. They are put in their order by God, Himself, and they are kept there by His eternal and irreversible decree. If you are justified by the righteousness of Christ, you shall be glorified through Christ Jesus, for thus has God purposed, and so must it be! Do you not remember how salvation, itself, is linked with glory? Paul, in 2 Timothy 2:10, speaks of the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. The two things are riveted together and cannot be separated! The saved ones must partake of the glory of God, for this are they being prepared every day.

Paul, in the ninth of Romans, where he speaks about the predestinating will of God, says in the 23rd verseThe vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory. This is the process which commenced in regeneration and is going on in us every day in the work of sanctification. We cannot be glorified so long as sin remains in uswe must first be pardoned, renewed and sanctifiedand then we are fitted to be glorified. By communion with our Lord Jesus we are made like He, as says the Apostle in 2 Corinthians 3:18But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. It is very wonderful, how, by the wisdom of God, everything is made to work this way.

Look at the blessed text in 2 Corinthians 4:17, where Paul says, For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, where he represents that all that we can suffer, whether of body or of mind, is producing for us such a mass of glory that he is quite unable to describe it and he uses hyperbolically language in saying, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Oh, blessed men, whose very losses are their gains, whose sorrows produce their joys, whose griefs are big with Heaven! Well may we be content to suffer if so it is that all things are working together for our good and are helping to pile up the excess of our future glory! Thus, then, it seems we are called to glory and we are being prepared for it.

Is it not, also, a sweet thought that our present fellowship with Christ is the guarantee of it? In Romans 8:17 it is said, If so be that we suffer with Him that we may be also glorified together. Going to prison with Christ will bring us into the palace with Christ! Smarting with Christ will bring us into reigning with Christ! Being ridiculed, slandered and despised for Christs sake will bring us to be sharers of His honor, glory and immortality! Who would not be with Christ in His humiliation if this is the guarantee that we shall be with Him in His Glory? Remember those dear words of the Lord Jesus, You are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father has appointed unto Me. Let us shoulder the Cross, for it leads to the crown. No Cross, no crownbut he that has shared the battle shall partake in the victory.

I have not yet done, for there is a text, in Hebrews 2:10, which is well worthy of our considerationwe are to be brought to Glory. It is said of our Lord that it became Him, for whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. See, Beloved, we are called to Heaven, we are being prepared for it and we shall be brought to it. We might despair of ever getting into the glory land if we had not One to bring us there, for the pilgrims road is rough and beset with many foesbut there is a Captain of our salvationa greater than Bunyans Great-Hearted, who is conducting the pilgrim band through all the treacherous ways and He will bring the many sonswhere?unto glory! Nowhere short of that shall be their ultimatum.

Glory, glory shall surely follow upon Gracefor Christ the Lord, who has come into His Gloryhas entered into Covenant engagements that He will bring all the many sons to be with Him. Mark this and then I will quote no more Scripturesthis glory will be for our entire manhoodfor our body as well as for our soul! You know that text in the famous Resurrection chapter in 1 Corinthians 15? Paul speaks of the body as being sown in dishonor, but he adds, it is raised in glory. And then, in Philippians 3:21, he says of our Divine Lord at His coming, Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. What a wonderful change that will be for this frail, feeble, suffering body!

In some respects it is not vile, for it is a wonderful product of Divine skill, power and goodnessbut inasmuch as it hampers our spiritual nature by its appetites and infirmitiesit may be called a vile body. It is an unhandy body for a spiritit fits a soul well enough, but a spirit needs something more ethereal, less earth-bound, more full of life than this poor flesh and blood and bone can ever be. Well, the body is to be changed. What alteration will it undergo? It will be rendered perfect. The body of a child will be fully developed and the dwarf will attain to full stature. The blind shall not be sightless in Heaven, neither shall the lame be halt, nor shall the palsied tremble. The deaf shall hear and the dumb shall sing Gods praises. We shall carry none of our deficiencies or infirmities to Heaven. As good Mr. Ready-to-Halt did not carry his crutches there, neither shall any of us need a staff to lean upon!

There we shall not know an aching brow, or a weak knee, or a failing eye. The inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick. And it shall be an impassive body, a body that will be incapable of any kind of sufferingno palpitating heart, no sinking spirit, no aching limbs no lethargic soul shall worry us there! No, we shall be perfectly delivered from every evil of that kind. Moreover, it shall be an immortal body. Our risen bodies shall not be capable of decay, much less of death. There are no graves in Heaven! Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for their bodies shall rise never to know death and corruption a second time!

No smell or taint of corruption shall remain upon those whom Jesus shall call from the tomb. The risen body shall be greatly increased in powerit is sown in weakness, says the Scripturebut it is raised in power. I suppose there will be a wonderful agility about our renovated frame. Probably it will be able to move as swiftly as the lightning flash, for so do angels pass from place to place, and we shall in this, as in many other things, be as the angels of God. Anyway, it will be a glorious body and it will be raised in glory, so that the whole of our manhood shall participate of that wonderful depth of bliss which is summed up in the wordglory. Thus I think I have set before you much of what the Word of God says upon this matter.

II. Secondly, may the Holy Spirit help me while I try very hesitatingly and stammeringly to answer the enquiry, WHEREIN DOES THIS DESTINY CONSIST? Do you know how much I expect to do? It will be but little. You remember what the Lord did for Moses when the man of God prayedI beseech you show me Your glory! All that the Lord, Himself, did for Moses was to say, You shall see My back parts; but My face shall not be seen. How little, then, can we hope to speak of this glory! Its back parts are too bright for usas for the face of that glory, it shall not be seen by any of us here below, though, by-and-by, we shall behold it!

I suppose if one who had been in Heaven could come straight down from there and occupy this platform, he would find that his discoveries could not be communicated because of the insufficiency of language to express such a weight of meaning. The saints destiny is glory! What is glory, Brothers and Sisters? What is it, I mean, among the sons of men? It is generally understood to be fame, a great reputation, the sound of trumpets, the noise of applause, the sweets of approbation among the crowd and in high places. The Queen of Sheba came from afar to see the glory of Solomon. What was that glory, Brothers and Sisters? It was the glory of a rare wisdom excelling all others! It was the glory of immense riches expended upon all manner of magnificence and splendor!

As for this last glory, the Lord says of it that a lily of the field had more of it than Solomon. At least, Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Yet that is what men mean by gloryrank, position, power, conquestthings that make the ears of men to tingle when they hear of themthings extraordinary and rare. All this is but a dim shadow of what God means by glory, yet out of the shadow we may obtain a little inkling of what the substance must be. Gods people shall be wise and even famous, for they shall shine as the stars forever and ever. Gods people shall be richthe very streets of their abode are paved with gold exceedingly rich and rare. Gods people shall be singularly honoredthere shall be an unrivalled glory about them, for they shall be known as a peculiar people, a royal priesthood, a race of beings lifted up to reveal their Makers Character beyond all the rest of His works.

I reckon that glory to a saint means, first of all, purified character. The brightest glory that really can come to anyone is the glory of character. Thus Gods glory among men is His goodness, His mercy, His justice, His truth. But shall such poor creatures as we are ever have perfect characters? Yes, we shall one day be perfectly holy! Gods Holy Spirit, when He has finished His work, will leave in us no trace of sin! No temptation shall be able to touch us! There will be in us no relics of our past and fallen state. Oh, will not that be blessed? I was going to say it is all the glory I needthe glory of being perfect in character, never sinning, never judging unjustly, never thinking a vain thought, never wandering away from the perfect Law of God, never vexed with sin which has so long been my worst enemy!

One day we shall be glorious because the devil, himself, will not be able to detect a fault in usand those eyes of God which burn like fire and read the inmost secrets of the soul will not be able to detect anything blameworthy in us! Such shall be the character of the saints that they shall be meet to fellowship with Christ Himself! They will be fit company for that thrice Holy Being before whom angels veil their faces. This is glory!

Next, I understand by, glory, our perfected manhood. When God made Adam, he was a far superior being to any of us. Mans place in creation was very remarkable. The Psalmist says, For You have made him a little lower than the angels and have crowned him with glory and honor. You made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yes, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatever passes through the paths of the seas. No king among men in these days could rival Adam in the Garden of Edenhe was, indeed, monarch of all that he surveyed, and from the lordly lion down to the tiniest insect of all, living creatures paid him

willing homage. Can we ever rise to this last honor?

Brothers and Sisters, listenIt does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when Christ shall appear we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is. Is there any limit to the growth of the mind of a man? Can we tell what he may reach? We read of Solomon that God gave him largeness of heart as the sand of the sea! God will give to His people glory that will include in it more largeness of heart than Solomon ever knew! Then shall we know even as we are known by God. Now we see, but it is, through a glass darkly. But then we shall see face to face. You have met with men of great intellect and you have looked up to them, but assuredly, the smallest babe in Christ, when he shall reach Heaven, shall have a greater intellect than the most profound philosopher who has ever astounded mankind by his discoveries!

We shall not always be as we are today, contracted and hampered because of our little knowledge, our slender faculties and our dull perceptions. Our ignorance and prejudice shall vanish. What a man will become we can scarcely tell when he is remade in the image of God, and made like unto our Divine Lord who is, the firstborn among many brethren. Here we are but in the embryo stageour minds are but the seeds, or the bulbs out of which shall come the flower and glory of a nobler manhood! Your body is to be developed into something infinitely brighter and better than the bodies of men here below. And as for the soul, we cannot guess to what an elevation it shall be raised in Christ Jesus. There is room for the largest expectation, here, as we conjecture what will be the full accomplishment of the vast intent of eternal lovean intent which has involved the sacrifice of the Only-Begotten Son of God! That can be no mean design which has been carried on at the expense of the best that Heaven, itself, possessed!

Further, by glory and, coming to glory, I think we must understand complete victory. Dwelling in the age of the Romans, men said to themselves, as they read the Scriptures, What does the Apostle mean by glory? And they could scarcely help connecting it with conquest and the return of the warrior in triumph. Men called it, glory, in those days when valiant warriors returned from fields of blood with captives and spoil. Then did the heroes ride through the streets of Rome, enjoying a triumph voted them by the senate. Then, for a while, the men of war were covered with glory and all the city was glorious because of them.

As Christians, we hate the word, glory, when it is linked with wholesale murder and symbolized in garments rolled in blood. But yet there is a kind of fighting to which you and I are called, for we are soldiers of the Cross and if we fight valiantly under our great Captain, and rout every sin, and are found faithful even unto deaththen we shall enter glory and receive the honor which belongs to men who have fought a good fight, and have kept the faith. It will be no small glory to obtain the crown of life which fades not away. Is not this a full glory if we only place these three things together, a purified character, a perfected nature and a complete victory?

An invaluable ingredient in true glory is the Divine approval. Glory among men means approbationit is a mans glory when he is honored by his Queen and she hangs a medal on his breastor when his name is mentioned in the high court of Parliament and he is ennobled for what he has done. If men speak of our actions with approval, it is called fame and glory. Oh, but one drop of the approbation of God has more glory in it than a sea full of human praise! And the Lord will reward His own with this holy favor. He will say, Well done, good and faithful servant, and Christ, before the universe, will say, Come, you blessed of My Father. Oh, what glory that will be! They were despised and rejected of men; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; destitute, afflicted, tormentedbut now God approves them and they take seats among the peers of Heaven, made noble by the approbation of the Judge of All!

This is glory with an emphasis, substantial glory! One approving glance from the eyes of Jesus; one accepting word from the mouth of the Father will be glory enough for any one of usand this we shall have if we follow the Lamb wherever He goes! But this is not allchildren of God will have the glory of reflecting the glory of God. When any of Gods unfallen creatures shall wish to see the greatness of Gods goodness, mercy and love, they that dwell in Heaven will point out a glorified saint. Whenever any spirit from a far off regions desires to know what is meant by faithfulness and Grace, some angel will reply, Go and talk with those who have been redeemed from among men.

I believe that you and I will spend much of eternity in making known to principalities and powers the unsearchable riches of the Grace of God. We shall be mirrors reflecting God and in us shall His Glory be revealed. There may be myriads of races of pure and holy beings of whom we have never heard of as yet, and these may come to the New Jerusalem as to the great metropolis of Jehovahs universeand when they come, there they will gaze upon the saints as the highest instances of Divine Grace, wisdom, power and love. It will be their highest pleasure to hear how eternal mercy dealt with us unworthy ones. How we shall delight to rehearse to them the fact of the Fathers eternal purpose, the story of the Incarnate Godthe God that loved and died and the love of the blessed Spirit who sought us in the days of our sin, and brought us to the foot of the Cross, renewing us in the spirit of our minds and making us to be sons of God!

Oh, Brothers and Sisters, this shall be our glory, that God shall shine through us to the astonishment of all! Yet I think glory includes somewhat more than this. In certain cases, a mans glory lies in his relationships. If any of the royal family should come to your houses, you would receive them with respect. Yes, and even as they went along the street they would be spied out, and passers-by would say, That is the prince! And they would honor the son of our good Queen. But royal descent is a poor business compared with being allied to the King of kings! Many angels are exceedingly bright, but they are only servants to wait upon the sons. I believe that there will be a kind of awe upon the angels at the sight of men when they see us in our glory, they will rejoice to know our near relation to their Lordand to fulfill their own destiny as ministering spirits appointed to minister to the heirs of salvation.

No pride will be possible to the perfected, but we shall then realize the exalted position to which, by our new birth, and the Divine adoption we have been raised. Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. Sons of God! Sons of the Lord God Almighty! Oh what glory this will be! Then there will be connected with this the fact that we shall be connected with Jesus in everything. For do not you see, Brothers and Sisters, it was because of our fall that Christ came here to save men? When He worked out a perfect righteousness, it was all for us. When He died, it was all for us. And when He rose again, it was all for us!

And what is more, we lived in Christ, we died in Him, we were buried in Him and rose in Himand we shall ascend into Heaven to reign with Him! All our glory is by Christ Jesus and in all the glory of Christ Jesus we have a share. We are members of His body. We are one with Him. I say the creatures that God has made, when they shall come to worship in the New Jerusalem, will stand and gaze at glorified men and with bated breath will say one, to another These are the beings whose nature the Son of God assumed! These are the chosen creatures whom the Prince of Heaven bought with His own blood. They will stand astonished at the Divine Glory which will be manifested in beings emancipated from sin and Hell and made heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ!

Will not even angels be surprised and awed as they look on the Church and say to one another, This is the bride, the Lambs wife! They will marvel how the Lord of Glory should come to this poor earth to seek a spouse and that He should enter into eternal union with such a people! Glory, glory dwells in Immanuels land! Now we are getting near to the center of it. I feel inclined, like Moses, to take off my shoes, for the place where we stand is holy ground, now that we are getting to see poor bushes like ourselves aglow with the indwelling God and changed from glory unto glory! And yet this is not all, for there in Heaven we shall dwell in the immediate Presence of God. We shall dwell with Him in nearest and dearest fellowship! All the felicity of the Most High will be our felicity. The blessedness of the Triune Jehovah shall be our blessedness forever and ever.

Did you notice that our text says, He has called us unto His glory? This outshines everythingthe glory which the saints will have is the same glory which God possesses and such as He, alone, can bestow! Listen to this textWhom He justified them He also glorified. He glorifies them! I know what it is to glorify God, and so do you, but when we poor creatures glorify God it is in a poor way, for we cannot add anything to Him. But what must it be for God, Himself, to glorify a man! The glory which you are to have forever, my dear believing Brothers and Sisters, is a glory which God Himself will put upon you!

Peter, as a Hebrew, perhaps uses a Hebraism when he says, His glory. It may be that he means the best of glory that can be, even as the Jews were apt to sayThe trees of Godwhen they meant the greatest trees, or, the mountains of God, when they intended the highest mountains. So, by the glory of God, Peter may mean the richest, fullest glory that can be. In the original, the word, glory, has about it the idea of, weight, at which the Apostle Paul hints when he speaks of a weight of glory. This is the only glory that has weight in it, all else is light as a feather. Take all the glories of this world and they are outweighed by the small dust of the balance. Place them here in the hollow of my hand, all of thema child may blow them away as thistledown!

Gods glory has weight! It is solid, true, realand he that gets it possesses no mere name, or dream, or tinselhe has that which will abide the rust of ages and the fire of judgment. The glory of God! How shall I describe it? I must set before you a strange Scriptural picture. Mordecai must be made glorious for his fidelity to his king and singular is the honor which his monarch ordains for him. This was the royal order. Let the royal apparel be brought which the king uses to wear, and the horse that the king rides upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head: and let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the kings most noble princes, that they may array the man with whom the king delights to honor, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor.

Can you not imagine the surprise of the Jew when robe and ring were put upon him, and when he found himself placed upon the kings horse? This may serve as a figure of that which will happen to uswe shall be glorified with the Glory of God! The best robe, the best of Heavens array shall be appointed unto us and we shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever! Highest of all our glory will be the enjoyment of God Himself. He will be our exceeding joythis bliss will swallow up every otherthe blessedness of God. The Lord is my portion, says my soul. Whom have I in Heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside You. Our God shall be our glory! Yet bear with me, I have left out a word againthe text has it, Unto His eternal glory. Yes, but that is the gem of the ring. The glory which God has in reserve for His chosen will never come to an endit will stay with us and we shall stay with it forever!

It will always be glory, too. Its brightness will never become dim. We shall never be tired of it, or sated with it. After ten thousand thousand millions of years in Heaven, our happiness shall be as fresh as when it first began! Those are no fading laurels which surround immortal brows. Eternal glory knows no diminution. Can you imagine a man being born at the same time that Adam was created and living all these thousands of years as a king like Solomon, having all he could desire? His would seem to be a glorious life. But, if at the end of 7,000 years that man must necessarily die, what has it profited him? His glory is all over, nowits fires have died out in ashes.

But you and I, when we once enter Glory, shall receive what we can neither lose nor leave. Eternity! Eternity! This is the sweetness of all our future bliss! Rejoice, you saintly ones! Take your harps down from the willows, any of you who are mourningand if you never sang before, yet sing this morning, God has called us unto His eternal glory, and this is to be our portion world without end!

III. I can only find time for a few words upon the concluding head, which isWHAT INFLUENCE SHOULD ALL THIS HAVE UPON OUR HEARTS? I think, first, it ought to excite desire in many here present that they might attain unto glory by Christ Jesus. Satan, when he took our blessed Lord to the top of an exceedingly high mountain, tempted Him to worship him by offering Him the kingdoms of the world and all the glories thereof. Satan is very clever and I will, at this time, take a leaf out of his book. Will you not fall down and worship the Lord Jesus when He can give you the Kingdom of God and all the glory thereof, and all this, not in pretense, but in reality?

If there was any force in the temptation to worship Satan for the sake of the glory of this world, how much more reason is there for urging you to worship the Son of God that you may obtain His salvation with eternal glory! I pray the Holy Spirit to drop a hot desire into many a poor sinners breast, this morning, that he may cry, If this glory is to be had, I will have it, and I will have it in Gods way, for I will believe in Jesus! I will repent, I will come to God and so obtain His promise.

Secondly, this ought to move us to the feeling of fear. If there is such a glory as this, let us tremble lest by any means we should come short of it! Oh, my dear Hearersespecially you that are my fellow members, brother Church officers and workers associated with mewhat a dreadful thing it will be if any one of us should come short of this glory! Oh, if there were no Hell, it would be Hell enough to miss Heaven! What if there were no Pit that is bottomless, nor undying worm, nor unquenchable fire? It would be boundless misery to have a shadow of a fear of not reaching to Gods eternal glory! Let us, therefore, pass the time of our sojourning here in fear, and let us watch unto prayer and strive to enter in at the strait gate. God grant we may be found of Him, at last, to praise and honor!

If we are right, how this ought to move us to gratitude! Think of this we are to enjoy His eternal glory! What a contrast to our deserts! Shame and everlasting contempt are our righteous due apart from Christ. If we were to receive according to our merits, we should be driven from His Presence and from the glory of His power. Verily, He has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities, for, after all our transgressions, He has still reserved us for glory, and reserved Glory for us! What love and zeal should burn in our bosoms because of this!

Last of all, it should move us to a dauntless courage. If this glory is to be had, do we not feel like the heroes in Bunyans picture? Before the dreamer there stood a fair palace and he saw persons walking upon the top of it, clad in light, and singing. Around the door stood armed men to keep back those who would enter. Then a brave man came up to one who had a writers inkhorn by his side and said, Set down my name. And straightway the warrior drew his sword and fought with all his might until he had cut his way to the door. And then he entered and they within were heard to sing

*Come in, come in,   
Eternal glory you shall win.*

Will you not draw your swords this morning and fight against sin till you have overcome it? Do you not desire to win Christ and to be found in Him? Oh, let us now begin to feel a passion for eternal glory and then, in the strength of the Spirit, and in the name of Jesus, let us press forward till we reach it! Even on earth we may taste enough of this glory to fill us with delight!

The glory which I have described to you dawns on earth though it only comes to its noontide in Heaventhe glory of sanctified character, the glory of victory over sin, the glory of relationship to God, the glory of union with Christthese are all to be tasted in a measure here below. These glories send their beams down even to these valleys and lowlands. Oh, to enjoy them, today, and thus to have earnests and foretastes of Glory! If we have them, let us go singing on until we reach the place where Gods eternal glory shall surround us. Amen.

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A NEW YEARS BENEDICTION   
NO. 292

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 1, 1860, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

But the God of all grace, who has called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. 1 Peter 5:10.

THE Apostle Peter turns from exhortation to prayer. He knew that if praying is the end of preaching in the hearer, preaching should always be accompanied by prayer in the minister. Having exhorted Believers to walk steadfastly, he bends his knee and commends them to the guardian care of Heaven, imploring upon them one of the largest blessings for which the most affectionate heart ever made supplication. The minister of Christ is intended to execute two offices for the people of his charge. He is to speak for God to them and for them to God. The pastor has not fulfilled the whole of his sacred commission when he has declared the whole counsel of God. He has then done but half.

The other part is that which is to be performed in secret, when he carries upon his breast, like the priest of old, the wants, the sins, the trials of his people and pleads with God for them. The daily duty of the Christian pastor is as much to pray for his people, as to exhort, instruct and console. There are, however, special seasons when the minister of Christ finds himself constrained to pronounce an unusual benediction over his people. When one year of trial has gone and another year of mercy has commenced, we may be allowed to express our sincere congratulations that God has spared us and our earnest invocations of a thousand blessings upon the heads of those whom God has committed to our pastoral charge.

I have this morning taken this text as a new years blessing. You are aware that a minister of the Church of England always supplies me with the motto for the new year. He prays much before he selects the text and I know that it is his prayer for you all today. He constantly favors me with this motto and I always think it my duty to preach from it and then desire my people to remember it through the year as a staff of support in their time of trouble, as some sweet morsel, a wafer made with honey, a portion of angels food, which they may roll under their tongue and carry in their memory till the year ends and then begin with another sweet text. What larger benediction could my aged friend have chosen, standing as he is today in his pulpit and lifting up holy hands to preach to the people in a quiet village Churchwhat larger blessing could he implore for the thousands of Israel than that which in His name I pronounce upon you this dayBut the God of all grace, who has called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish,

strengthen, and settle you.   
In discoursing upon this text, I shall have to remarkfirst, what the

Apostle asks of Heaven. And then, secondly, why he expects to receive it.   
The reason of his expecting to be answered is contained in the title by   
which he addresses the Lord his GodThe GOD OF ALL GRACE who has   
called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus.  
I. First, then, WHAT THE APOSTLE ASKS FOR ALL TO WHOM THIS   
EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN.  
He asks for them four sparkling jewels set in a black foil. The four   
jewels are thesePerfection, Establishment, Strengthening, Settling. The   
jet-black setting is thisAfter you have suffered awhile. Worldly  
compliments are of little worth. For as Chesterfield observes, They cost   
nothing but ink and paper. I must confess, I think even that little   
expense is often thrown away. Worldly compliments generally omit all idea   
of sorrow. A merry Christmas! A happy new year! There is no   
supposition of anything like suffering. But Christian benedictions look at  
the truth of matters.   
We know that men must suffer, we believe that men are born to sorrow  
as the spark flies upwards. And therefore in our benediction we include  
the sorrow. No, more than that, we believe that the sorrow shall assist in  
working out the blessing which we invoke upon your heads. We, in the   
language of Peter, say, After you have suffered a while, may the God of all   
grace make you perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.   
Understand, then, as I take each of these four jewels, that you are to look   
upon them and consider that they are only desired for you After you have   
suffered awhile. We must not discard the sufferings. We must take them   
from the same hand from which we receive the mercy. And the blessing  
bears date, After you have suffered a while.   
1. Now the first sparkling jewel in this ring is perfection. The Apostle   
prays that God would make us perfect. Indeed, though this is a large  
prayer and the jewel is a diamond of the first water and of the finest size,   
yet is it absolutely necessary to a Christian that he should ultimately   
arrive at perfection. Have you ever on your bed dreamed a dream, when  
your thoughts roamed at large and the bit was taken from the lip of your   
imagination, when stretching all your wings, your soul floated through the   
infinite, grouping strange and marvelous things together, so that the   
dream rolled on in something like supernatural splendor? But on a  
sudden you were awakened and you have regretted hours afterwards that   
the dream was never concluded.   
And what is a Christian, if he does not arrive at perfection, but an  
unfinished dream? A majestic dream it is true, full of things that earth  
had never known if it had not been that they were revealed to flesh and  
blood by the Spirit. But suppose the voice of sin should startle us before   
that dream is concluded and if as when one awakes, we should despise   
the image which began to be formed in our mindswhat were we then?   
Everlasting regrets, a multiplication of eternal torment must be the result   
of our having begun to be Christians, if we do not arrive at perfection. If there could be such a thing as a man in whom sanctification began but in whom God the Spirit ceased to workif there could be a being so unhappy as to be called by grace and to be deserted before he was perfectedthere would not be among the damned in Hell a more unhappy   
wretch.   
It were no blessing for God to begin to bless if He did not perfect. It   
were the grandest curse which Omnipotent hatred itself could pronounce,   
to give a man grace at all, if that grace did not carry him to the end and   
land him safely in Heaven. I must confess that I would rather endure the   
pangs of that dread archangel, Satan, throughout eternity, than have to  
suffer as one whom God once loved, but whom He cast away. But such a  
thing shall never be. Whom once He has chosen He does not reject. We   
know that where He has begun a good work He will carry it on and He will  
complete it until the day of Christ. Grand is the prayer, then, when the   
Apostle asks that we may be perfected. What were a Christian if he were   
not perfected?   
Have you ever seen a canvas upon which the hand of the painter has   
sketched with daring pencil some marvelous scene of grandeur? You see   
where the living color has been laid on with an almost superhuman skill.   
But the artist was suddenly struck dead and the hand that worked  
miracles of art was palsied and the pencil dropped. Is it not a source of   
regret to the world that ever the painting was commenced, since it was   
never finished? Have you ever seen the human face Divine starting out   
from the chiseled marble? You have seen the exquisite skill of the sculptor   
and you have said within yourself, What a marvelous thing this will be!   
What a matchless specimen of human skill!   
But, alas, it never was completed, but was left unfinished. And do you   
imagine, any of you, that God will begin to sculpture out a perfect being  
and not complete it? Do you think that the hand of Divine wisdom will   
sketch the Christian and not fill up the details? Has God taken us as   
unhewn stones out of the quarry and has He begun to work upon us and   
show His Divine art, His marvelous wisdom and grace and will He   
afterwards cast us away? Shall God fail? Shall He leave His works   
imperfect? Point, if you can, my Hearers, to a world which God has cast   
away unfinished. Is there one speck in His creation where God has begun   
to build but was not able to complete? Has He made a single angel  
deficient? Is there one creature over which it cannot be said, This is very  
good?   
And shall it be said over the creature twice madethe chosen of God,  
the blood-boughtshall it be said, The Spirit began to work in this mans  
heart, but the man was mightier than the Spirit and sin conquered grace.   
God was put to rout and Satan triumphed and the man was never   
perfected? Oh, my dear Brothers and Sisters, the prayer shall be fulfilled.  
After you have suffered a while, God shall make you perfect, if he has  
begun the good work in you.   
But, Beloved, it must be After you have suffered awhile. You cannot be   
perfected except by the fire. There is no way of ridding you of your dross  
and your tin but by the names of the furnace of affliction. Your folly is so bound up in your hearts, you children of God, that nothing but the rod can bring it out of you. It is through the blueness of your wounds that your heart is made better. You must pass through tribulation, that through the Spirit it may act as a refining fire to you. That pure, holy, purged and washed, you may stand before the face of your God, rid of   
every imperfection and delivered from every corruption within. 2. Let us now proceed to the second blessing of the benediction  
establishment. It is not enough even if the Christian had received in   
himself a proportional perfection, if he were not established. You have   
seen the arch of Heaven as it spans the plain. Glorious are its colors and   
rare its hues. Though we have seen it many and many a time, it never   
ceases to be A thing of beauty and a joy forever. But alas for the   
rainbow, it is not established. It passes away and lo it is not. The fair   
colors give way to the fleecy clouds and the sky is no longer brilliant with   
the tints of Heaven. It is not established. How can it be? A thing that is   
made of transitory sunbeams and passing rain-drops, how can it abide?  
And mark, the more beautiful the vision, the more sorrowful the reflection   
when that vision vanishes and there is nothing left but darkness. It is,   
then, a very necessary wish for the Christian, that he should be  
established.   
Of all Gods known conceptions, next to His incarnate Son, I do not  
hesitate to pronounce a Christian man the noblest conception of God. But   
if this conception is to be but as the rainbow painted on the cloud and is  
to pass away foreverwoe was the day that ever our eyes were tantalized   
with a sublime conception that is so soon to melt away. What is a   
Christian man better than the flower of the field, which is here today and   
which withers when the sun is risen with fervent heat, unless God   
establish himwhat is the difference between the heir of Heaven, the   
blood-bought child of God and the grass of the field?   
Oh, may God fulfill to you this rich benediction, that you may not be as   
the smoke out of a chimney, which is blown away by the windthat your   
goodness may not be as the morning cloud and as the early dew which   
passes away. But may you be established, may every good thing that you   
have be an abiding thing. May your character be not a writing upon the   
sand, but an inscription upon the rock. May your faith be no baseless   
fabric of a vision, but may it be built of stone that shall endure that awful   
fire which shall consume the wood, hay and stubble of the hypocrite. May   
you be rooted and grounded in love. May your conviction be deep. May  
your love be real. May your desires be earnest. May your whole life be so  
settled, fixed and established, that all the blasts of Hell and all the storms   
of earth shall never be able to remove you.   
You know we talk about some Christian men as being old established   
Christians. I do fear there are a great many that are old, who are not  
established. It is one thing to have the hair whitened with years, but I fear   
it is another thing for us to obtain wisdom. There are some who grow no  
wiser by all their experience. Though their fingers are well rapped by  
experience, yet have they not learned in that school. I know there are   
many aged Christians who can say of themselves and say it sorrowfully too, they wish they had their opportunities over again, that they might learn more and might be more established. We have heard them sing *I find myself a learner yet,   
Unskillful, weak and apt to slide.*   
The benediction however of the Apostle is one which I pray may be  
fulfilled in us whether we are young or oldbut especially in those of you   
who have long known your Lord and Savior. You ought not now to be the  
subject of those doubts which vex the babe in grace. Those first principles

should not always be laid again by youbut you should be going forward   
to something higher. You are getting near to Heaven. Oh, how is it that   
you have not got to the land Beulah yet? To that land which flows with   
milk and honey? Though they have been whitened with the sunlight of   
Heaven, how is it that some of the sunlight does not gleam from your  
eyes?   
We who are young look up to you old established Christians. And if we  
see you doubting and hear you speaking with a trembling lip then we are   
exceedingly cast down. We pray for our sakes as well as for yours, that   
this blessing may be fulfilled in you, that you may be established. That   
you may no longer be exercised with doubt. That you may know your  
interest in Christ. That you may feel you are secure in Him. That resting   
upon the Rock of Ages you may know that you cannot perish while your   
feet are fixed there. We do pray, in fact, for all, of whatever age, that our  
hope may be fixed upon nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness   
and that it may be so firmly fixed that it may never shake. That we may be   
as Mount Zion, which can never be removed and which abides forever. Thus have I remarked upon the second blessing of this benediction.  
But mark, we cannot have it until after we have suffered a while. We   
cannot be established except by suffering. It is of no use our hoping that   
we shall be well-rooted if no March winds have passed over us. The young  
oak cannot be expected to strike its roots so deep as the old one. Those  
old gnarlings on the roots and those strange twisting of the branches, all  
tell of many storms that have swept over the aged tree. But they are also  
indicators of the depths into which the roots have dived. And they tell the   
woodman that he might as soon expect to rend up a mountain as to tear   
up that oak by the roots. We must suffer a while, then shall we be   
established.   
3. Now for the third blessing, which is strengthening. Ah, Brethren,   
this is a very necessary blessing, too, for all Christians. There are some   
whose characters seem to be fixed and established. But still they lack   
force and vigor. Shall I give you a picture of a Christian without strength?   
There he is. He has espoused the cause of King Jesus. He has put on his   
armor. He has enlisted in the heavenly host. Do you observe him? He is   
perfectly covered from head to foot and he carries with him the shield of   
faith. Do you notice, too, how firmly he is established? He keeps his   
ground and he will not be removed.   
But notice him. When he uses his sword it falls with feeble force. His   
shield, though he grasps it as firmly as his weakness will allow him,   
trembles in his grasp. There he stands, he will not move, but still how tottering is his position. His knees knock together with fright when he hears the sound and the noise of war and tumult. What does this man need? His will is right, his intention is right and his heart is fully set upon good things. What does he need? Why he needs strength! The poor man is weak and childlike. Either because he has been fed on unsavory and unsubstantial meator because of some sin which has straitened him he has not that force and strength which ought to dwell in the Christian   
man.   
But once let the prayer of Peter be fulfilled to him and how strong the  
Christian becomes! There is not in all the world a creature so strong as a   
Christian when God is with him. Talk of Behemoth! He is but as a little   
thing. His might is weakness when matched with the Believer. Talk of  
Leviathan that makes the deep to be hoary! He is not the chief of the ways   
of God. The true Believer is mightier far than even he. Have you ever seen   
the Christian when God is with him? He smells the battle afar off and he  
cries in the midst of the tumult, Aha! Aha! Aha! He laughs at all the   
hosts of his enemies. Or if you compare him to the Leviathanif he is cast   
into a sea of trouble, he lashes about him and makes the deep hoary with   
benedictions. He is not overwhelmed by the depths, nor is he afraid of the   
rocks.   
He has the protection of God about him and the floods cannot drown  
him. No, they become an element of delight to him, while by the grace of  
God he rejoices in the midst of the billows. If you want a proof of the   
strength of a Christian you have only to turn to history. There you can see   
there how Believers have quenched the violence of fire, have shut the   
mouths of lions, have shaken their fists in the face of grim death, have   
laughed tyrants to scorn and have put to flight the armies of aliens, by the   
all-mastering power of faith in God. I pray God, my Brethren, that He may  
strengthen you this year.   
The Christians of this age are very feeble things. It is a remarkable  
thing that the great mass of children nowadays are born feeble. You ask   
me for the evidence of it. I can supply it very readily. You are aware that in   
the Church of England Liturgy it is ordered and ordained that all children  
should be immersed in Baptism except those that are certified to be of a   
weakly state. Now, it were uncharitable to imagine that persons would be  
guilty of falsehood when they come up to what they think to be a sacred   
ordinance. And, therefore, as nearly all children are now sprinkled and   
not immersed, I suppose they are born feeble. Whether that accounts for   
the fact that all Christians are so feeble I will not undertake to say, but   
certain it is that we have not many gigantic Christians nowadays. Here and there we hear of one who seems to work all but miracles in  
these modern times and we are astonished. Oh that you had faith like   
these men! I do not think there is much more piety in England now than  
there used to be in the days of the Puritans. I believe there are far more   
pious men. But while the quantity has been multiplied, I fear the quality  
has been depreciated. In those days the stream of grace ran very deep   
indeed. Some of those old Puritans, when we read of their devotion and of the hours they spent in prayer, seem to have as much grace as any  
hundred of us. The stream ran deep.   
But nowadays the banks are broken down and great meadows have   
been flooded therewith. So far so good. But while the surface has been  
enlarged I fear the depth has been frightfully diminished. And this may  
account for it, that while our piety has become shallow our strength has   
become weak. Oh, may God strengthen you this year! But remember, if He  
does do so, you will then have to suffer. After you have suffered a while,   
may He strengthen you. There is sometimes an operation performed upon   
horses which one must consider to be cruelthe firing of them to make   
their tendons strong. Now, every Christian man before he can be   
strengthened must be fired. He must have his nerves and tendons braced   
up with the hot iron of affliction. He will never become strong in grace,  
unless it is after he has suffered a while.   
4. And now I come to the last blessing of the fourSettling. I will not  
say that this last blessing is greater than the other three, but it is a   
stepping-stone to each. And strange to say, if is often the result of a   
gradual attainment of the three preceding ones. Settle you! Oh, how   
many there are that are never settled. The tree which should be  
transplanted every week would soon die. No, if it were moved, no matter   
how skillfully, once every year, no gardener would expect fruit from it.   
How many Christians there be that are transplanting themselves   
constantly, even as to their doctrinal sentiments. There be some who   
generally believe according to the last speaker. And there are others who   
do not know what they believe, but they believe almost anything that is   
told them.   
The spirit of Christian charity, so much cultivated in these days and   
which we all love so much, has, I fear, assisted in bringing into the world   
a species of latitudinarianism. In other words, men have come to believe   
that it does not matter what they believe. Although one minister says it is   
so and the other says it is not sowe are both right. Though we   
contradict each other flatly, yet we are both correct. I know not where men  
have had their judgments manufactured, but to my mind it always seems   
impossible to believe a contradiction. I can never understand how   
contrary sentiments can both of them be in accordance with the Word of  
God, which is the standard of truth.   
But yet there are some who are like the weathercock upon the Church  
steeple, they will turn just as the wind blows. As good Mr. Whitfield said,  
You might as well measure the moon for a suit of clothes as tell their   
doctrinal sentiments, for they are always shifting and ever changing. Now  
I pray that this may be taken away from any of you, if this is your  
weakness and that you may be settled. Far from us be bigotry removed.   
Yet would I have the Christian know what he believes to be true and then   
stand to it. Take your time in weighing the controversy, but when you  
have once decided, be not easily moved. Let God be true though every  
man be a liar and stand to itthat what is according to Gods Word one   
day cannot be contrary to it another day. That what was true in Luthers   
day and Calvins day must be true now.   
Falsehoods may shift, for they have a Protean shape. But the Truth of God is one and indivisible and evermore the same. Let others think as they please. Allow the greatest latitude to others, but to yourself allow none. Stand firm and steadfast by that which you have been taught and ever seek the spirit of the Apostle Paul, If any man preach any other Gospel than that which we have received, let him be accursed. If, however, I wished you to be firm in your doctrines, my prayer would be that you may be especially settled in your faith. You believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God and you rest in Him. But sometimes your faith wavers, then you lose your joy and comfort. I pray that your faith may become so settled that it may never be a matter of question with you, whether Christ is yours or notthat you may say confidently, I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that

which I have committed to Him.   
Then I pray that you may be settled in your aims and designs. There   
are many Christian people who get a good idea into their heads, but they   
never carry it out, because they ask some friend what he thinks of it. Not  
much, says he. Of course he does not. Whoever did think much of  
anybody elses idea? And at once the person who conceived it gives it up   
and the work is never accomplished. How many a man in his ministry has   
begun to preach the Gospel and he has allowed some member of the   
Church, some deacon possibly, to pull him by one ear and he has gone a   
little that way. By-and-by, some other Brother has thought fit to pull him   
in the other direction. The man has lost his manliness. He has never been  
settled as to what he ought to do. And now he becomes a mere lackey,  
waiting upon everybodys opinion, willing to adopt whatever anybody else   
conceives to be right.   
Now I pray you be settled in your aims. See what niche it is that God   
would have you occupy. Stand in it and dont leave it regardless of all the   
laughter that comes upon you. If you believe God has called you to a  
work, do it. If men will help you, thank them. If they will not, tell them to   
stand out of your road or be run over. Let nothing daunt you. He who will   
serve his God must expect sometimes to serve him alone. Not always shall  
we fight in the ranks. There are times when the Lords David must fight  
Goliath singly and must take with him three stones out of the brook amid  
the laughter of his Brethren. But still in his weapons is he confident of  
victory through faith in God. Be not moved from the work to which God   
has put you. Be not weary in well-doing, for in due season you shall reap   
if you faint not. Be you settled. Oh, may God fulfill this rich blessing to   
you.   
But you will not be settled unless you suffer. You will become settled in   
your faith and settled in your aims by suffering. Men are soft molluscous   
animals in these days. We have not the tough men that know they are  
right and stand to it. Even when a man is wrong, one admires his   
conscientiousness when he stands up believing that he is right and dares   
to face the frowns of the world. But when a man is right, the worst thing   
he can have is inconstancy, vacillation, the fear of men. Hurl it from you,  
O knight of the holy Cross, and be firm if you would be victorious. FaintHeart never stormed a city yet and you will never win nor be crowned   
with honor if your heart is not steeled against every assault and if you are   
not settled in your intention to honor your Master and to win the crown.  
Thus have I run through the benediction.   
II. I come now, asking your attention for a few minutes more, to   
observe THE REASONS WHY THE APOSTLE PETER EXPECTED THAT   
HIS PRAYER WOULD BE HEARD.   
He asked that they might be made perfect, established, strengthened,   
settled. Did not Unbelief whisper in Peters ear, Peter, you ask too much.   
You were always headstrong. You did say Bid me come upon the water.   
Surely, this is another instance of your presumption. If you had said,  
Lord, make them holy, had it not been a sufficient prayer? Have you not  
asked too much? No, says Peter. And he replies to Unbelief, I am sure I   
shall receive what I have asked for. For I am in the first place asking it of  
the God of all gracethe God of all grace.   
Not the God of the little graces we have received already, but the God of   
the great boundless grace which is stored up for us in the promisewhich  
as yet we have not received in our experience. The God of all grace. Of  
quickening grace, of convincing grace, of pardoning grace, of believing  
gracethe God of comforting, supporting, sustaining grace. Surely, when   
we come to Him we cannot come for too much. If He is the God, not of one  
grace, or of two graces, but of ALL gracesif in Him there is stored up an  
infinite, boundless, limitless supply, how can we ask too much, even  
though we ask that we may be perfect? Believer, when you are on your  
knees, remember you are going to a king. Let your petitions be large.   
Imitate the example of Alexanders courtier, who when he was told he   
might have whatever he chose to ask as a reward for his valor, asked a   
sum of money so large that Alexanders treasurer refused to pay it until he   
had first seen the monarch.   
When he saw the monarch, he smiled and said, It is true, it is much   
for him to ask, but it is not much for Alexander to give. I admire him for   
his faith in me. Let him have all he asks for. And dare I ask that I may be   
perfect, that my angry temper may be taken away, my stubbornness   
removed, my imperfections covered? May I ask that I may be like Adam in  
the gardenno, moreas pure and perfect as God Himself? May I ask   
that one day I may tread the golden streets and, With my Saviors   
garments on, holy as the Holy One, stand in the mid-blaze of Gods glory  
and cry, Who shall lay anything to the charge of Gods elect? Yes, I may  
ask it. And I shall have it, for He is the God of all grace.   
Look again at the text and you see another reason why Peter expected  
that his prayer would be heardThe God of all grace who has called us.   
Unbelief might have said to Peter, Ah, Peter, it is true that God is the God   
of all grace, but He is as a fountain shut up, as waters sealed. Ah, says   
Peter, get you hence Satan, you savor not the things that be of God. It is  
not a sealed fountain of all grace, for it has begun to flow. The God of all   
grace has called us. Calling is the first drop of mercy that trickles into the   
thirsty lip of the dying man. Calling is the first golden link of the endless   
chain of eternal mercies. Not the first in order of time with God, but the first in order of time with us. The first thing we know of Christ in His mercy, is that he cries, Come unto Me all you that are weary and heavy laden. And that by His sweet Spirit He addresses us, so that we obey the   
call and come to Him.   
Now, mark, if God has called me, I may ask Him to establish and keep   
me. I may ask that as year rolls after year my piety may not die out. I may  
pray that the bush may burn, but not be consumedthat the barrel of   
meal may not waste and the cruse of oil may not fail. Dare I ask that to   
lifes latest hour I may be faithful to God, because God is faithful to me?  
Yes, I may ask it and I shall have it, toobecause the God that calls, will  
give the rest. For whom He did foreknow, them He did predestinate. And   
whom He did predestinate, them He also called. And whom He called He  
also justified. And whom He justified, them He also glorified. Think of  
your calling, Christian, and take courage, For the gifts and calling of God   
are without repentance. If He has called you He will never repent of what  
He has done, nor cease to bless or cease to save.   
But I think there is yet a stronger reasonThe God of all grace, who   
has called us unto His eternal glory. Has God called you, my Hearer? Do   
you know to what He has called you? He called you first into the house of   
conviction, where He made you feel your sin. Again, He called you to  
Calvarys summit, where you did see your sin atoned for and your pardon   
sealed with precious blood. And now He calls you. And to where? I hear a   
voice todayUnbelief tells me that there is a voice calling me to Jordans   
waves. Oh, Unbelief! It is true that through the stormy billows of that sea   
my soul must wade. But the voice comes not from the depths of the grave,  
it comes from the eternal glory. There where Jehovah sits resplendent on  
His Throne, surrounded by cherubim and seraphim, from that brightness   
into which angels dare not gaze, I hear a voiceCome unto Me, you   
blood-washed sinner, come unto My eternal glory.   
O Heavens! Is not this a wondrous call?To be called to Glory? Called   
to the shining streets and pearly gates? Called to the harps and to the   
songs of eternal happiness? And better still, called to Jesus bosom  
called to His Fathers facecalled, not to eternal glory, but to HIS eternal  
glorycalled to that very glory and honor with which God invests Himself  
forever? And now, Beloved, is any prayer too great after this? Has God  
called me to Heaven and is there anything on earth He will deny me? If He  
has called me to dwell in Heavenis not perfection necessary for me? May  
I not therefore ask for it? If He has called me to Glory, is it not necessary  
that I should be strengthened to fight my way there? May I not ask for   
strengthening? If there is a mercy upon earth too great for me to think of,   
too large for me to conceive, too heavy for my language to carry it before   
the Throne in prayerHe will do for me exceeding abundantly above what  
I can ask, or even I can think. I know He will, because He has called me to  
His eternal glory.   
The last reason why the Apostle expected that his benediction would be   
fulfilled was thisWho has called us to His eternal glory by Christ   
Jesus. It is a singular fact that no promise is ever so sweet to the Believer  
as those in which the name of Christ is mentioned. If I have to preach a comforting sermon to desponding Christians, I would never select a text which did not enable me to lead the desponding one to the Cross. Does it not seem too much to you, Brothers and Sisters, this morning, that the God of all grace should be your God? Does it not surpass your faith that He should actually have called you? Do you not sometimes doubt as to whether you were called at all? And when you think of eternal glory, does not the question arise, Shall I ever enjoy it? Shall I ever see the face of   
God with acceptance?   
Oh, Beloved, when you hear of Christ, when you know that this grace   
comes through Christ and the calling through Christ and the glory   
through Christ, then you say, Lord, I can believe it now, if it is through  
Christ. It is not a hard thing to believe that Christs blood was sufficient   
to purchase every blessing for me. If I go to Gods treasury without Christ,   
I am afraid to ask for anything, but when Christ is with me I can then ask

for everything. For surely I think He deserves it though I do not. If I can   
claim His merits then I am not afraid to plead. Is perfection too great a   
blessing for God to give to Christ? Oh, no. Is the keeping, the stability, the   
preservation of the blood-bought ones too great a reward for the terrible  
agonies and sufferings of the Savior? I think not. Then we may with   
confidence plead, because everything comes through Christ.   
I would in concluding make this remark. I wish, my Brothers and   
Sisters, that during this year you may live nearer to Christ than you have   
ever done before. Depend upon it, it is when we think much of Christ that   
we think little of ourselves, little of our troubles and little of the doubts   
and fears that surround us. Begin from this day and may God help you.   
Never let a single day pass over your head without a visit to the garden of   
Gethsemane and the Cross on Calvary. And as for some of you who are  
not saved and know not the Redeemer, I would to God that this very day  
you would come to Christ. I dare say you think coming to Christ is some   
terrible thingthat you need to be prepared before you come. That He is   
hard and harsh with you. When men have to go to a lawyer they need to   
tremble. When they have to go to the doctor they may fearthough both   
those persons, however unwelcomemay be often necessary. But when you come to Christ, you may come boldly. There is no fee   
required. There is no preparation necessary. You may come just as you   
are. It was a brave saying of Martin Luthers, when he said, I would run  
into Christs arms even if He had a drawn sword in His hand. Now, He   
has not a drawn sword, but He has His wounds in His hands. Run into   
His arms, poor Sinner. Oh, you say, May I come? How can you ask the   
question? You are commanded to come! The great command of the Gospel  
is, Believe on the Lord Jesus. Those who disobey this command disobey   
God. It is as much a command of God that man should believe on Christ,   
as that we should love our neighbor.   
Now, what is a command I have certainly a right to obey. There can be   
no question, you see. A sinner has liberty to believe in Christ because he  
is told to do so. God would not have told him to do a thing which he must  
not do. You are allowed to believe. Oh, says one, that is all I want to   
know. I do believe that Christ is able to save to the uttermost. May I rest my soul on Him and say, sink or swim, most blessed Jesus, you are my Lord ? May do it, Man? Why you are commanded to do it. Oh that you may be enabled to do it. Remember, this is not a thing which you will do at a risk . The risk is in not doing it. Cast yourself on Christ, Sinner.   
Throw away every other dependence and rest alone on him.   
No, says one, I am not prepared. Prepared! Sir? Then you do not  
understand me. There is no preparation needed. It is, just as you are.   
Oh, I do not feel my need enough. I know you do not. What has that to   
do with it? You are commanded to cast yourself on Christ. Be you ever so   
black, or ever so bad, trust to Him. He that believes on Christ shall be   
saved, be his sins ever so many. He that believes not must be damned be  
his sins ever so few. The great command of the Gospel is, Believe. Oh,   
says one, am I to say I know that Christ died for me? Ah, I did not say   
that, you shall learn that by-and-by. You have nothing to do with that   
question now, your business is to believe on Christ and trust Him. To cast  
yourself into His hands. And may God the Spirit now sweetly compel you   
to do it.   
Now, Sinner, hands off your own righteousness. Drop all idea of  
becoming better through your own strength. Cast yourself flat on the   
promise. Say   
*Just as I am without one plea,   
But that Your blood was shed for me,   
And that You bid me come to You.   
Oh, Lamb of God! I come, I come.*  
You cannot trust in Christ and find Him to deceive you. Now, have I made   
myself plain? If there were a number of persons here in debt and if I were   
to say, If you will simply trust to me your debts, they shall be paid and   
no creditor shall ever molest you, you would understand me directly.   
How is it you cannot comprehend that trusting in Christ will remove all  
your debts, take away all your sins and you shall be saved eternally? Oh, Spirit of the living God, open the understanding to receive and the   
heart to obey and may many a soul here present cast itself on Christ. On  
all such, as on all Believers, do I again pronounce the benediction, with   
which I shall dismiss you. May the God of all grace, who has called us   
unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, After you have suffered a while,  
make you perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you!

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FAITH AND LIFE

NO. 551

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 24, 1864, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Simon Peter, a servant and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, according as His Divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that has called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these you might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 2 Peter 1:1-4.

THE two most important things in our holy religion are faith and life. He who shall rightly understand these two words is not far from being a master in experimental theology. Faith and life! These are vital points to a Christian. They possess so intimate a connection with each other that they are by no means to be severed. God has so joined them together, let no man seek to put them asunder. You shall never find true faith unattended by true godliness. On the other hand, you shall never discover a truly holy life which has not for its root and foundation a living faith upon the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Woe unto those who seek after the one without the other! There are some who cultivate faith and forget holiness. These may be very high in orthodoxy, but they shall be very deep in damnation in that day when God shall condemn those who hold the Truth of God in unrighteousness and make the doctrine of Christ to pander to their lusts. There are others who have strained after holiness of life, but have denied the faith. These are comparable unto the Pharisees of old, of whom the Master said, they were whitewashed sepulchers. They were fair to look upon externally, but inwardly, because the living faith was not there, they were full of dead mens bones and all manner of uncleanness. You must have faith, for this is the foundation! You must have holiness of life, for this is the superstructure.

Of what use is the mere foundation of a building to a man in the day of storms? Can he hide himself among sunken stones and concrete? He wants a house to cover him as well as a foundation upon which that house might have been built! Even so we need the superstructure of spiritual life if we would have comfort in the day of doubt. But seek not a holy life without faithfor that would be to erect a house which can afford no permanent shelter because it has no foundation on a rocka house which must come down with a tremendous crash in the day when the rain descends and the floods come and the winds blow and beat upon it.

Let faith and life be put together and, like the two abutments of an arch, they shall make your piety strong. Like the horses of Pharaohs chariot, they pull together gloriously. Like light and heat streaming from the same sun, they are alike full of blessing. Like the two pillars of the temple, they are for glory and for beauty. They are two streams from the Fountain of Grace. Two lamps lit with holy fire. Two olive trees watered by heavenly care. Two stars carried in Jesus hands. The Lord grant that we may have both of these to perfection so that His name may be praised.

Now it will be clear to all that in the four verses before us our Apostle has most excellently set forth the necessity of these two thingstwice over he insists upon faith and twice over upon holiness of life. We will take the first occasion first.

I. Observe, in the first place, what he says concerning the character and the origin of faith and then concerning the character and origin of spiritual life. Simon Peter, a servant and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ. So far the faith. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, according as His Divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that has called us to glory and virtue. These two verses, you see, concern the spiritual life which comes with the faith.

Let us begin where Peter begins, with FAITH. You have here a description of true saving faith.   
First, you have a description of its source. He says, to them that have obtained like precious faith. See, then, my Brothers and Sisters, faith does not grow in mans heart by nature. It is a thing which is obtained. It is not a matter which springs up by a process of education, or by the example and excellent instruction of our parents. It is a thing which has to be obtained. Not imitation, but regeneration! Not development, but conversion! All our good things come from without usonly evil can be educed from within us.   
Now that faith which is obtained by us must be given to us. And well are we taught in Scripture that faith is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. Although faith is the act of man, yet it is the work of God. With the heart man believes unto righteousness, but that heart must, first of all, have been renewed by Divine Grace before it ever can be capable of the act of saving faith. Faith, we say, is mans act, for we are commanded to, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and we shall be saved.   
At the same time faith is Gods gift and wherever we find it we may know that it did not come there from the force of nature, but from a work of Divine Grace. How this magnifies the Grace of God, my Brethren, and how low this casts human nature! Faith! Is it not one of the simplest things? Merely to depend upon the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christdoes it not seem one of the easiest of virtues? To be nothing and to let Him be everythingto be still and to let Him work for medoes not this seem to be the most elementary of all the Christian Graces? Indeed, so it is.   
And yet, even to this first principle and rudiment poor human nature is so fallen and so utterly undone that it cannot attain unto it! Brethren, the Lord must not only open the gates of Heaven to us at the last, but He must open the gates of our heart to faith at the first. It is not enough for us to know that He must make us perfect in every good work to do His will. We must be taught that He must even give us a desire after Christ. And when this is given, HE must enable us to give the grip of the hand of faith whereby Jesus Christ becomes our Savior and Lord.   
Now the question comes (and we will try and make the text of today a text of examination all the way through)have we obtained this faith? Are we conscious that we have been operated upon by the Holy Spirit? Is there a vital principle in us which was not there originally? Do we know today the folly of carnal confidence? Have we a hope that we have been enabled, through Divine Grace, to cast away all our own righteousness and every dependence? And are we, now, whether we sink or swim, resting entirely upon the Person, the righteousness, the blood, the intercession, the precious merit of our Lord Jesus Christ?   
If not, we have cause enough to tremble. But if we have, while the Apostle writes, Unto them that have obtained like precious faith, he writes to us, and across the interval of centuries his benediction comes as full and fresh as ever, Grace and peace be multiplied unto you.   
Peter, having described the origin of this faith, proceeds to describe its object. The word, through, in our translation, might, quite as correctly have been rendered infaith in the righteousness of our God and our Savior Jesus Christ. True faith, then, is a faith in Jesus Christ, but it is a faith in Jesus Christ as Divine. That man who believes in Jesus Christ as simply a Prophet, as only a great teacher, has not the faith which will save him. Charity would make us hope for many Unitarians, but honesty compels us to condemn them without exception so far as vital godliness is concerned.   
It matters not how intelligent may be their conversation, nor how charitable may be their manners, nor how patriotic may be their spiritif they reject Jesus Christ as very God of very God we believe they shall, without doubt, perish everlastingly. Our Lord uttered no dubious words when He said, He that believes not shall be damned, and we must not attempt to be more liberal than the Lord Himself. Little allowance can I make for one who receives Jesus the Prophet and rejects Him as God. It is an atrocious outrage upon common sense for a man to profess to be a Believer in Christ at all if he does not receive His Divinity. I would undertake, at any time, to prove to a demonstration that if Christ were not God, He was the grossest impostor who ever lived. He was one of two thingsHe was either Divine or a villain. There is no stopping between the two.   
I cannot imagine a character more vile than that which would be borne by a man who should lead his followers to adore him as God, without ever putting in a word by way of caveat, to stop their idolatry! No, who could have spoken in terms so ambiguous that two thousand years after His death there should be found millions of persons resting upon Him as God? I say, if He were not God, the atrocity of His having palmed Himself upon us, His disciples, as God, puts aside altogether from consideration any of the apparent virtues of His life. He was the grossest of all deceivers, if He was not very God of very God.   
O Beloved, you and I have found no difficulties here! When we have beheld the record of His miracles. When we have listened to the testimony of His Divine Father. When we have heard the Words of the inspired Apostles. When we have felt the majesty of His own Divine influence in our own hearts we have graciously accepted Him as, the Wonderful, the Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father. And, as John bore witness of Him and said, The Word was in the beginning with God and the Word was God, even so have we received Him! So that at this day, He that was born of the virgin Mary, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, is to us, God over all, blessed forever.

*Jesus is worthy to receive   
Honor and power Divine.   
And blessings more than we can give,   
Be Lord forever Yours.*   
Now, beloved Friends, have we heartily and joyfully received Jesus Christ as God? My Hearer, if you have not, I pray you seek of God the faith which saves, for you have it not as yet, nor are you in the way to it. Who but a God could bear the weight of sin? Who but a God shall be the same yesterday, today and forever? Concerning whom but a God could it be said, I am the Lord, I change not. Therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed? We have to do with Christ and we should be consumed if He changed. Inasmuch, then, as He does not change and we are not consumed, He must be Divine and our soul rolls the entire burden of its care and guilt upon the mighty shoulders of the everlasting God, who *Bears the earths huge pillars up,   
And spreads the heavens abroad.*   
Mark in further dwelling upon the text that the Apostle has put in another word beside, God, and that is, of God and our Savior. As if the Glory of the Godhead might be too bright for us, he has attempted it by gentler words, our Savior. Now, to trust Jesus Christ as Divine will save no man, unless there is added to this a resting in Him as the great Propitiatory Sacrifice. Jesus Christ is our Savior because He became a Substitute for guilty man. He, having taken upon Himself, the form of manhood by union with our nature, stood in the place of sinners. When the whole tempest of Divine wrath was about to spend itself on man, He endured it all for His elect. When the great whip of the Law must fall, He bared His own shoulders to the lash.   
When the cry was heard, Awake, O Sword! it was against Christ the Shepherd, against the Man who was the fellow to the eternal God. And because He thus suffered in the place of man, He received power from on high to become the Savior of man and to bring many sons into Glory because He had been made perfect through suffering. Now, have we received Jesus Christ as our Savior? Happy are you if you have laid your hand upon the head of Him who was slain for sinners. Be glad and rejoice in the Lord without ceasing if today that blessed Redeemer who has ascended upon high has become your Savior, delivered you from sin, passed by your transgressions and made you to be accepted in the Beloved! A Savior is He to us when He delivers us from the curse, punishment, guilt and power of sin! He shall save His people from their sins. O great God, be You my Savior, mighty to save!   
But be pleased to notice the word righteousness. It is a faith in the righteousness of our God and our Savior. In these days, certain Divines have tried to get rid of all idea of Atonement. They have taught that faith in Jesus Christ would save men, apart from any faith in Him as a Sacrifice. Ah, Brethren, it does not say, faith in the teaching of God our Savior, I do not find here that it is written, faith in the Character of God our Savior, as our Exemplar. No, but faith in the righteousness of God our Savior. That righteousness, like a white robe, must be cast around us. I have not received Jesus Christ at all, but I am an adversary and an enemy to Him unless I have received Him as Jehovah Tsidkenu, the Lord our Righteousness.   
There is His perfect life. That life was a life for me. It contains all the virtues, in it there is no spot. It keeps the Law of God and makes it honorable. My faith takes that righteousness of Jesus Christ and it is cast about me and I am then so beauteously, no, so perfectly arrayed, that even the eyes of God can see neither spot nor blemish in me. Have we, then, today, a faith in the righteousness of God our Savior? For no faith but this can ever bring the soul into a condition of acceptance before the Most High. Why, says one, these are the very simplicities of the Gospel. Beloved, I know they are and therefore do we deal them out this morning. For thanks be to Godit is the simplicities which lie at the foundation. And it is rather by simplicities than by mysteries that a Christian is to try himself and to see whether he is in the faith or not. Ask the question, Brethrenhave we, then, this like precious faith in God and our Savior Jesus Christ?   
Our Apostle has not finished the description without saying that it is like precious faith. All faith is the same sort of faith. Our faith may not be like that of Peters, in degree, but if it is genuine, it is like it as to its nature, its origin, its objects and its results. Here is a blessed equality! Speak of liberty, equality and fraternity, you shall only find these things carried out within the Church of Christ. There is, indeed, a blessed equality here, for the poorest Little-Faith who ever crept into Heaven on its hands and knees, has a like precious faith with the mighty Apostle Peter.   
I say, Brothers and Sisters, if the one is gold, so is the other. If the one can move mountains, so can the other. Remember that the privileges of mountain-moving and of plucking up the trees and casting them into the sea are not given to great faith, but, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, it shall be done. Little faith has a royal descent and is as truly of Divine birth as is the greatest and fullest assurance which ever made glad the heart of man! Therefore it ensures the same inheritance at the last and the same safety by the way. It is like precious faith. He tells us, too, that faith is precious, and is it not precious? For it deals with precious things, with precious promises, with precious blood, with a precious redemption, with all the preciousness of the Person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.   
Well may that be a precious faith which supplies our greatest want, delivers us from our greatest danger and admits us to the greatest Glory. Well may that be called precious faith, which is the symbol of our election, the evidence of our calling, the root of all our Graces, the channel of communion, the weapon of prevalence, the shield of safety, the substance of hope, the evidence of eternity, the reward of immortality and the passport of Glory! O for more of this inestimably precious faith! Precious faith, indeed, it is.   
When the Apostle, Simon Peter, writes, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ, does he write to you? Does he write to me? If not, if we are not here addressed, remember that we can never expect to hear the voice which says, Come you blessed of My Father. But we are today in such a condition, that, dying as we now are, Depart you cursed must be the thunder which shall roll in our ears and drive us down to Hell. So much, then, concerning faith.   
Now we shall turn to notice with great brevity, the LIFE. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, according as His Divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that has called us to glory and virtue. Here we have, then, Brethren, the fountain and source of our spiritual life. Just as faith is a gift which is to be obtained, so you will perceive that our spiritual life is a principle which is given. A thing which is given to us, too, by Divine poweraccording as His Divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.   
To give life at all is the essential attribute of God. This is an attribute which He will not alienateto save and to destroy belong unto the Sovereign of Heaven. He can create and He can destroy, is one of the most profound notes in the ascription of our praise. Suppose a corpse is before us. How great a pretender would he be who should boast that it was in his power to restore it to life! Certainly it would be even a greater pretense if anyone should say that he could give to himself or to another Divine life the spiritual life by which a man is made a Christian. My Brethren, you who are partakers of the Divine nature know that by nature you were dead in trespasses and sins and would have continued so until this day if there had not been an interposition of Divine energy on your behalf.   
There you lay in the grave of your sin, rotten, corrupt. The voice of the minister called to you, but you did not hear. You were often bid to come forth, but you did not and could not come. But when the Lord said, Lazarus, come forth, then Lazarus came forth. And when He said to you, Live, then you lived, also, and the spiritual life beat within you with joy and peace through believing. This we ought never to forget, because let us never fail to remember that if our religion is a thing which sprang from ourselves, it is of the flesh and must die. That which is born of the flesh in its best and most favorable moments is flesh. Only that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. You must be born again.   
If a mans religious life is only a refinement of his ordinary lifeif it is only a high attainment of the natural existencethen is it not the spiritual life and does not prepare him for eternal life before the Throne of God. No, we must have a supernatural spark of heavenly flame kindled within us. Just as nothing but the soul can quicken the body and make it live, so the Spirit alone can quicken the soul and make the soul live. We must have the third master principle infused or else we shall be but natural menmade after the image of the first Adam.   
We must have, I say, the new spirit, or else we shall not be like the second Adam, who was made a quickening Spirit. Only of the Christian can we say that he is spirit, soul and body. The ungodly man has only soul and body and as to spiritual existence he is as dead as the body would be if there were no soul. Now the implantation of this new principle, called the spirit, is a work of Divine power. Divine power! What stupendous issues are grasped in that term, Divine power!   
It was this which dug the deep foundations of the earth and sea! Divine power! It is this which guides the marches of the stars of Heaven! Divine power! It is this which holds up the pillars of the universe and which one day shall shake them and hurry all things back to their native nothingness. Yet the same power which is required to create a world and to sustain it is required to make a man a Christian! And unless that power is put forth, the spiritual life is not in any one of us. You will perceive, dear Friends, that the Apostle Peter wished to see this Divine life in a healthy and vigorous state and therefore he prays that Grace and peace may be multiplied. Divine power is the foundation of this life. Grace is the food it feeds upon and peace is the element in which it lives most healthily.

Give a Christian much Grace and his spiritual life will be like the life of a man who is well clothed and nurtured. Keep the spiritual life without abundant Grace and it becomes lean, faint and ready to dieand though it cannot die, yet will it seem as though it gave up the ghost, unless fresh Grace is bestowed. Peace, I say, is the element in which it flourishes most. Let a Christian be much disturbed in mind, let earthly cares get into his soul, let him have doubts and fears as to his eternal safety, let him lose a sense of reconciliation to God, let his adoption be but dimly before his eyes and you will not see much of the Divine life within him. But oh, if God shall smile upon the life within you, if He shall give you Grace, and your soul dwells much in the balmy air of heavenly peacethen shall you be strong to exercise yourself unto godliness and your whole life shall adorn the doctrine of God your Savior.   
Observe again, that in describing this life, Peter speaks of it as one which was conferred upon us by our being called. He says, We were called unto glory and virtue. I find translators differ here. Many of them think the word should be ByWe are called by the Glory and virtue of God, that is, there is a manifestation of all the glorious attributes of God and of all the efficacious virtue and energy of His power in the calling of every Christian. Simon Peter himself was at his fishing and in his boat, but Jesus said to him, Follow Me, and at once he followed Christ. He says there was in that calling, the Divine Glory and virtue. And, doubtless, when you and I shall get to Heaven and see things as they are, we shall discover in our effectual calling of God to Grace, a Glory as great as in the creation of worlds and a virtue as great as in the healing of the sick, when virtue went from the garments of our Savior.   
Now, can we say today that we have a life within us which is the result of Divine power and have we, upon searching ourselves, reason to believe, dear Friends, that there is that within us which distinguishes us from other men because we have been called out of mankind by the Glory and energy of the Divine power? I am afraid some of us must say No. Then the Lord in His mercy has yet to bring us into the number of His people. But if we can, however, tremblingly say Yes, I trust there is something of the life in me, then as Peter did so, do I wish for you that benediction, Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.   
O Brothers and Sisters, whatever men may say against the faith of God there is nothing in the world which creates virtue like true faith! Wherever true faith enters, though it be into the heart of a harlot or of a thief, what a change it makes! See her thereshe has polluted herself many times she has gone far into sin. Mary has been a sinner! She hears the preaching of the Savior. Standing in the crowd she listens to Him one day as He preaches concerning the prodigal and how the loving father pressed him to his bosom. She comes to Jesus and she finds forgiveness. Is she a harlot any longer? No, there she is, washing His feet with her tears and wiping them with the hairs of her head. The woman who was a sinner hates her evil ways and loves her gracious Lord. We may say of her, But she is washed, but she is sanctified, but she is saved.   
Take Saul of Tarsus. Foaming with blood, breathing out threats, he is going to Damascus to drag the saints of God to prison. On the road he is struck down. By Divine mercy he is led to put his trust in Jesus. Is he a persecutor any longer? See that earnest Apostle beaten with rods shipwreckedin labors more abundant than all the rest of them! He counts not his life dear unto him, that he may win Christ and be found in Him. Saul of Tarsus becomes a majestic proof of what the Grace of God can do! Sec Zaccheus, the grasping publican, distributing his wealth! The Ephesians burning their magical books! The jailer washing the Apostles stripes!   
Take the cases of many now present. Let memory refresh itself this morning with the recollection of the change which has been worked in you. We have nothing to boast ofGod forbid that we should glory, save in the Cross of Christbut yet some of us are wonderful instances of renewing Grace. We were unclean, our mouths could utter blasphemy. Our temper was hot and terrible. Our hands were unrighteouswe were altogether as an unclean thingbut how changed now!  
Again, I say we boast of nothing which we now are, for by the Grace of God we are what we are, yet the change is something to be wondered at! Has Divine Grace worked this change in you? Be not weary with my reiteration of this question. Let me put it again to you till I get an answer no, till I force you to an answerHave you this precious faith? Can you not answer the question? Then, have you not that Divine life, that life which is given by Divine calling? If you have the one, you have the other. And if you have not both, you have neitherfor where there is the one, the other must come and where the other has comethe other has been there.   
II. I have thus fully but feebly brought the subject before you. Allow me to remind you that another verse remains which handles the same topics. In the fourth verse he deals with the privileges of faith and also with the privileges of the spiritual life.   
Notice the PRIVILEGE OF FAITH first. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promisesthere is the faith. That by these you might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lustthere is the life resulting from the faith. Now, the privileges of faith first. The privileges of faith are that we have given to us, Exceeding great and precious promises. Great and precioustwo words which do not often come together.   
Many things are great which are not precious, such as great rocks which are of little value. On the other hand, many things are precious which are not greatsuch as diamonds and other jewels which cannot be very great if they are very precious. But here we have promises which are so great that they are not less than Infinite! And so precious that they are not less than Divine! I shall not attempt to speak about their greatness or their preciousness, but just give a catalog of them and leave you to guess at both. We have some of them which are like birds in the handwe have them already. Other promises are like birds in the bush, only that they are just as valuable and as sure as those which are in the hand.   
Note here, then, we have received by precious faith the promise and pardon. Hark you, my Soul, all your sins are forgiven! He who has faith in Christ has no sin to curse him. His sins are washed away, they have ceased to be. They have been carried on the scapegoats head into the wilderness. They are drowned in the Red Sea. They are blotted out. They are thrown behind Gods back. They are cast into the depths of the sea. Here is a promise of perfect pardon. Is not this great and preciousas great as your sins are? And if your sins demanded a costly ransom, this precious promise is as great as the demand.   
Then comes the righteousness of Christyou are not only pardoned, that is, washed and made clean, but you are dressedrobed in garments such as no man could ever weave. The vesture is Divine. Jehovah Himself has worked out your righteousness for you. The holy life of Jesus, the Son of God, has become your beauteous dress and you are covered with it. Christian, is not this an exceedingly great and precious promise? The Law was greatthis righteousness is as great as the Law. The Law asked a precious revenue from man, more than humanity could paythe righteousness of Christ has paid it all! Is it not great and precious?   
Then next comes reconciliation. You were strangers, but you are brought near by the blood of Christ. Once aliens, but now fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God. Is not this great and precious? Then comes your adoption. Beloved, now are we the sons of God and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ, if so we suffer with Him that we may be glorified together. Oh, how glorious is this great and precious promise of adoption!   
Then we have the promise of Providenceall things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose. Your place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks. Your bread shall be given you and your waters shall he sure. As your days your strength shall be. Fear not, I am with you; be not dismayed, I am your God. When you pass through the rivers, I will be with you, the floods shall not overflow you. When you go through the fire, you shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon you. When I think of Providence, the greatness of its daily gifts and the preciousness of its hourly gifts, I may well say, here is an exceeding great and precious promise!   
Then you have the promise, too, that you shall never taste of death but shall only sleep in Jesus. Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yes, says the Spirit, that they cease from their labors. And their works do follow them. Nor does the promise cease here! You have the promise of a resurrection. For the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.   
Beloved, we know that if Christ rose from the dead, so also they who sleep in Jesus will the Lord bring with Him. Nor is this all, for we shall reign with Jesus at His coming. We shall be glorified with Him. We shall sit upon His Throne, even as He has overcome and sits with His Father upon His Throne. The harps of Heaven, the streets of Glory, the trees of Paradise, the river of the Water of Life, the eternity of immaculate bliss all these God has promised to them who love Him. Eye has not seen, nor ear heard the things which God has prepared for them that love Him, but He has revealed them to us by His Spirit, and by our faith we have grasped them and we have today the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.

Now, Beloved, see how rich faith makes you! What treasure! What a costly regalia! What gold mines! What oceans of wealth! What mountains of sparkling treasures has God conferred upon you by faith! But we must not forget the life and with that we close. The text says, He has given us this promise, thatin order that. What then? What are all these treasures lavished for? Why these pearls? Why these jewels? Why, I say, these oceans of treasure? Why? Is the end worthy of the means? Surely God never gives greater store than the thing which He would purchase will be worth! We may suppose, then, the end to be very great when such costly means have been given. And what is the end? Why, that by these you might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.   
O, my Brothers and Sisters, if you have these mercies today by faith, see to it that the result is obtained. Be not content to be made rich in these great and precious promises, without answering Gods design in your being thus enriched! That design, you perceive, is twofold. It is first that you may be partakers of the Divine nature. And, secondly, that you may escape the corruption which is in the world.   
To be a partaker of the Divine nature is not, of course, to become God. That cannot be. The essence of Deity is not to be participated in by the creature. Between the creature and the Creator there must ever be a gulf fixed in respect of essence. But as the first man Adam was made in the image of God, so we, by the renewal of the Holy Spirit, are in a yet more Divine sense made in the image of the Most High and are partakers of the Divine nature. We are, by Grace, made like God. God is love, we become loveHe that loves is born of God. God is truthwe become true and we love that which is true and we hate the darkness and the lie.   
God is good, it is His very nameHe makes us good by His Grace so that we become the pure in heart who shall see God. No, I will say this that we become partakers of the Divine nature in even a higher sense than thisin fact, in any sense, anything short of our being absolutely Divine. Do we not become members of the body of the Divine Person of Christ? And what sort of union is thismembers of His body, of His flesh and of His bones? The same blood which flows in the head flows in the hand, and the same life which quickens Christ, quickens His people, for, You are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God.   
No, as if this were not enough, we are married into Christ. He has betrothed us unto Himself in righteousness and in faithfulness. And as the spouse must, in the nature of things, be a partaker of the same nature as the husband, so Jesus Christ first became partaker of flesh and blood that the two might be one flesh. And then He makes His Church partakers of the same spirit, that the two may be one spiritfor He who is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Oh, marvelous mystery! We look into it, but who shall understand it? One with Jesus, by eternal union! One, married to Himso one with Him that the branch is not more one with the vine than we are a part of the Lord, our Savior and our Redeemer!   
Rejoice in this, Brethren! You are made partakers of the Divine nature and all these promises are given to you in order that you may show this forth among the sons of men, that you are like God and not like ordinary men! That you are different now from what flesh and blood would make you, having been made participators of the nature of God.   
Then the other result which follows from it was this, Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Ah, Beloved, it were ill that a man who is alive should dwell in corruption. Why seek you the living among the dead? said the angel to Magdalene. Should the living dwell among the dead? Should Divine life be found among the corruptions of worldly lusts? The Bride of Christ drunk? Frequenting the ale-house? A member of Christs body found intoxicated in the streets, or lying, or blaspheming, or dishonest? God forbid!   
Shall I take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? How can I drink the cup of the Lord and drink the cup of Belial? How can it be possible that I can have life and yet dwell in the black, dark, foul, filthy, pestiferous tomb of the worlds lusts? Surely, Brethren, from these open lusts and sins you have escapedhave you also escaped from the more secret and more delusive lime twigs of the Satanic fowler? O, have you come forth from the lust of pride? Have you escaped from slothfulness? Have you clean escaped from carnal security? Are we seeking, day by day, to live above worldlinessthe love of the things of the world and the ensnaring avarice which they nourish? Remember, it is for this that you have been enriched with the treasures of God. Do not, oh, I implore you, do notchosen of God and beloved by Him and so graciously enricheddo not suffer all this lavish treasure to be wasted upon you.   
There is nothing which my heart desires more than to see you, the members of this Church, distinguished for holinessit is the Christians crown and glory. An unholy Church? It is of no use to the world and of no esteem among men. Oh, it is an abominationHells laughterHeavens abhorrence! And the larger the Church, the more influential, the worse nuisance does it become when it becomes dead and unholy. The worst evils which have ever come upon the world have been brought upon her by an unholy Church. From where came the darkness of the dark ages? From the Church of Rome! And if we want to see the world again sitting in Egyptian darkness, bound with fetters of iron, we have only to give up the faith and to renounce holiness of life and we may drag the world down again to the limbo of superstition and bind her fast in chains of ignorance and vice.   
O Christian, the vows of God are upon you! You are Gods priestact as such! You are Gods kingreign over your lusts! You are Gods chosendo not associate with Belial! Heaven is your portionlive like a heavenly spirit! And so shall you prove that you have the true faith. But unless you do this, your end shall be to lift up your eyes in Hell and find yourself mistaken when it will be too late to seek or find a remedy. The Lord give us the faith and the life, for Jesus sake. Amen.

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PARTICULAR ELECTION

NO. 123

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 22, 1857, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

Therefore, Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these things, you shall never fall, for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.   
2 Peter 1:10, 11.

IT is exceedingly desirable that in the hours of worship and in the House of Prayer our minds should be as much as possible divested of every worldly thought. Although the business of the week will very naturally struggle with us to encroach upon the Sabbath, it is our business to guard the Sabbath from the intrusion of our worldly cares, as we would guard an oasis from the overwhelming eruption of the sand. I have felt, however, that today we should be surrounded with circumstances of peculiar difficulty in endeavoring to bring our minds to spiritual matters, for of all times, perhaps, election times are the worst. So important in the minds of most men are political matters that very naturally after the hurry of the week, combined with the engrossing pursuit of elections, we are apt to bring the same thoughts and the same feelings into the House of Prayer and speculate, perhaps, even in the place of worship, whether a conservative or a liberal shall be returned for our borough. Or whether for the City of London there shall be returned Lord John Russell, Baron Rothschild or Mr. Currie. I thought, this morning, Well, it is of no use my trying to stop this great train in its progress! People are just now going on at an express rate on these matters. I think I will be wise and instead of endeavoring to turn them off the line, I will turn the points so that they may still continue their pursuits with the same swiftness as ever, but in a new direction! It shall be the same line. They shall still be traveling in earnest towards election but, perhaps, I may have some skill to turn the points so that they shall be enabled to consider election in a rather different manner!

When Mr. Whitefield was once applied to use his influence at a general election, he returned answer to his lordship who requested him that he knew very little about general elections but that if his lordship took his advice he would make his own particular calling and election sure, which was a very proper remark. I would not, however, say to any persons here present, despise the privilege which you have as citizens. Far be it from me to do it! When we become Christians, we do not leave off being Englishmen! When we become professors of religion, we do not cease to have the rights and privileges which citizenship has bestowed on us. Let us, whenever we shall have the opportunity of using the right of voting, use it as in the sight of Almighty God, knowing that for everything, we shall be brought into account and for that among the rest, seeing that we are entrusted with it. And let us remember that we are our own governors, to a great degree, and that if at the next election we should choose wrong governors, we shall have nobody to blame but ourselves, however wrongly they may afterwards act, unless we exercise all prudence and prayer to Almighty God to direct our hearts to a right choice in this matter. May God so help us and may the result be for His Glory, however unexpected that result may be to any of us!

Having said so much, let me, then, turn the points and draw you to a consideration of your own particular calling and election, bidding you, in the words of the Apostle, therefore, Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these things, you shall never fall, for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We have here, first of all,

two fundamental points in religioncalling and election. We have here, secondly, some good adviceto make our calling and election sure, or, rather, to assure ourselves that we are called and elected. And then, in the third place, we have some reasons given us why we should use this diligence to be assured of our electionbecause, on the one hand, we shall so be kept from falling and on the other hand, we shall attain unto an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I. First of all, then, there are the TWO IMPORTANT MATTERS IN RELIGIONsecrets, both of them, to the worldonly to be understood by those who have been quickened by Divine GraceCALLING AND ELECTION.

By the word, calling, in Scripture, we understand two thingsone, the general call, which in the preaching of the Gospel is given to every creature under Heaven. The second call (that which is here intended) is the special callwhich we call the effectual call, whereby God secretly, in the use of means, by the Irresistible power of His Holy Spirit, calls out of mankind a certain number whom He has before elected. He calls them from their sins to become righteous, from their death in trespasses and sins to become living spiritual men and from their worldly pursuits to become the lovers of Jesus Christ. The two callings differ very much. As Bunyan very prettily puts it, By His common call, He gives nothing. By His special call, He always has something to give. He has also a brooding voice for them who are under His wing and He has an outcry to give the alarm when He sees the enemy come. What we have to obtain as absolutely necessary to our salvation, is a special calling, made in usnot to our ears but to our heartsnot to our mere fleshly understanding, but to the inner man, by the power of the Spirit. And then the other important thing is election. As without calling there is no salvation, so without election there is no calling! Holy Scripture teaches us that God has from the beginning chosen us who are saved unto holiness through Jesus Christ. We are told that as many as are ordained unto eternal life, believeand that their believing is the effect of their being ordained to eternal life from before all worlds! However much this may be disputed, as it frequently is, you must first deny the authenticity and full Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures before you can legitimately and truly deny it. And since, without doubt, I have many here who are members of the Episcopal Church, allow me to say to them what I have often said before, You, of all men, are the most inconsistent in the world unless you believe the Doctrine of Election, for if it is not taught in Scripture, there is this one thing for an absolute certainty, it is taught in your Articles. Nothing can be more forcibly expressed, nothing more definitely laid down than the Doctrine of Predestination in the Book of Common Prayer. Although we are told what we already know, that that Doctrine is a high mystery and is only to be carefully handled by men who are enlightened.

However, without doubt, it is the Doctrine of Scripture that those who are saved are saved because God chose them to be saved and are called as the effect of that first choice of God! If any of you dispute this, I stand upon the authority of Holy Scripture. Yes, and if it were necessary to appeal to tradition, which I am sure it is not and no Christian would ever do it, yet I would take you upon that point. For I can trace this Doctrine through the lips of a succession of holy men, from this present moment to the days of Calvin. From there to Augustine and from there on to Paul, himself, and even to the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ! The Doctrine is without doubt taught in Scripture and were not men too proud to humble themselves to it, it would universally be believed and received as being no other than manifest Truth of God! Why, Sirs, do you not believe that God loves His children? And do you not know that God is unchangeable? Therefore, if He loves them, now, He must always have loved them! Do you not believe that if men are saved, God saves them? And if so, can you see any difficulty in admitting that because He saves them, there must have been a purpose to save thema purpose which existed before all worlds? Will you not grant me that? If you will not, I must leave you to the Scriptures, themselves. And if they will not convince you on the point, then I must leave you unconvinced!

It will be asked, however, why is calling here put before election, seeing election is eternal and calling takes place in time? I reply, because calling is first to us. The first thing which you and I can know is our callingwe cannot tell whether we are elect until we feel that we are called! We must, first of all, prove our callingand then our election is most certainly sure. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also calledand whom He called, them He also justifiedand whom He justified, them He also glorified. Calling comes first in our apprehension. We are by Gods Spirit called from our evil estate, regenerated and made new creatures and then, looking backward, we behold ourselves as being most assuredly elect because we were called!

Here, then, I think I have explained the text. There are the two things which you and I are to prove to be sure to ourselveswhether we are called and whether we are elected. And oh, dear Friends, this is a matter about which you and I should be very anxious, for consider what an honorable thing it is to be elected! In this world it is thought a mighty thing to be elected to the House of Parliament. But how much more honorable to be elected to eternal life? To be elected to the Church of the first born, whose names are written in Heaven. To be elected to be a compeer of angels, to be a favorite of the living God, to dwell with the Most High among the fairest of the sons of light, nearest the eternal Throne! Election in this world is but a short-lived thing, but Gods election is eternal. Let a man be elected to a seat in the Houseseven years must be the longest period that he can hold his election. But if you and I are elected according to the Divine Purpose, we shall hold our seats when the daystar shall have ceased to burn! When the sun shall have grown dim with age and when the eternal hills shall have bowed themselves with weaknessif we are chosen of God and precious, then are we chosen forever for God changes not in the objects of His election! Those whom He has ordained, He has ordained to eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of His hand. It is worthwhile to know ourselves elect, for nothing in this world can make a man more happy or more valiant than the knowledge of his election. Nevertheless, said Christ to His Apostles, rejoice not in this, but rather rejoice that your names are written in Heaventhat being the sweetest comfort, the honeycomb that drops with the most precious drops of all, the knowledge of our being chosen by God! And this, too, Beloved, makes a man valiant. When a man by diligence has attained to the assurance of his election, you cannot make him a coward. You can never make him cry, quit, even in the thickest battle. He holds the standard firmly and cleaves his foes with the sword of the Truth of God. Was I not ordained by God to be the standard-bearer of this Truth? I must, I will stand by it, despite you all, he says to every enemy! Am I not a chosen king? Can floods of water wash out the sacred unction from a kings bright brow? No, never! And if God has chosen me to be a king and a priest unto God forever and ever, come what may or come what willthe lions teeth, the fiery furnace, the spear, the rack, the stakeall these things are less than nothing, seeing I am chosen of God unto salvation!

It has been said that the Doctrine of Election naturally makes men weak. It is a lie! It may seem so in theory, but in practice it has always been found to be the reverse. The men who have believed in destiny and have held fast and firm by it have always done the most valiant deeds. There is one point in which this is akin even with Mahomets faiththe deeds that were done by him were chiefly done from a firm confidence that God had ordained him to his work. Never had Cromwell driven his foes before him if it had not been in the stern strength of this Omnipotent Truth. And there shall scarcely be found a man strong enough to do great and valiant deeds unless, confident in the God of Providence, he looks upon the happenings of life as being steered by God! He then gives himself up to Gods firm Predestination, to be borne along by the current of His will, contrary to all the wills and all the wishes of the world! Therefore, Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.

II. Come, then, here is the second pointGOOD ADVICE. Make your calling and election sure. Not towards God, for they are sure to Him make them sure to yourself! Be quite certain of them. Be fully satisfied about them. In many of our dissenting places of worship, very great encouragement is held out to doubting. A person comes before the pastor and says, Oh, Sir, I am so afraid I am not converted. I tremble lest I should not be a child of God. Oh, I fear I am not one of the Lords elect. The pastor will put out his hands to him and say, Dear Brother, you are all right so long as you can doubt. Now, I hold that is altogether wrong! Scripture never says, He who doubts shall be saved, but, He who believes. It may be true that the man is in a good state. It may be true that he needs a little comfort. But his doubts are not good things, nor ought we to encourage him in his doubtsour business is to encourage him out of his doubts and, by the grace of God, to urge him to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure, not to doubt it but to be sure of it! Ah, I have heard some hypocritical doubters say, Oh, I have had such doubts whether I am the Lords, and I have thought to myself, And so have I very great doubts about you. I have heard some say they do tremble so because they are afraid they are not the Lords people and the lazy fellows sit in their pews on Sunday and just listen to the sermonthey never think of giving diligence! They never do good, perhaps are inconsistent in their lives and then talk about doubting. It is quite right they should doubtit is well they should and if they did not doubt, we might begin to doubt for them! Idle men have no right to assurance. The Scripture says, Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.

Full assurance is an excellent attainment. It is profitable for a man to be certain in this life and absolutely sure of his own calling and election. But how can he be sure? Now, many of our more ignorant hearers imagine that the only way they have of being assured of their election is by some revelation, some dream and some mystery! I have enjoyed very hearty laughs at the expense of some people who have trusted in their visions! Really, if you had passed among so many shades of ignorant professing Christians as I have, and had to resolve so many doubts and fears, you would be so infinitely sick of dreams and visions that you would say, as soon as a person began to speak about them, Now, just hold your tongue! Sir, said a woman, I saw blue lights in the front parlor when I was in prayer and I thought I saw the Savior in the corner and I said to myself I am safe. [Mr. Spurgeon here narrated a remarkable story of a poor woman who was possessed with a singular delusion.] And yet there are tens of thousands of people in every part of the country and members, too, of Christian bodies, who have no better grounds for their belief that they are called and elected, than some equally ridiculous vision, or the equally absurd hearing of a voice! A young woman came to me some time ago. She wanted to join the Church and when I asked her how she knew herself to be converted, she said she was down at the bottom of the garden and she thought she heard a voice and she thought she saw something up in the clouds that said to her such-and-such. Well, I said to her, that thing may have been the means of doing good to you, but if you put any trust in it, it is all over with you. A dream, yes, and a vision may often bring men to Christ. I have known many who have been brought to Him by them, beyond a doubt, though it has been mysterious to me how it was. But when men bring these forward as a proof of their conversion, it is a mistakeyou may see 50,000 dreams and 50,00 visions and you may be a fool for all thatand all the bigger sinner for having seen them! There is better evidence to be had than all this Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.

How, then, says one, am I to make my calling and election sure? Why, thusif you would get out of a doubting stateget out of an idle state. If you would get out of a trembling state, get out of an indifferent lukewarm statefor lukewarmness and doubting and laziness and trembling very naturally go hand in hand! If you would enjoy the eminent Grace of the full assurance of faith under the blessed Spirits influence and assistance, do what the Scripture tells youGive diligence to make your calling and election sure. Wherein shall you be diligent? Note how the Scripture has given us a list. Be diligent in your faith. Take care that your faith is of the right kindthat it is not a creed but a credencethat it is not a mere belief of Doctrine but a reception of Doctrine into your heart and the practical light of the Doctrine in your soul! Take care that your faith results from necessitythat you believe in Christ because you have nothing else to believe in. Take care it is simple faith, hanging alone on Christ, without any other dependence but Jesus Christ and Him Crucified. And when you have given diligence about that, give diligence next to your courage. Labor to get virtue. Plead with God that He would give you the face of a lion, that you may never be afraid of any enemy however much he may jeer or threaten you, but that you may, with a consciousness of right, go on, boldly trusting in God and having, by the help of the Holy Spirit, obtained that, study well the Scriptures and get knowledge. For a knowledge of Doctrine will tend very much to confirm your faith. Try to understand Gods Word. Get a sensible, spiritual idea of it. Get, if you can, a system of Divinity out of Gods Bible. Put the Doctrines together. Get real, theological knowledge, founded upon the Infallible Word. Get a knowledge of that science which is most despised but which is the most necessary of all, the science of Christ and of Him Crucified and of the great Doctrines of Grace. And when you have done this, Add to your knowledge temperance. Take heed to your bodybe temperate there. Take heed to your soulbe temperate there. Be not drunk with pride. Be not lifted up with self-confidence. Be temperate. Be not harsh towards your friends, nor bitter to your enemies. Get temperance of lips, temperance of life, temperance of heart, temperance of thought. Be not passionatebe not carried away by every wind of Doctrine. Get temperance and then add to it, by Gods Holy Spirit, patience. Ask Him to give you that patience which endures affliction, which, when it is tried, shall come forth as gold. Array yourself with patience, that you may not murmur in your sicknesseshat you may not curse God in your losses, nor be depressed in your afflictions. Pray without ceasing, until the Holy Spirit has nerved you with patience to endure unto the end!

And when you have that, get godliness. Godliness is something more than religion. The most religious men may be the most godless men and sometimes a godly man may seem to be irreligious. Let me just explain that seeming paradox. A real religious man is a man who sighs after sacraments, attends Churches and Chapels and is outwardly good but goes not farther. A godly man is a man who does not look so much to the dress as to the personhe looks not to the outward form, but to the inward and spiritual Grace. He is a godly man as well as attentive to religion. Some men, however, are godly and, to a great extent, despise form. They may be godly without some degree of religion. But a man cannot be fully righteous without being godly in the true meaning of each of these words, though not in the general vulgar sense of them. Add to your patience an eye to God. Live in His sight, dwell close to Him! Seek for fellowship with Him and you have got godliness. And then to that, add brotherly love. Be loving towards all the members of Christs Church. Have a love to all the saints of every denomination. And then add to that charity, which opens its arms to all men and loves them. And when you have got all these, then you will know your calling and election! And just in proportion as you practice these heavenly rules of life, in this heavenly manner, will you come to know that you are called and that you are elect. But by no other means can you attain to a knowledge of that except by the witness of the Spirit, bearing witness with your spirit that you are born of God and then witnessing in your conscience that you are not what you were, but are a new man or woman in Christ Jesus and are, therefore, called and elected.

A man over there says he is elect. He gets drunk. Yes, you are elect by the devil, Sir. That is about your only election. Another man says, Blessed be God, I dont care about evidences a bit. I am not so legal as you are! No, I dare say you are not. But you have no great reason to bless God about it, for, my dear Friend, unless you have these evidences of a new birth, take heed to yourselfGod is not mockedwhatever a man sows, that shall he also reap. Well, says another, but I think that Doctrine of Election a very licentious Doctrine. Think on as long as you please, but please to bear me witness that as I have preached it, today, there is nothing licentious about it! Very likely you are licentious and you would make the Doctrine licentious, if you believed it. But to the pure all things are pure. He who receives Gods Truth in his heart does not often pervert it and turn aside from it unto wicked ways. No man, let me repeat, no man has any right to believe himself elect of God unless he has been renewed by God! No man has any right to believe himself called unless his life is, in the main, consistent with his vocation and he walks worthy of that whereunto he is called! Out with an election that lets you live in sin! Away with it! Away with it! That was never the design of Gods Word and it never was the Doctrine of Calvinists, either! Though we have been lied against and our teachings perverted, we have always stood by thisthat good works, though they do not procure nor in any degree merit salvation, yet they are the necessary evidences of salvation! And unless they are in men, the soul is still dead, uncalled and unrenewed. The nearer you live to Christ, the more you imitate Him. The more your life is conformed to Him and the more simply you hang upon Him by faith, the more certain you may be of your election in Christ and of your calling by His Holy Spirit. May the Holy One of Israel give you the sweet assurance of Grace by affording you tokens for good in the Graces which He enables you to manifest!

III. And now I shall close up by giving you THE APOSTLES REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE.   
I put in one of my own to begin with. It is because, as I have said, it will make you so happy. Men who doubt their calling and election cannot be full of joy. The happiest saints are those who know and believe it. You know our friends say this is a howling wilderness and you know my reply to it is that they make all the howling themselves. There would not be much howling if they were to look up a little more and look down a little less, for by faith they would make it blossom like the rose and give to it the excellence and glory of Carmel and Sharon! But why they howl so much is because they do not believe. Our happiness and our faith are, to a great degree, proportionate. They are Siamese twins to the Christian. They must flourish or decay together   
*When I can say my God is mine,   
Then I can all my griefs resign!   
Can tread the world beneath my feet,   
And all that earth calls good or great.*   
But ah  
*When gloomy doubts prevail,   
I fear to call Him mine,   
The streams of comfort seem to fail,   
And all my hopes decline.*   
Only faith can make a Christian lead a happy life.   
But now for Peters reasons. First, because

if you do these things you shall never fall. Perhaps, says one, in attention to election we may forget our daily walk and, like the old philosopher who looked up to the stars, we may walk on and tumble into a ditch! No, no, says Peter, if you take care of your calling and election, you shall not trip but with your eyes up there, looking for your calling and election, God will take care of your feet and you shall never fall! Is it not very notable that in many Churches and Chapels, you do not often hear a sermon about today? It is always either about old eternity, or else about the millennium. Either about what God did before man was made, or else about what God will do when all are dead and buried. It is a pity they do not tell us something about what we are to do today, now, in our daily walk and conversation! Peter removes this difficulty. He says, This point is a practical point, for you can only answer your election for yourself by taking care of your practice. And while you are so taking care of your practice and assuring yourself of your election, you are doing the best possible thing to keep you from falling. And is it not desirable that a true Christian should be kept from falling? Mark the difference between falling and falling away. The true Believer can never fall away and perish, but he may fall and injure himself. He shall not fall and break his neck. But a broken leg is bad enough, without a broken neck. Though he falls, he shall not be utterly cast down. But that is no reason why he should dash himself against a stone! His desire is that day by day he may grow more holy, that hour by hour he may be more thoroughly renewed until conformed to the image of Christ, he may enter into eternal bliss! If, then, you take care of your calling and election, you are doing the best thing in the world to prevent you from falling, for in so doing you shall never fall.   
And now, the other reason and then I shall have almost concluded. For so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. An abundant entrance has sometimes been illustrated in this wayYou see yonder ship? After a long voyage, it has neared the haven but is much injured, the sails are torn to ribbons and it is in such a forlorn condition that it cannot come up to the harbora steam tug is pulling it in with the greatest possible difficulty. That is like the righteous being scarcely saved. But do you see that other ship? It has made a prosperous voyage and now, laden to the waters edge, with the sails all up and with the white canvass filled with the wind, it rides into the harbor joyously and nobly. That is an abundant entrance! And if you and I are helped by Gods Spirit to add to our faith, virtue and so on, we shall have, at the last, an abundant entrance into the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is a man who is a Christian. But, alas, there are many inconsistencies in his life for which he has to mourn. He lies there, dying on his bed. The thought of his past life rushes upon him. He cries, O Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner, and the prayer is answered. His faith is in Christ and he shall be saved. But oh, what griefs he has upon his bedOh if I had served my God better! And these children of mineif I had but trained them up better, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord! I am saved, he says, but alas, alas! Though it is a great salvation, I cannot enjoy it just yet. I am dying in gloom and clouds and darkness. I trust, I hope I shall be gathered to my fathers but I have no works to follow meor very few, indeed, for though I am saved, I am but just savedsaved so as by fire. Here is another one. He, too, is dying. Ask him what his dependence is he tells you, I rest in none else but Jesus. But mark him as he looks back to his past life. In such a place, he says, I preached the Gospel and God helped me. And though with no pride about himhe will not congratulate himself upon what he has doneyet does he lift his hands to Heaven and he blesses God that throughout a long life he has been able to keep his garments white. That he has served his Master. And now, like a shock of corn fully ripe, he is about to be gathered into his Masters garner. Listen to him! It is not the feeble lisp of the trembler, but with, victory, victory, victory! for his dying shout! He shuts his eyes and dies like a warrior in his glory. That is the abundant entrance. Now, the man who gives diligence to make his calling and election sure, shall ensure for himself an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.   
What a terrible picture is hinted at in these words of the Apostle Saved so as by fire! Let me try and present it to you. The man has come to the edge of Jordan. The time has arrived for him to die. He is a Believerjust a Believer. But his life has not been what he could wish. Not all that he now desires that it had been. And now stern Death is at him and he has to take his first step into the Jordan. Judge of his horror when the flames surround his feet! He treads upon the hot sand of the stream. He takes the next step. His hair is well near on end. Though his eyes are fixed on Heaven on the other side of the shore, his face is yet marked with horror. He takes another step and he is all bathing in fire. Another step and he is up to his very loins in flamessaved, so as by fire. A strong hand has grasped him that drags him onward through the stream. But how dreadful must be the death, even of the Christian, when he is saved so as by fire! There on the rivers brink, astonished, he looks back and sees the liquid flames through which he has been called to walk as a consequence of his indifference in this life. Saved he is thanks to God! And his Heaven shall be great and his crown shall be golden and his harp shall be sweet and his hymns shall be eternal and his bliss unfadingbut his dying momentthe last article of death, was blackened by sin. And he was saved so as by fire!   
Mark the other man. He, too, has to die. He has often feared death. He dips the first foot in Jordan. As his body trembles, his pulse waxes faint and even his eyes are well near closed. His lips can scarcely speak, but still he says, Jesus, You are with me, You are with me, passing through the stream! He takes another step and the waters now begin to refresh him. He dips his hand and tastes the stream and tells those who are watching him in tears, that to die is blessed. The stream is sweet, he says, it is not bitterit is blessed to die! Then he takes another step and when he is well near submerged in the stream and lost to vision, he says   
*And when you hear my eye strings break, How sweet my minutes roll   
A mortal paleness on my cheek   
But glory in my soul!*   
That is the abundant entrance of the man who has manfully served his Godwho, by Divine Grace, has had a path unclouded and serenewho, by diligence, has, made his calling and election sure and, therefore, as a reward, not of debt but of Grace, has entered Heaven with higher honors and with greater ease than others equally saved but not saved in so splendid a manner!   
Just one more thought. It is said that the entrance is to be ministered to us. That gives me a sweet hint that, I find, is dwelt upon by Doddridge. Christ will open the gates of Heaven, but the heavenly train of virtuesthe works which follow uswill go up with us and minister an entrance to us. I sometimes think if God should enable me to live and die for the good of these congregations, so that many of them shall be saved, how sweet it will be to enter Heaven and when I shall come there, to have an entrance ministered to me not by Christ, alone, but by some of you for whom I have ministered! One shall meet me at the gate and say, Minister, you were the cause of my salvation! And another and another and another shall all exclaim the same! When Whitefield entered Heaventhat highly honored servant of the LordI think I can see the hosts rushing to the gate to meet him! There are thousands there who have been brought to God by him! Oh how they open wide the gates! And how they praise God that he has been the means of bringing them to Heaven! And how they do minister unto him an abundant entrance! There will be some of you, perhaps, in Heaven, with starless crownsfor you never did good to your fellow creatures. You never were the means of saving soulsyou are to have crowns without stars. But they who turn many to righteousnessyours are the stars, forever and ever. And an entrance shall be abundantly ministered to them. I want to get a heavy crown in Heavennot to wear, but to have all the more costly gift to give to Christ! And you ought to desire the same, that you may have all the more honors and so have the more to cast at His feet, withNot unto us, but unto Your name, O Christ, be the glory! Therefore, Brethren, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.   
And now, to conclude. There are some of you with whom this text has nothing to do. You cannot make your calling and election sure, for you have not been called! And you have no right to believe that you are elected if you have never been called. To such of you, let me say, do not ask whether you are elected, first, but ask whether you are called. And go to Gods House and bend your knees in prayer. And may God, in His infinite mercy, call you! And mark thisif any of you can say *Nothing in my hands I bring,   
Simply to Your Cross I cling.*   
If any of you, renouncing your self-righteousness, can now come to Christ and take Him to be your All-in-Allyou are called, you are elect! Make your calling and election sure, and go on your way rejoicing! May God bless you. And to Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be glory forever more! Amen.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.   
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1820 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FALLEN ANGELS A LESSON TO FALLEN MEN

NO. 1820

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

God spared not the angels who sinned, but cast them down to Hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment. 2 Peter 2:4.

THESE are ancient things. Most men hunger after the latest news, but let us, on this occasion, go back upon the earliest records and think of the hoary past, before man was made. It does us good to look back upon the past of Gods dealings with His creaturesherein lies the value of history. We should not confine our attention to Gods dealings with men, but we should observe how He acts towards another order of beingshow He dealt with angels before man had become the second sinner. If angels transgress, what is His conduct towards them? This study will enlarge our minds and show us great principles in their wider sweep. We shall inevitably make mistakes in our judgment as to Gods conduct towards men if we do not remember sufficiently how He has dealt with beings who are, in certain respects, much superior to the human race. By seeing how God treated the rebellions angels, light may be cast upon His dealings with us and thereby misapprehensions may be removed.

We shall go to our subject at once, asking aid from the Spirit of all Grace. We will first view the mysterious fact of the fall of the angels and their casting away for our warning. Then, secondly, we shall regard the fact of the hopeless doom of the angels who sinned as it stands in contrast to the amazing mercy of the Lord towards men. Thus our second head will lead us to view the text for our admirationI hope for the increase of our grateful love and reverent wonder.

I. First, then, let us consider our text FOR OUR WARNING. God spared not the angels who sinned, but cast them down to Hell. Behold, here, a wonder of wickednessangels sin! A wonder of justiceGod spared them not! A wonder of punishmentHe cast them down to Hell! A wonder of future vengeance, for they are reserved for judgment! Here are deep and terrible themes. Black as tempest are the facts and flashes of terrible lightning flame forth from them.

Let us receive a warning, first, against the deceivableness of sin, for whoever we may be, we may never reckon that on account of our position or condition, we shall be free from the assaults of sin, or even certain of not being overcome by it. Notice that these who sinned were angels in Heaven, so that there is no necessary security in the most holy position. We know that they were in heavenly places, for it was from that high abode that they were cast down to Hell by the terrible right hand of the Eternal King. These angels that kept not their first estate, but sinned against God, dwelt with their brethren in the courts of the Most High. They seemed to be, as it were, walled round with fire to keep out all evil from them. Their communications were only with perfect spirits like themselves and yet, as they were undergoing a probation, they were made capable of choosing evil if they willed to do so, or of cleaving to good if their hearts were steadfast with their God.

There were none about them to tempt them to evil. They were, on the contrary, surrounded with every good and holy influencethey saw God and lived in His courts. They conversed with seraphim and cherubim. Their daily engagements were all of a holy orderworship and service were their duty and delight. Their company was select; there were no lapsed classes among them to render the moral atmosphere impure. They were not only in a Paradise, but in the central abode of God Himself! Yet evil entered into the breasts of angelseven envy, ambition, pride, rebellionand they fell, fell never to rise again

*High in the bright and happy throng,   
Satan, a tall archangel sat.   
Among the morning stars he sung,   
Till sin destroyed his heavenly state.   
Twas sin that hurled him from his throne. Groveling in fire the rebel lies   
How are you sunk in darkness down,   
Son of the Morning, from the skies!*

Beloved Hearer, this should teach us not to presume upon anything connected with our position here below. You may be the child of godly parents who watch over you with sedulous care and yet you may grow up to be a man of Belial. You may never enter a haunt of iniquity. Your journeys may be only to and from the house of God and yet you may be a bond slave of iniquity. The house in which you live may be none other than the house of God and the very gate of Heaven through your fathers prayers and yet you may, yourself, live to blaspheme. Your reading may be bound up with the Bible. Your companions may be of the choicest. Your talk may concern holy things. You may be as if you were in the garden of the Lord, shut in to everything that is good and every evil shut out from youand yet you may have no part nor lot with the people of God. As there were a Ham and an ungodly Canaan even in Noahs Ark, so may it turn out that you may be such in the very midst of all that should make you gracious and sanctified!

It is unhappy, indeed, to read the annals of human life and to meet with men that have gone from their mothers side, have gone from where their father knelt in prayerhave gone out from brothers and sisters whose piety was not only unquestionable, but even remarkableand they have gone to be leaders in every form of wickedness! Many of the enemies of the Cross of Christ have been so trained in godliness that we find it hard to believe that they could, indeed, be so vile! An Apostle must declare it with tears before he is believed! The sons of God they seemed to be, but they turned out to be sons of perdition after all! Let no man, therefore, arise and shake himself, as though no sins could ever bind him because he feels himself to be a very Samson through his connections and surroundings.

Yes, Sir, it may be that you shall fallfall foully, fall desperately unless the Grace of God is in you! You may fall so as never to come to God and Christor find eternal life. It was so with these angels. The best natural thing that creation can work is not sufficient to preserve the fickle creature from sin! Regeneration must come inthe work of the Holy Spirita yet higher work than the material creating power of God. Or else you may put the creature where you pleaseand that creature may be perfect and yet sin will reach and destroy him! You and I are far from perfect. We are not unfallen angels! We are not angels at all and we have evil hearts within us. Therefore let us not imagine, for a moment, that the most select position can screen us from the worst of sin.

The next thought is that the greatest possible ability, apparently consecrated, is still nothing to rely upon as a reason why we should not yet fall so low as to prostitute it all to the service of the worst of evils. Angels are beings of remarkable power. We know that they have amazing intelligence and beauty. We read of one whose face was like that of an angel of God. When a thing is spoken of as being exceedingly good, it is often connected with angelsmen did eat angels food. It is supposed that everything with regard to them is of superior order and of refined quality. I suppose that a spirit that is not cumbered with flesh and blood, as we are, must be delivered from much that hampers and beclouds. Oftentimes a clear judgment is dimmed by a headache, or an attack of indigestion. Anything that affects the body drags down the mind, but these angelic beings are delivered from such weakness and they are clothed with a glory of strength, beauty and power.

Hear, then, and observe! However great Lucifer was, he degenerated into Satanthe Son of the Morning became Apollyon the Destroyer. However excellent the fallen angels may once have been, they have now become potent only for mischieftheir wisdom has curdled into cunning and their strength has soured into a vicious forceso that no man may say within himself, I am a clear thinker, therefore I shall never become a blaspheming infidel. Or, I am gifted in prayer, therefore I shall never become a blasphemer. You know not what you may become. There is a great difference between gift in prayer and Grace in prayergift will breed pride and pride will ensure destruction! It is only Grace that can preserve unto eternal Gory.

There is also a great difference between office and person and, therefore, a man may not say, I am a ministerI shall be kept faithful in the Church of God. Ah me! But we have seen leaders turn aside and we need not marvel, for if angels fall, what man may think that he can stand? To trust our office as a security is to rest upon a broken reed! The Grace of God can keep the least and weakest of us, but, apart from that heavenly power, how dare any man hope to be preserved to the end! Self-confidence is the beginning of declension. He that reckons that he is past temptation is already entangled in its net. We must never presume. Angels fellwhy should not men? An angel occupies a high position near the Throne of GodAre they not all ministering spirits? We have evidence in Scripture that they are called on grand occasions to discharge high commissions for the King of kings. And yet, these courtiers, these household messengers of the palace of Heaven, these domestics of Gloryeven these went astray, fell and turned to devils!

Let no man dream that because he occupies an office in the Church his salvation is, therefore, securean Apostle fell! The arrows of the Prince of Darkness can reach the highest seats of the synagogue. The high places of the field of service are not free from danger. No, they are the more perilous as they are the more notable! The powers of darkness make their direst onset upon the foremost soldiers of the Cross, hoping to overthrow the standard-bearers and create confusion throughout the camp.

Neither, dear Friendsto continue my warning must any of us suppose that we shall be kept by the mere fact that we are engaged in the most sublime possible office. Apart from the perpetual miracle of Gods Grace, nothing can keep us from declension, apostasy and spiritual death. Oh, but I spend my time, one may sayI spend my time wholly in the service of God! I go from door to door seeking the lost souls of men, as a city missionary. Or, I conduct a large class in the school and I have brought many to the Savior. All this is good, but if you trust in

it for your standing before God, it will certainly fail you! If any one of us were to say, But I am a minister, called to offer prayer and to preach the precious Word of Godmy engagements are so sanctified; they bring me into such hallowed fellowship with holy things that it is not possible that I should fallthis would be the height of folly!

We need not go beyond the pale of professed ministers of Christ to find specimens of every infamy of which man is capable! After having preached to others, there is grave cause for trembling lest we be castaways, ourselves. No, there is nothing in the most sacred office in the Church to preserve us or our characters. Office, if we trust in it, may even become, as in the case of Judas, a Tarpeian rock from which we may be cast down to our destructionfor the angelic office in Heaven did not keep the angels from being hurled over the battlements of Glory when once they dared to sin. Let not the angels of the Churches hope to be kept from falling unless He that bears the seven stars in His right hand shall keep them even to the end!

I want you to notice, as a great warning, that this sin of the angels was not prevented, even, by the fullest happiness. Oh, what a change, dear Friends, from the joy they once knewwhen they were the servants of Godto being cast down to Hell in chains of darkness as they now are! The devils go about the world tempting men, but they are never released from their darkness. They cannot escape from the prison which they make for themselvesthe blackness and horror of Gods judgment always shut them in, be they where they may. What a difference between that and the Throne of God and the vision thereof, which was once their joy! The service of God was once theirs, but now the slavery of evil holds them in iron bonds. Once they took delight in the high praises of their Creator, but now they curse Him in their heart of hearts.

Once, on high days, when the servants of God came together, they sang for joy as they beheld new worlds created by their great Lord and King! Now, everything He does is as gall and wormwood to them. They curse Him and themselves, and they are always busily occupied in seeking to pull down His kingdom and to quench His Light among the sons of men. Oh, the misery of these old offenders! They once were supremely happy but this happiness of theirs did not suffice to preserve their fidelity. The most golden wages will not keep a servant loyal to the kindest of masters. The most blessed experience will not preserve a soul from sinning! You may come here and be greatly blessed under a sermonand sweetly sing and pray with intense fervor and seem carried up to the gates of Heaven by itbut remember that no feelings of joy or happiness can be relied upon as sufficient holdfasts to keep us near the Lord.

We have seen men drink of the cup of the Lord till they appeared to be full of love to Him and yet they have gone back to be drunken with the cup of devils! We have known men preach the Gospel and yet, afterwards, blaspheme every truth of Revelation and deny the inspiration of the Book of God! We have known them appear to be among the holiest and the best and yet they have come, at last, to be common frequenters of the most evil haunts of the city and to be ringleaders in folly! Is not this a dreadful thing and should it not be a warning to every one of us? Let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall. There is One who is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before His Presence with exceedingly great joybut if we do not trust in Him and abide in Himwe shall perish! If we dare to confide in our position, our ability, our office, our service, or our experience, we shall, sooner or later, discover that we are prone to sin and that when we sin, God will not spare us any more than He spared the angels who sinned.

This warning, be it noted, applies itself to the very foulest of sin. The angels did not merely sin and lose Heaven, but they passed beyond all other beings in sin and made themselves fit denizens for Hell. When Christ was describing the most wicked of men, He said that he was a devil. One of you is a devil, was His expressionfor the devil is the most wicked form of existence. Now, is it not singular that after being in Heaven, it remained possible for an angel to become so dreadful a being as a devil in Hell now is? If any of us come very near to the Kingdom of God and yet the life of God is not in usif we are joined with the Church of God, perform holy duties and yet depend upon ourselves and so fall into sinwe may fall into the foulest of sins. I do not think that Judas could have been what he was if he had not been an Apostle. The best of that which looks like goodness must be used as the raw material with which to make a traitor who will sell his Master!

The devils have gone into open war with Godthe same beings that once bowed before His awful majesty are now openly and defiantly at war with the God that made them! They once could sing their chorales with delight and day without night, circle the Throne of God rejoicingly. But now they blaspheme, rage and rave against all that is good in earth or Heaven. They go about like roaring lions seeking whom they may devour even they who once would have been ministering spirits, eager to save and bless. They were once loyal subjects, but now they are traitors, rebels, seducers. They try to lead the people of God astray. They do their utmost to stir up sin in every human bosom. So bad have they become that their leader actually met the Son of God, Himself, and tempted Him to fall down and worship him! Was ever such infamous, such infernal impudence as for the devil, himself, to ask the eternal Son of God to do him homage? O base proposal, that the purity of the Most High should bow itself before the impiety of a fallen spirit!

Yet, so far have devils proceeded that in them evil has reached its ripeness and maturity. Let this be a lesson to us. I must not for a moment think that apart from the keeping of Gods Spirit, I am incapable, even, of the foulest sin. Recall the story of Hazael. When the Prophet told him what he would do, he exclaimed in amazement, Is your servant a dog that he should do this thing? He was not only dog enough to seek the Syrian throne, but he was devil enough to suffocate his master with a wet cloth and then to carry out with eagerness all those terrible deeds of barbarity which the Prophet had foretold! We may yet do horrible deeds which we think ourselves incapable of doing! How much of devil there lies within the unregenerate heart, no man can tell.

O my unrenewed Hearer, I would not slander you, but I must warn youthere are all the makings of a Hell within your heart! It only needs that the restraining hand of God should be removed and you would come out in your true colorsand those are the colors of iniquity! If it were not for the restraints of society and Providence, there would be eruptions of evil, even in the most moral, sufficient to shake society to its foundations! An officer in India had tamed a leopard. From the time when it was quite a kitten he had brought it up, till it went about the house like a cat and everybody played with it. But he was sitting in his chair one day, asleep, when the leopard licked his hand. It licked it in all innocence, but as he licked, the skin was broken and the taste of blood came to the leopard and from that moment it was not content to dwell with men. It rushed forth to kill and was no more at ease till it reached the jungle! That leopard, though tamed, was still a leopard! So a man, sobered by moral motives, but unchanged in heart, is a still fallen man, and the taste of blood, I mean the taste of sin, will soon reveal the tiger in him!

Wash a Russian and you find a Tartar. Tempt a moralist and you discover a sinner! The thin crust of goodness which is formed by education, soon disappears under temptation. You may be everything that looks like good, but unless you have been born again, you are still capable of the direst evil. It does seem a horrible thing to me that there should stream from a mans lips the foulest blasphemy and yet, he that utters it, was once accustomed to sing in the House of God and bow his knee with the saints. O God, that ever a creature bidding fair to serve his Maker, should sink to such a depth! Yet such horrors abound! The vessel which adorned the lordly festival is broken and thrown on the dunghilland even so, the excellent and honorable are defiled and cast away!   
I know what some are whispering, I never could become an open reprobate! How do you know that? You already question the warnings of Scripture and you may go further before long! He that is the most sure is the most insecure! But he that cries, Hold me up, Lord, shall be made to stand! Be this our confession, O Lord, I know that I shall become utterly vile except Your sovereign Grace prevent! In humility let us cast ourselves upon the mighty Grace of God and we shall be kept! In fervent earnestness let us cry to the Strong for strength and we shall not be overcome by evil! He that presumes shall fallhe that confides shall stand!

The text may lead us a little farther before we leave it, by giving us a warning against the punishment of sin as well as against the sin, itself. Read thisGod spared not the angels who sinned, but cast them down to Hell. They were very great; they were very powerfulbut God did not spare them for all that. If sinners are kings, princes, magistrates, millionairesGod will cast them into Hell. If they were commanders of all the forces of the world, he that is a just and righteous judge would not spare them because of their dignities and powers. God spared not the angels why should He spare you, you great ones of the earth? They were very numerous, too. I do not know how many there were, but we read of legions of devils on one occasion. But God did not spare angelic sinners because there were so many of themHe made room in Hell for them all and set them in darkness and in bonds, every one of them. God will not spare sinful men because of their millionsthe wicked shall be turned into Helland all the nations that forget God. Be they few or many, sinners must be punished, and God will not turn away His wrath from those who do iniquity.

God did not spare the rebel angels because of their unity. I never heard of devils quarrellingit is very amazing in Scripture to notice their unanimitytheir concord with one another. But though hand join in hand, yet shall not the wicked go unpunished. You unbelievers may combine together to hate and oppose the Gospel, but it matters not, God will deal with your confederacies, break up your unities and make you companions in Hell even as you have been comrades in sin! God spared not the angels who sinned, but cast them down to Hell.

Neither did He spare them because of their craft. There were never such subtle creatures as these areso wise, so deep, so craftybut these serpents and all the brood of them had to feel the power of Gods vengeance, notwithstanding their cunning! Men often escape at the bar of their country because of their long-headed ways of evading the law. They keep within legal bounds and yet are great villains. Or if they go over the line, they hire a clever tongue to plead for them, be they as guilty as they may, and through crafty pleading they escape from a righteous sentence. Thus is it with men, but no counselors can pervert judgment with the Most High! He will deal out justice even to a hairs breadth and He will by no means spare the guilty. God spared not the angels who sinnedwhy should He spare any guilty son of Adam? Be sure that He will not spare any one of us if we live in sin. Unless we accept the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, our sin will find us out and God will find our sin outand He will cast us, also, down to the place prepared for the devil and his angels. Let the flatterers of today preach what they may, the Lord will punish men who live and die in their sins! He spared not the angels who sinned certainly He will not spare men if they sin. Let this stand as a warning to us.

II. But now I want to carry you on and ask all your attention to this second point for OUR ADMIRATION. I want you to admire, dear Friends, the fact that though angels fell, the saints of God are made to stand. The angels sinned fatally, but the saints of God cannot sin, for they are born of God. You know the sense in which the Apostle means thatnot that we do not all sin, but that we do not so sin as to depart from the living God, give up our allegiance to Himand cease to be His loving children. No. He keeps himself, says the Scripture, and that wicked one touches him not. But what a wonder it is! I tell you, when the tales of Gods people shall be written and the records of the saints shall be read by the Light of Glory, we shall be miracles of Grace to ourselves and to one another! Oh, we shall say, I had almost gone, but the hand of Grace interposed and snatched me from slipping over the awful precipice. My mind almost consented to that sin and yet I was able to cry out, How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? There was great stress of weather and my poor boat was almost on the rocks, but still, though I grazed the bottom, yet I did not make shipwreck.

Oh, if I had been left at that moment, one will say, what would have become of me? Though I had tasted of the heavenly gift and the powers of the world to come, yet had I been left to myself at that hour, I would have so fallen that I could never again have been brought to repentance! But I was keptpreserved by as great a miracle as if a spark should fall into the sea and yet burn on, or a straw should be blown into a heated furnace and should not be consumed, or a moth should be trodden on by a giant and yet remain uncrushed

*Kept alive with death so near,*

*I to God the glory give.*   
To think that men should stand where angels fall! We are, by Sovereign Grace, called to be as near to God as the angels ever wereand in some respects we are nearer! We are the bodyguard of Christ, His chosen ones with whom He communes. We are the table companions of our Lordwe eat of His bread and drink of His cupand are made partakers with Him. We are lifted up to be one with Him and are made to be members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. Yet Gods eternal unbounded power keeps us in the day of temptation and leads us so that if we go through the rivers we are not drowned, and when we pass through the fires we are not burned. O, the splendor of triumphant Grace! Neither the glory of our calling, nor the unworthiness of our original, shall cause us to be traitors. We shall neither perish through pride nor lust, but the new nature within us shall overcome all sin and abide faithful to the end.

Now, unto Him that is able to keep us from falling, unto Him be honor and glory, and dominion and power forever and ever. I cannot look back on my past life without feeling the tears rush into my eyes at the remembrance of how I have been preserved in the hour of trial. We could not possibly tell, nor would we wish to tell in public, of those hours of weakness, those times of strong delusion, those moments of slipping and of fainting which have happened to us. We grieve as we remember our worse than childish weaknesses! And yet we have not stained our garments! We have not dishonored the holy name by which we are named! We have not been suffered to turn aside from the straightness of our path so as to bring grief to the Holy Spirit and dishonor to the Church of God! Verily this is a wonder!

Mr. Bunyan tells us that Christian, by the light of day, looked back on the Valley of the Shadow of Death which he had passed through in the nighttime and saw what a narrow path he had kept, and what a quay there was on one side and what a miry place on the otherand where the hobgoblins were and all the fiends of Hell. When he looked back on it, he was lost in admiration and gratitude! So it must be and will be with you if, through a dangerous way you have yet held on in your plain course and have not turned from your integrity. We shall be full to the brim with gratitude and love! Grace shall reign unto eternal life. Redeemed men shall stand where angels fall, for God shall keep them! He is able to hold them up and He will do it even to the end!

Now, let us learn another lesson full of admirationand that is that God should deal in Grace with men and not with angels   
*From Heaven the sinning angels fell,   
And wrath and darkness chained them down. But man, vile man, forsook his bliss,   
And mercy lifts him to a crown!   
Amazing work of Sovereign Grace   
That could distinguish rebels so!   
Our guilty treasons called aloud   
For everlasting fetters too.*

Now, you that do not believe in the Doctrine of Election, but kick at it and bite your lips at the mention of it, listen to this! God gave fallen angels no Savior, no Gospel, no space for repentanceyet He gives these to menwhy is this? What reason was there? Can you conceive one? Why did God pass the fallen angels by and yet look in love upon the sons of men? Oh, says one, perhaps fallen angels were the greater offenders of the two. I do not think socertainly many men go far to rival devils in rebellion.

Perhaps men were tempted and angels were not. Stop! Let us be clear on this point. Very likely Satan, the first angel that fell, was not tempted, but just as likely all the others were. Their leader tempted them as much as Eve tempted Adam, or the serpent tempted Eve. The mass of fallen angels may have been seduced by the example of Satan, the Prince of devils. I do not, therefore, see any great difference as to that matter. This I do know, that some men are greater sinners than devils. No, you ask, how is that? I answer that the devil never yet rejected Free Grace and dying love! The devil never yet struggled against the Holy Spirit in his own conscience! The devil never yet refused the mercy of God! These supreme pinnacles of wickedness are only reached by you who are hearers of the Gospel and yet cast its precious message behind your backs! It is amazing that God should deal in mercy with men who act so wickedly, while yet He never spoke of mercy to the fallen angels, nor set before them terms of peace! They were given over, then and there, to be bound in chains of darkness until the judgment of the Last Great Day!

Notice that God gave the angels no respite. He did not wait for them to continue in sin for years, but when they sinned, they fell. The punishment followed hard on the crime. They cast God out of their hearts and He cast them out of Heaven. How different is His conduct to some of you! You have sinned through a series of years. How old are you? Twenty years? Thirty? Forty? Fifty? Sixty? Seventy? Is it 80 years that you have lived in rebellion against God? And yet He has not cut you down! Wonderful patience! He banished the angels from His Presence at once. He spared not the angels, but He has spared you. Why is this?

The Lord never entered into any parley with the angelsnever invited them to repentance or to mercy. Oh, but what parleys God has had with some of you! I am not the only one who has entreated and tried to persuade you! Yes, with some of you I have pleaded very earnestly that you would turn from the error of your ways and livethat you would believe in Christ and find eternal life. But why should the Lord offer peace to men and not to fallen angels?

For the angels, God never made a Covenant of Grace, ordered in all things and sure. They broke their Covenant of Works and they fell, never to rise again! For the angels, there was never a sacrificeno dying Son of God for themno bloody sweat and wounded hands and feet for them! And yet a great Atonement is prepared for men. What sovereignty of Gods Grace is displayed here! He opens the golden gates of love for us and shuts the iron gate on beings nobler than we are! The Spirit of God strives with us, but He never strives with fallen angels. Devils are left to themselves, but concerning man, the Lord cries, how can I give you up? How justly might God have left us alone, for we have been given unto idols and yet He follows us with the admonitions of His mercy!

For the devils there is no pardon, no hope, no gate of Heavenand yet there is

all this for men. Oh, dear Hearers, do not, I pray you, reject these choice gifts of Almighty love! If God is so specially gracious to the race of men, let not man become singularly ungrateful to his God, presumptuously wanton in his sin! Let us turn unto the Lord with full purpose of heart, seeing that He turns to us with such specialty of favor. I am sure that it is a great wonder and a thing for admiration that God should look upon us and not on fallen angels, because, as I have already said, angels certainly are not worse sinners than some men have been. Angels are not more willful than we have been, for we have sinned against light and knowledge with deliberate intent and purpose.

Angels are certainly more valuableif God had wanted one of the two races to be employed as His servants, the best would have been chosen and these are not men, but angels! Angels can do more for God than we canyet He has chosen us. Angels must, surely, be more missed than mentheir downfall made a great gap in Heaven. We go there to fill the space and to repair the breach which was made when they were cast down from Glory. But, surely, it were easier to restore the angels who came from Heaven than to take up inferior creatures who had never been there! If we make a distinction between men in the distribution of our charity, we very properly say, Let us first do good to those who would be the most miserable without it.

Now, men have never known Heaven and, consequently, cannot so much feel the loss of it as those who have been there and have fallen from it. We are like people that have always been poorbut the angels have been in Heaven and are, therefore, like wealthy persons who have come down to poverty! What a Hell to them to be out of Heaven! What misery to those spirits to miss the eternal glories which they once enjoyed! One would have thought, therefore, that God would have restored the angels before He raised up the human race. But He has notHe has redeemed us and left the elder race of rebels unrestored! No man knows why and in our amazement we cryHow is this? Why this election of Grace?

Tell me, you who would leave God no choice, but would deify the will of man, what all this means? Where is your proud theory that God is bound to treat all alike, as if we had a claim on God? I point you to the fallen angels and what can you say?

Sometimes princes, when they mean to give a pardon according to their will, say to themselves, We will pardon the man who will be most dangerous if we leave him to be our enemy. Now, bad as men are, and great enemies of God as they become, yet the devil has more power to harm God than a man can haveand yet God does not pardon the devil! He lets Satan go on with all his dreadful power and do his worst in reviling his Lordand yet the Lords mercy comes to us whose powers are within so narrow a range compared with the fallen angels! He makes choice of puny man to receive His Grace!

One would think that to restore an angel was more easy and more agreeable to the plan of the universe than to exalt fallen man. There is nothing to do but to put an angel back in his place. But men must be taken into a new existence! Christ, Himself, must come and be a Man and, to wash away the sin of man, Christ must die! Nothing more could have been needed had devils been saved. I cannot conceive the salvation of angels to be more difficult than the salvation of men! I rather conceive it to have been the easier thing of the two if the Lord had so willed it. And yet, involving, as it did, the Incarnation of the Son of God and His death to make atonement, the infinitely gracious Father condescended to ordain that He would take up men and would not take up the fallen angels! It is a marvel! It is a mystery! I put it before you for your admiration. Oh, Sirs, do not despise it! Let not such amazing Sovereignty of Grace be treated with contempt by any of us! Talk no more about the injustice of the election of certain men, for if you do, the devils will bear witness that you are quibbling at the royal prerogative of the great Lord who says, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

Now, I think that I see in this a great argument with Gods people. Has the Lord given up angels and chosen you? It reminds me of that famous text, Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honorable, and I have loved you. Therefore will I give men for you, and people for your life. I gave Egypt for your ransom; Ethiopia and Seba for you. See, He has passed angels by and He has made choice of us! What a height of Grace! Behold how He loves us! What shall we do in return? Let us do angels work!

Come, Brothers and Sisters, let us glow with such a fire of devotion as might have burned in an augers heart! Let us be as intensely zealous as a redeemed angel might have been! Let us glorify God as angels would have done had they been restored and made, again, to taste Divine favor and infinite love! What manner of people ought we to be? What manner of lives ought we to live? What manner of consecration ought to be upon us? Should not our whole being live unto God?

I have given you this somewhat in the rough, for time flies, but think it over and profit by it. Think it over, you ungodly ones, and do not cast away mercy like this. When you read, He took not up angels, but He took up the seed of Abraham, be full of surprise, and fly at once to Jesus! And, O you saints, as you read it, say to yourselves

*For more love than seraphs know   
We will, like seraphs burn.*   
God bless you, for Jesus sake. Amen.   
**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONJohn 17.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK261, 668, 869. TO MY CONGREGATION OF HEARERS AND READERS:

By the great mercy of God I was permitted to leave my house on Tuesday and commence my journey to the South of France. It seemed impossible for me to recover while in our trying climate and so, in great weakness, I have ventured to make a move. I beg your prayers for my recovery and especially for the sanctification of my grievous pains, so that they may turn out to be for Gods Glory. Week by week I shall carefully prepare these Sermons and I hope they will be attended with the Divine blessing. In them I hope to keep up my communion with thousands of dear friends, though we are divided by many a league.

Friends at the Tabernacle, I have heard of one enthusiastic friend who so misses my ministry that he wished he could fall asleep till I return. That is exactly what I hope you will not do! Be doubly alive! Seek for a revival of religionlabor for it! Everything shines through the fire while the Builder is absentlet it be seen that our building is not wood, hay and stubble which will disappear, but precious metal that will remain to the Glory of God. KEEP UP THE PRAYER MEETINGS! Sustain every holy work. Live near to God. Continue in concord. Devote yourselves wholly unto the Lord. With Christian love to my dear Hearers and Readers,

I am yours, for I am Christs, *C. H. SPURGEON.* Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2441 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE LORDS KNOWLEDGE, OUR SAFEGUARD

NO. 2441

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS DAY, DECEMBER 1, 1895. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JUNE 30, 1887.

The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished. 2 Peter 2:9.

THERE are very narrow limits to our knowledge. There is a great breadth to our conceit, but the things that we really know are very few, after all. He who is wisest will be the first to confess his own ignorance. Our faith in the superior knowledge of God is a great source of comfort to us. That He knows everything is a sort of Omnipresent covering to our naked ignorance. Though we know not as yet, we rejoice that He knows, and it is better that He should know than that we should know. Knowledge is safer in the hands of God than it would be in our hands. Only the Infinite God is to be trusted with infinite knowledge!

The first words of our text, The Lord knows, often come as a comfort to my own mind. The text says, The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations. This is only one of the many things which the Lord knows. For instance, sometimes we meet with perplexing doctrines perhaps we endeavor to effect reconciliation between the Predestination of God and the freedom of human action. It is better not to wade too far into those deep waters, lest we lose ourselves in an abyss! The Lord knows. There is a reconciling point in His mind as to all the great Truths which He has revealed. One was wishful, the other night, to tell me some great secret which he had discovered, but I was not so wishful to hear it, for I did not think that I should be any holier or any happier if I did hear it! I was just as pleased not to know as I should have been to know the secret. That insatiable craving to know everything draws away the life of men from what ought to be their insatiable craving, namely, to be like God, to know Him, to trust Him, to love Him and to serve Him.

Sometimes, dear Friends, we come across puzzling prophecies. Some Brothers and Sisters profess to know all about prophecy. I do not, neither am I quite sure that they do. This I know, that you have only to place one set of interpreters of prophecy over against another set and they speedily swallow one another, as Aarons rod swallowed the rods of the magicians of Egypt! But I am satisfied to feel that the Lord knows. And He knows how every prophecy will be fulfilled and the exact order in which the prophecies will come to be facts. We may make our prophetic charts if we like, but God will follow His own chart. We may think that we have discovered the clue of the maze in the Apocalypse and in Daniel, but whether we have, or have not, is of no very great consequence! John and Daniel spoke by the Holy Spirit and their words will all be fulfilled in due timeand the Lord knows all about the whole matter.

The same is the case in reference to the Lords amazing promises. Many of them are so amazingly bright and grand that we sometimes ask ourselves, How can all these things be fulfilled? And possibly, like Abraham, we may have a Divine promise, yet there may come a precept or a Providence which seems to murder the promise and render its fulfillment impossible, as when God said to the Patriarch, In Isaac shall your seed be called, and then bade him offer up his son in whom the promise was wrapped up! Yet Abraham, although he did not know how the promise would be fulfilled, staggered not because of unbelief, for he felt that God knew. God will keep His promises, Brothers and Sisters. We need not try to help Him as she did who sought to secure the blessing for her favorite son by setting him on an evil and mischievous piece of plotting to deceive his aged father.

It is not your work to fulfill Gods promisesyou will have enough to do to obey His preceptsand you will need His help to enable you to do that! He does not need your help in fulfilling His promises, but you may say with regard to the whole of them, The Lord knows how to fulfill them and He will fulfill them to the dot of every i and the stroke of every t. Not one good thing that He has promised shall ever fail to be bestowed upon those who put their trust in Him.

The same is the case, also, dear Friends, with regard to afflictive Providences. I cannot see the wisdom of this trial, says one. I cannot understand why this trouble has befallen me, says another. Why do you wish to understand? Why do you need to see? We walk by faith, not by sight! I have known what it is to feel a thrill of sacred joy within my soul when my Divine Master has given me a task altogether beyond my strength. I have felt, If this work had been only half as heavy as it is, I might have attempted it, but now I know that I cannot perform this task in my own strength, so I am cast upon Omnipotence. It is poor work paddling about on the muddy beach, lifting first one foot and then the other! The grand exercise is to swimand you must swim when you cannot touch the bottom. Sometimes God puts us into an ocean of afflictions where there seems to be no bottom. Our trials are altogether too heavy for us, they quite overwhelm us. Oh, then, what a mercy it is if we have faith enough to trust in God!

If Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had been summoned to the common trial by ordealwell-known among our ancestorsthat of walking over red-hot plowshares, they might have hoped, somehow, to pick their way. But when they were bound in their coats, their hose, their hats and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning, fiery furnacewhere there was no possibility of escape unless Jehovah, Himself, entered the furnace with themwell, then, they had a grander arena for the display of faith in God! They had passed from the littleness of human possibility into the grandeurs of Omnipotenceand God was glorified as they walked loose in the midst of the fire having had nothing burnt except their bonds! It is a great gain when any tried or persecuted child of God has the company of his Heavenly Father even in the midst of the fiery trial to which he is exposed.

It is the same with regard to grievous temptations. Some of the Lords very dear children are sorely tempted, sometimes by their own thoughts, into which Satan casts the bitterness of his blasphemies. Sometimes by trials at home which they cannot understand, or by afflictions which seem like that wind from the wilderness which smote the four corners of the house where Jobs children were feasting. Well now, at such times, when we cannot comprehend our temptations, but seem altogether in a maze, and at a standstill, then let us fall back on these three words, The Lord knows. The infinite breadth of Divine Wisdom comprehends all our needs, all our sorrows, all our feeblenesses, all our trials and temptations! Let this be like an all-surrounding atmosphere to us, breathing which we shall feel our life strengthened and our hearts made glad!

In our text, the Apostle calls attention to one item of Gods knowledge. He makes us feel quite safe as to the government of the universe, seeing it is in the hands of the All-Knowing One, the Lord who knows, on the one hand, how to deliver the godly out of temptations and, on the other hand, how to reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished.

I. In considering these words, I shall ask you, first, to think of THE LORDS KNOWLEDGE IN REFERENCE TO CHARACTER. This may not appear on the surface of the text, but it is evidently implied, for the Lord would not know how to deliver the godly if He did not know who were godly and He would not know how to reserve the unjust unto the future judgment if He did not know who were unjust! Reflect, then, for a few moments, upon the Truth of God that the Lord knows the godly. Sometimes they come under trials and temptations so that they are not known to others. Their former friends and their kindred stand aloof from them, as Jobs friends and kindred did from him. The Patriarch was so sorely smitten and wounded that his three friends concluded he must be a hypocrite. He was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil, a very favorite of Heaven, yet his friends did not know him as one of the godly because of the great trials which had befallen him.

Yes, and sometimes, because of imperfections, others may not know us to be godly. It is a pity that it should be so, but there are times when sin fiercely assails the Believer and he is sorely put to it. He has to confess that he gives cause to others to stand in doubt of him. Well, Beloved, when others do not know you to be godly, the Lord knows! The Lord knows them that are His. There have been secret passages between you and God which nobody else can ever know. He perceives your sincerity in the midst of your infirmity and, though He will chasten you for your sin, He still knows that you believe in Him. You may, like Samson, lose your eyes and be shorn of your strength. I pray that you may not fall so low as that, but even if you do, remember that it is written of the blinded Nazarite, howbeit the hair of his head began to grow, again, and the Lord gave him back his former strength, for, notwithstanding all his folly and his sin, he was a Believer in Jehovah! He had a firm, childlike faith in the Most High, and in the power of that faith he did great exploits and the Lord, even in Samsons death-struggle, acknowledged him as His servant and avenged him of his adversaries.

Do not let us get into such a condition that others may justifiably doubt us, but if they maliciously doubt usif without cause they cast out our name as evil, if they slander us and invent fictions and falsehoods to injure our characterlet us come back to this, which is implied, if not stated, in our text, The Lord knows the godly.

It may sometimes come as a great comfort to us that the Lord knows the godly when they do not know themselves. I have heard some of Gods people speak as though this were not possible, but I boldly assert it from my own observation of hundreds of those who truly love the Lord. We may sometimes be so beset with temptations and our spirit may so sink within us that we may have to stand in doubt as to our own salvation and say, Am I really the Lords, or am I not? There are times when we have to hear the question from our own conscienceand why should we not hear it from our own conscience, since Peter heard it from his Masters own lips, Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me? I would like to say to you, with the poet Cowper

*Come, thena still small whisper in your ear He has no hope who never had a fear   
And He who never doubted of his state,   
He may, perhapsperhaps he maytoo late.*

It is not an ill thing to go and search to the very foundations to see whether there is peace between God and your soul or not! Some of the best of the Lords servants have had to go through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, wherein the voice of the evil spirit has been louder in their ears than the whisper of their own faithand they have had to stand still in utter bewilderment! They could not get their sword out of its sheath, or, if they could, they were unable to use it, for it seemed as if the enemy could not be touched by their sword. The only weapon they could handle was the weapon of all-prayer, as they cried out in their anguish, My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Now remember, when you do not know yourself to be godly, God knows! Here is the comfort for our hearts, The Lord knows the godly. He knows both them and their waysbut the way of the ungodly shall perish.

As this is true about the godly, so is it most solemnly certain concerning the ungodly. The Lord knows the unjust. That is to say, despite their loud pretensions of piety, the Lord knows that they are really ungodly. They have joined the Church, they wear the name of Christian, they are even honored among Christian menbut the Lord knows the unjustno garb of religion can conceal their wickedness, no form of pious speech can hide the insincerity of their hearts! Oh, should there be any such here, may this flash of light go right through them! The Lord knows the unjust, whatever they may pretend to be.

He knows them, also, notwithstanding their great possessions. I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. And many a hollow profession has been gilded over with riches and, because the man was well-to-do, they thought that he must be doing welltwo very different things, however. But God can read us through and through. If we climbed to a throne, He would discern the state of our heart even there! And if we had the acclamations of a nation for our devotion and piety, He would discover us, even then, for all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do! Let this not be forgotten by any of us! Let us not try to deceive the Lord, but let everything be open and above-board before Him. There should be in us all the most strict truthfulnessI am afraid that there is a tinge of hypocrisy even in the most gracious. May God take it away from us and let us walk in the Light of God as He is in the light, while the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, still cleanses us from all sin, for we shall still need it!

II. Now let us come to the very marrow of the text, which is thisTHE LORDS KNOWLEDGE IN REFERENCE TO THE GODLY. The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations.

Notice their namethe godlythat is, the people who know God. He is no dream of fancy to themthey know Him. He is the most real of all existences to them. Knowing Him, they fear Him. They have learned to fear and tremble before the Most High. It was a name of scorn which they gave to the Society of Friends when they called them, Quakers. But, after all, it was a right thing for them, like Moses, to exceedingly fear and quake in the Presence of the Most High God. The godly also trust God. To them, God is the pillar of their confidence, the brightness of their life, the life of their light, the light of their delight! They rest on Him, as on the Rock of Ages, and they rest nowhere else. These godly ones also love Godtheir heart goes out towards Him. He is their Joy. He is their Companion, their Friend. He is All in All to them. The Lord knows these godly ones and He makes them to know Him. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His Covenant.

Well, it is certain that these godly ones will have to suffer temptation. Gold is tried in the furnace. Good things are tested and provedand godly men are full often tempted and afflicted and tried. They shall, very few of them, get to Heaven without passing through the trying waters and testing fires, else to them the promise would not be true, When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers they shall not overflow you; when you walk through the fires, you shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon you. The Lord knows all about them and their trials! And especially, according to our text, The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations. Let me make a few observations upon that Truth of God.

The first is this His knowledge answers much better for them than their own would do. They do not know how they will be delivered out of temptations. Sometimes they make a guess and so make a mistakeand then they are disappointed. They would be far wiser if they left knowledge to the Most High and kept to their own sphere, which is that of trusting, believing and knowing that the Lord knows! One says of Adam that he knew a great deal and it was a pity that he did not know one thing more, namely, that he knew enough, for had he known that he knew enough, he would not have eaten of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil! You know enough when you believe. If you know nothing except how you can put you hand into the hand of God, you may go boldly on with a surer tread than the best-sighted man ever knew by his own wisdom alone! Commit your way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. Better that the knowledge be with the Lord, your Head, than in your own head, for you are not the Lord! The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations. It is almost a cant expression among the ungodlyThe Lord knows. Oh, but let it be a very solemn expression among us, The Lord knows and, blessed be His name, The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations!

In the next place, His knowledge of their case is perfect. He knew the temptation before it came! Before He appointed it, He weighed it in His unerring scalesnot in the big scale of the coal merchant, but in the delicate scales of the chemist who measures every tiny grain and has a scale that will turn with the weight of a single hair! If God appoints me 10 afflictions, the devil, himself, cannot make 11 of them! If the Lord shall put half an ounce of a bitter ingredient into your cup, all the devils in Hell cannot make an ounce of it! God knows your affliction before it comes to you and He knows it when it comes to you. When Israel was in Egypt, the Lord knew their afflictions. Well said David, You have known my soul in adversities. The Lord knows just where the trial touches and pinches us, how we grieve under it, how far it has gone and how far it must not go. The Lord knows our afflictions with a perfect knowledge before they comeand when they comeand He also knows all about them when they go. I bless His name that He can foresee the effect of trial upon His children! He knows what Grace it will brighten. He knows what shams it will destroy. He knows what it will teach us and He knows what it will make us unlearn, which we thought we needed to know. He knows all about us from beginning to end and, consequently, His knowledge of our temptations is absolutely perfectand we may be content and rest in perfect peace. He knows the way that I take.

And this is true in every case of every child of God. The Lord knows how to delivernot merely some one godly man, or some 20 godly men, but the godly as a whole, all of them! Dear Friend, to put it very personally, the Lord knows how to deliver you out of your present temptation. But do not put your hand to sin in order to deliver yourself! That is what Satan will tempt you to do. Lay not the hand of Uzzah upon the Ark of the Lord, much less upon any piece of furniture in your own house! Oh, the temptation there is, sometimes, to indulge in a hasty temper, or to speculate in business, or to keep back a part of the truth, or to pretend to be something which you are not, or to allow a sin to go unreproved because you wish to escape reproach or to avoid censorious judgments! No, the Lord knows how to deliver you, and if He does not deliver you, then say with those three holy children whom I mentioned a few minutes ago, If it is so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto you, O king, that we will not serve your gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up. Do not attempt to supplement the wisdom of God with your insanity, for it is nothing better than insanity when you fancy that you can ever profit by wrongdoing!

Gods knowledge, as revealed to us in this verse, gives us a very comfortable thought. If the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation, then, depend upon it, there is a way of deliverance out of every temptation. The Lord does not know what does not exist. If He knows that there is a way of deliverance, then there is a way of deliverance, and there is a way of escape for you! You do not see itdo not ask or wish to see it. Ah, those eyes of ourswould God that they were put out! I was going to say we see a great deal too much, Brothers and Sisters, or we think we do. And because we say we see, we go blindly on, stumbling and blundering every foot of the way! It is for God to see and it is for us to believe and to trust in Him! There is a way of deliverance and it will be proved before long that there is a way of deliverance for you. If you believe it, you shall see it. God knows how to deliverthat means that there is a way of deliverance!

But it means more. The Lord knows how to deliver the godly in the way most profitable for themselves. We have invented various ways of deliverance, but God has not used them. And then we have found out another way, but He has not acknowledged that. And we have sought another way, but He would not have that. No, He knows how to deliver, so why do you come in with your inventions? Verily, I shall apply that text even to you, God has made man upright; but they have sought out many inventionseven inventions for escaping from trouble and trial! But the Lord knows which is the best way for their deliverance. He will bring you out of Egypt, but not in the way you thought, that you should flee away all of a sudden and escape by stealth. No, nothis is how He will deliver you, even as He delivered Israel of oldHe brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes. He will bring you out in a profitable way and a right way!

And, best of all, He will bring you out in the way which will be most glorifying to Himself. With a high hand and an outstretched arm, He led His people out of Egypt, shattering all the might and pomp of the proudest monarch of the day! And the emancipated nation sang unto the Lord a new song as they took their timbrels and danced before Him who had triumphed gloriously over their cruel oppressor. That is what you, also, shall yet do. The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations in the way that is most glorious to Himself. Gods children ought to think less of what is done, at any time, than of the Glory that God gets out of it. We sometimes want to see a great work, but a great work may not glorify God. If there is a little, obscure, unknown workand to human eyes it remains almost a secretif it glorifies God, it is to be preferred to the most gigantic wave of supposed revival that, after all, would leave behind it the names of men, but the name of God would be forgotten! In all things let God be glorified! Oh, that we would always aim at this objective! The salvation of men is a grand aim, but it must always be in subordination to the Glory of the Lord, that His arm may be revealed and that all flesh may see it together. Oh, that God might be glorified! Be this our prayer in our trials and in coming out of our trials, Father, glorify Your name.

III. Now, I must say a few solemn and weighty words upon THE LORDS KNOWLEDGE IN REFERENCE TO THE UNJUSTand to reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished.

Observe that Peter does not say, the ungodly. He is not dealing with their inward character so much as with their outward conduct. They are unjust. Ungodliness is unrighteousness and, sooner or later, the ungodly are seen to be unjust.

Ungodly men are legally unjustthey have broken Gods Law and, therefore, they are not justified in His sight. Worse than that, they are evangelically unjust, for they have not believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, they have not His justifying righteousness to cover them. And then they are

practically unjust, for their life is an injustice to God and to men. They have not received the sanctifying power of the Spirit to make them just in their daily lives.

God knows how to deal with these people. Let me read Peters words, again, The Lord knows how to reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished. You hear their blasphemies. You mark their infamies and your indignation burns against thembut the Lord knows how to deal with them. He knows how to reserve them under restraints. He acts like a magistrate who commits a prisoner for trial at the Great Assize. That is what God has done with some of you ungodly onesyou are committed for trial at the Day of Judgment. The Lord lets you live, but you are only out on bail and you will soon have to appear before the great Judge of Heaven and earth.

According to the Revised Version, and I think that translation is correct, the punishment has already begun. The Lord knows how to go, on even, now punishing the ungodly! That unrest of theirs, those fears, the tremblingall show that God is dealing with them. They swell themselves out very big, they laugh with loud laughter, they deny the Truth of God and they scoff at Christbut, believe me, dear Friends, you need not wish to be like they areno, not even like the healthiest, the wealthiest, the proudest and the greatest of them! The Lord knows how, even now, to smite them, and He does smite them! The life of an ungodly man, at its best, is a horrible life. I would sooner be Gods dog than the devils darling! It is better to be the most weeping Jeremiah than the most boastful Pharaoh. The day will come when the ungodly will, themselves, see it to be soand the proudest tyrant will envy the lowest man or woman who crept humbly to the Mercy Seat and cried, God be merciful to me, a sinner!

The Lord knows how to deal with the unjust even now and He will know how to deal with them by-and-by. O Sirs, these are no trifling matters of which I am speaking! The unjust may be in the fullness of their strength, but the Lord can bring them down to lie on a sickbed. Even there they may defy God, but He knows how to stop their impious mouths. Ah, He saysand that is an awful textAh, I will ease Me of My adversaries, and avenge Me of My enemies, as if they vexed and plagued His Holy Spirit and, at last He says, I will be rid of them. They shall not trouble Me any longer. I will ease Me of My adversaries. Then He sends the reaper, whose name is Death. I think that I meet him now, swinging his sharp sickle, and I say to him, Whither away, O Death? What are you about to do? Will you dare destroy that scarlet poppy blazing in the midst of the growing corn? Ah, he says, one touch of my sickle will bring it down. And that blue flower, yonder, in all its splendid majesty of beauty? Ah, he says, I will lay that low with all the common grasses of the field.

The Lord knows how to deal with the unjust in the next world as well as in this. Oh, that dreadful thought! Trouble not yourselves about it, except to flee from the wrath to come! Raise no perplexing questions in your mind. The Lord knows how to deal with the unjust in the world to come and that dealing shall be according to the strictest rule of justice. The Judge of all the earth shall do rightmen shall not be able to accuse Him of injustice! He will deal with them as the God who cannot err. They are in His hands and, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Do not believe those who tell you that it is not. They are the servants of the devilbe they who they maywho seek to delude your souls upon this matter! I beseech you, escape for your lives! Look not behind you, stay not in all the plain but escape to the Cross of Christ, for there, and there, only, is there salvation for the unrighteous! Oh, seek it now, for Jesus sake!

I close with an illustration of the text which I feel almost certain was in the mind of Peter when he wrote these words, The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished. Turn to the 12th Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, where you have the record of Peter lying asleep in the prison, watched by soldiers, and yet at dead of night the angel of the Lord came into the prison, smote Peter on the side, bade him bind on his sandals, gird himself and follow him. Peter went through all the doors of the prison till he came to the great iron gate and that opened of its own accord! And there stood Peter, out in the street, in answer to the prayers made at the Prayer Meeting at Mrs. Marks house, when the Christians in Jerusalem were gathered that night to pray for him. This miracle proves that the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of trial!

Read the rest of the chapter, please, for that takes in the other half of my text. Herod sat upon his throne of state and all the people were paying him homage. And when he made an oration from his golden throne, they shouted, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. That same God, who had delivered Peter, knew how to lay hold of Herod, for we are told that immediately the angel of the Lord smote him and he was eaten of worms and gave up the ghost! The first is a brilliant deed of infinitely wise Grace, the next is an astounding deed of n infinitely wise Justice! It is not necessary that you go to the gallows to meet your dooma few worms can destroy you! It is not necessary that you be killed in a great railway accident, or that there be a collision at sea, or that you fall on the field of battle! Herod was eaten of worms. A grape-stone has, before now, choked and killed a man. A draught of water has been poisonous to another. A little gas, that was almost impalpable, has laid another in his grave. There is not one of you ungodly ones who can escape if God shall say to His angels, Smite that man while he sits in his pew. He has resisted My mercy and rejected My love. He will not come to Christ. You, too, may be eaten of worms before another Sunday comes! God grant that you may not meet such a fate, but may you learn the lesson of this text and feel the force and power of it in your own souls, for Jesus Christs sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **1 PETER 1:16-21; 2:1-10.**

1 Peter 1:16. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. There is need in these perilous times to come back to such an elementary Truth as this. The Truths taught us in Gods Word are not fables, myths, or merely parables, but they are matters of actual fact. The Apostles were eyewitnesses of the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christeyewitnesses of His majesty. We receive these Truths of God without the slightest question and base our faith upon them. We would be troubled, indeed, if we had any doubts whatever about these great foundation facts of our holy religion.

17, 18. For He received from God the Father honor and Glory when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent Glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from Heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount. They were not deceivedneither Peter, nor James, nor John. There was such a voice from God, Himself, which they literally heard. It was the Father bearing approving witness to the Person and work of His only-begotten and wellbeloved Son.

19. We have also a more sure word of prophecy. Surely nothing could be more sure than the evidence presented to the Apostles in the holy mount! Yet Peter thus writes to express his utmost confidence in the Word of God. Surer than the light he saw, which dazzled him. Surer than the voice he heard which he never failed to remember and to which he always bore unfaltering witness! Surer, even, than these things is that Divine Book which is still preserved to usWe have also a more sure word of prophecy.

19. Whereunto you do well that you take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the day star arises in your hearts. You already have the assurance of the Word, itselfyou must build upon that and upon that, alonebut you shall have added to that a, day dawns, and a, day star, in your own hearts. We have the witness within us nowThe Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. And those things which we have received by faith we now have proven to be true by their effect upon our own souls! We know the Light of God, now, because we walk in it! We know it to be the Light of God for it has enlightened us.

20, 21. Knowing this, first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. How we rejoice in this fact! We shall never give it up. It is a disbelief of Inspiration which lies at the bottom of all the modern theoriesbut with this disbelief we have not the slightest fellowship! In our inmost souls we believe that holy men of God spoke as they were moved (or, borne along), by the Holy Spirit. They spoke not for their own age, alone, neither were the prophecies given to a few persons so as to belong privately to thembut the whole Inspired Scripture stands fast for all the faithful and is the Truth of God to us, today, even as it was to those to whom it was first spoken!

1 Peter 2:1. But there were false prophets also among the people. How true that still is! Be not startled, Brothers and Sisters, as though some strange thing had happened to us in this generation! It was always so and so it will continue. If there are true Prophets, there will also be false prophets. And if there is the Spirit of God, there will be the spirit of evil! And often, in proportion as the everlasting Truth of God is full of power, the everlasting lie will be full of power, too, and will strive mightily against it. That same sun and shower which shall make yonder wheat to grow, will, at the same time, cause the thorns to spring up! And perhaps for a time they may threaten to choke the wheat until, at last, the wheat will choke the thistles. There were false prophets also among the people.

1. Even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies. They always try to do their hateful work privately and then they ask, What is all this fuss about? We have not departed from the truth, we are as sound in the faith as any of you are, when they know, traitors that they are, that they are undermining the foundations and trying to take away the very cornerstone of the faith! These false teachers would deceive the very elect of God if it were possible, but they are not easily deceived, for God has given them a discerning mind by which they try the spirits whether they are of God. The Lord Jesus said of His sheep, A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. Sheep though they are, they have discernment enough to know their shepherdand the godly soon detect false teachers who privily bring in damnable heresies,

1, 2. Even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be spoken of evilly. They say, It is narrow; it is old-fashioned; it is not in accordance with the spirit of the age. I know not what else they say, but, for all that they say, it still remains the way of truth.

3, 4. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingers not, and their damnation slumbers not. For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to Hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgement. If God spared not the angels that sinned, He will not spare any who sin, however high their position may beeven though they are the angels of the Churches, He will cast them down to Hell.

5. And spared not the old world, but saved Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly. Which some in these days say could not be consistent with the acts of a God of Love. Their imaginary deity, from whom they have taken away every glorious attribute of holiness and justice, would not have done this! But the God that judges righteously must and will punish sin, as He always has done and, this God is our God forever and ever, even the God who is a consuming fire.

6-8. And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds). I love to see in Gods people a holy horror of the sin which surrounds them. In several of the prayers in which we joined before we came upstairs to this service, there were many tears and cries over the wickedness of our streetsthe impurity and the drunkenness which defile so many all around us. Alas! Alas! Men seem bent on horrible iniquity and it looks as if London, this great modern Babylon, will repeat the story of the cities of the plain! Well may we pray, O Lord, have mercy upon the people!

9. The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations. As He delivered Lot   
9, 10. And to reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished: but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise government. We have far too many, nowadays, of both these sorts of sinners, and of the two sorts joined in onethem that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government.   
10. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. There let us cease our reading and turn to another holy song in which we will praise our God, whose Grace has made us to differ from the ungodly by whom we are surrounded.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #447 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GODS ESTIMATE OF TIME

NO. 447

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 27, 1862, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

But, Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. 2 Peter 3:8.

FROM this text certain persons, more desirous to find arguments for their theories, than a truthful exposition of the Apostles meaning, have drawn the inference that a day in Scripture is typical of a thousand yearsthat is to say, that inasmuch as God was six days in creating the heavens and the earth and then rested on the seventh day, so we must expect to have a thousand years for every day. A thousand years in which the new heavens and the new earth will be in preparation, and then we shall enjoy in the seventh thousand a period of perfect peace and holiness.

Now such may possibly be the case. It may so happen that when the six thousandth year of labor shall be over, we shall enter upon the millennial rest. The last millennium may be a Sunday to the preceding six. But even if we knew this, I am not sure that it would be of any great assistance to us in foretelling the day when the Church militant should be universally triumphant through the coming of her Lord. The chronology of the past is surrounded with so much obscurity that we question whether any man will be able to tell us when the six thousand years will be over, or within a hundred or two of how old the world is.

Our curiosity would be rather tantalized than gratified, even if this theory could be verified. For all the chronologies we have, even that which the translators have put into our Bibles, are matters of conjecture, and their accuracy is far from indisputable. We could not, therefore, ascertain the times and seasons any more certainly, nor ought we desire to do so, for the Father keeps them in His own power and as for the time of the end we believe no man knows it, no, not even the angels of God.

Brethren, we would not wish to discover what God has hidden, nor to question where He declines to answer. It is certain, however, that our text does not teach the doctrine of the Sabbatical seventh thousand years. For looking at the whole drift of the passage, you will see that the words were written to meet the arguments of some who said, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the Fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. No, answers the Apostle, It is not so.

And then he quotes the memorable case of the flood as an instance of Divine interposition. Knowing, moreover, that even the faithful had begun to chide the tardy hours, and think the promise long in fulfillment, he meets the adversary and consoles the friend by the words of our text. He as much as says, You know not what you say when you speak of length of time, for you forget that in Gods estimate one day is as a thousand

years and a thousand years as one day. The Apostle, no doubt wrote this also for the encouragement of Christians in our day, who, because the chariot of Christ is long in coming to the triumph, are growing weary and are ready to cast down their arms and leave the conflict.

Like a good officer rallying the dispirited, he exhorts them to patience Beloved, it is not long. It may seem a tedious age to you, but it is fitting that you tarry for a while. Cease your impatience, and while you cry, Why are His chariots so long in coming? remember that the time is not long to Him. To Him one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years are as one day. What the Apostle seems to teach as the general principle is that our estimate of time is not the right one, certainly not the Divine standard. And that when we look at time in relation to God, we must remember that the distinctions which are known to us are not observed by Him.

Before, however, I enter upon the subject itself, let me remark that the Apostle says he would not have us ignorant concerning this matter. And therefore, beyond a doubt, great importance is to be attached to it. Some have a willful ignorance, and of them the Apostle speaks in the preceding, verseThis they willingly are ignorant of. See to it, Brethren, that you do not commit this sin of shutting your eyes to the light. Others have an idle ignorance. They will not study. They do not search the Scriptures. And, therefore, many things are not revealed to them. That the soul should be without knowledge is not good. And more especially, that the Christians mind should be without knowledge of God must be exceedingly harmful.

We cannot form an idea of what God is but we should be very careful that we do not make Him to be what He is not. Our Apostle is most earnest that upon this point of Gods eternity we should make no mistakes, and should not estimate and measure the existence of the Infinite One by our rules and standards, because, practically, the worst effects may flow from an error here. Impatience may ripen into unbelief. This may rot into petulant complaint, and that may breed inaction, sloth, disobedience, rebellion, and we know not how many other evils.

But now, to the text at once and we will handle it, as God shall help us, in three ways. First, we shall say a little as to the general principle of the text. Secondly, taking the words of the passage, we shall dwell upon Gods estimate of a day. And then, in the third place, still keeping to the words of the sentence, we shall enlarge upon Gods estimate of a thousand years.

I. First of all, then, we shall take the statement before us AS A GENERAL PRINCIPLE, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.

1. In opening up this general principle, we remark that all time is equally present with God. When we know that an event is to transpire today, it appears very near to us. But when we know that it will not occur until a thousand years have elapsed, we think nothing of it. We feel that we shall have gone to our graves long before that era, and therefore the event does not strike us as having any connection with ourselves. Now, it is not so with God. All things are equally near and present to His view. The distance of a thousand years, before the occurrence of an event, is no more to Him than would be the interval of a day.

With God, indeed, there is neither past, present, nor future. He takes for His name the I AM. He does not call himself the I WAS, for then we should conceive that He used to be something which He is not nowthat some part of His Character had changed, or some attribute ceased from existencefor there is an ominous sound of annihilation in the sound of the word, He WAS. Is it not rather a knell for the dead, than a name for the living?

Nor does our Lord God speak of Himself as the I SHALL BE, for that might lead us to imagine that He is not now something which He is to be in the ages to comewhereas, we know that His Being is perfect, His Essence infinite, His dominion absolute, His power unlimited, and His glory transcendent. Development is out of the question, He is all today that He will be in future. Of the Lord Jesus we read that He is the Everlasting Father and yet He has the dew of His youth. Childhood, manhood and old age belong to creatures, but at the right hand of the Most High they have no abode.

Growth, progress, advancementall these are virtues in finite beings but to the Infinite the thought of such change would be an insult. Yesterday, today and tomorrow, belong to dying mortalthe Immortal King lives in an eternal today. He is the I AM. I AM in the present. I AM in the past, and I AM in the future. Just as we say of God that He is everywhere, so we may say of Him that He is always. He is everywhere in space. He is everywhere in time. God is today in the past. He is today already in the future. He is today in that present in which we are.

This is a subject upon which we can only speak without ourselves fully understanding what we say, but yet, perhaps, a metaphor may tend to make the matter a little simpler. There is a river flowing along in gentle slope toward the sea. A boatman is upon it. His vessel is here, soon it is there, and soon it will be at the rivers mouthonly that part of the river upon which he is sailing is present to him. But up yonder, on a lofty mountain, stands a traveler, as he looks from the summit he marks the source of the river and gazes upon its infant stream, where as yet it is but a narrow line of silver.

Then he follows it with his clear eyes until it swells into a rolling flood and he tracks it till it is finally absorbed into the ocean. Now, as the climber stands upon that Alp, that whole sparkling line of water adorning the plain is equally present to him from its source to its fall. There is not one part of the stream which is nearer to him than another. In the long distance he sees the whole of it, from the end to the beginning. The boatman yonder has shifted his place since we have been looking upon him from the top of the mountain. He cannot see the whole of the river. He can only speak of the river under the heads of where he was, where he is, and where he is to be.

But we who see it as a whole speak of it as a whole, and it is all present before our view. Such, we think, is the stream of time to God. From the altitude of His observance He looks down upon it and sees it in one gaze, taking in, not at many thoughts but at one thought, all the revolutions of time and all the changes of ages and seeing both the thousands of years

that have gone and the thousands that are yet to come, as present at one view before His eyes.

Or, to use another figurethere are some stars which are known as double stars and with the strongest telescope it seems impossible to discover any distance between them. They are all but joinedthere are certain motions by which the astronomer perceives they are two stars, and not onebut to the common observer they seem as one. Even with the strongest telescope, we say, no distance is apparent between them. And yet it is perfectly certain that there may be millions and millions of miles of space between those two stars. But from the distance at which we stand they resolve themselves into one. So it is with the events of time.

Such, for instance, as the Fall and the Redemption. There is to us a space of some thousands of years. But God, who is far-seeing, from His lofty Throne, looks down upon them and they resolve themselves into one. He sees the Fall as taking place in the morning of time and the Redemption as completed before eventide has come. To Him they are one thought. We look at the Fall and weep over it and then afterwards we view the restoration in Christ and rejoice. But God regards the whole as onethe Fall and the rising again of Israel are one. He links them so closely together that He clearly beholds the glory which by the whole occurrence is brought to Him and the common good which is given to the creatures that His hands have made.

I know that by figures, however simple we may make them, we cannot set forth God to human eyes, for the face of none of His attributes can be seen. Yet it seems to me that we may by these thoughts be led to remember that a thousand years in the future are to God but as one day and so, too, with the past, since He looks upon all things in one eternal NOW, as they stand perpetually present before His eyes.

Let the sinner remember this. His sins, he says, were committed ten or twenty years ago. To God they are present in unmitigated hue of scarlet at this moment. Let the sinner remember this when he thinks of death and of the penalty after death. Ah, he says, it is a long time to come. Not so, Sinner. To God it is but as a day and if you could estimate it aright, how near the judgment is to you, and how close are those consuming flames into which impenitent souls must be cast! Think of this, I pray you, O dying Sinner, tremble, and God help you to look upon your years as one day, and oh, remember, that one day in Hell will be more painful than a thousand years on earth. God keep you from that place, for His names sake!

2. Still, taking the text as a general principle, it teaches us in the next place, that all time is equally powerless with God to affect Him. A day does not make any particular change in us that we can notice. We do not meet our friend at night, after having seen him the previous morning and say, My dear Sir, how much older you look! There is no doubt we all do grow older in one day, but the change is not very perceptible, at least by such coarse, common optics as those which mortal men possess.

But if you take fifty yearswhat a difference is perceptible in any of us! Some of my dear friends round about me, who are now gray or bald, were, fifty years ago, fine, tall, handsome young men in the full strength and vigor of their days. And others of us, twenty years ago were prattling boys, fond of play and frolic, and now we have come to manhood and are bearing the burden and heat of the day. The fingers of time blot the Epistle of life very sadly. As to this present congregation, wait but a hundred years and where shall we all be? Unless the Lord comes we shall, every one of us, be slumbering in the dust, awaiting the trump of the archangel.

But as a day seems to make no change with us, so but far more truthfully, a thousand years make no change with God. Ages roll on but He abides the same as when the waves break themselves against the rock and the rock stands fast forever. Brethren, we need be under no apprehension that God will ever be affected with weakness through the revolutions of time. The Ancient of Days, ever omnipotent, faints not, neither is weary. Is the Lords arm waxed short? Is His ear heavy that He cannot hear? Is His arm shortened that He cannot save?

We shall find, if this creaking earth is to perform revolutions upon its axle for another thousand years longer, that the Lord will show Himself as strong to help His servants and as mighty to crush His foes as previously. And as time brings no weakness, certainly it shall bring no decay to God. Upon His brow there is never a furrowno signs of palsy are in His hands. In the vision, His head and hair, we are told, are white like wool, as white as snow, as the emblem of His eternity, as the Ancient of Days. But His locks are bushy and black as the raven, said another, as the emblem of His perpetual youth and of His eternal strength.

O Sun, your fires shall one day become extinct! O Moon, you shall hide your light! And you, you Stars, when you are ripe, shall fall like fig leaves from the tree! And as for you, O Earth, your ancient mountains already crumble to decay and you yourself and all that dwells on you shall pass away as a garment that is worn out! But as for You, O God, You are the same and of Your years there is no end. From everlasting to everlasting You are God! And as no weakness and no decay can be brought to God by time, so no change in His purpose can ever come through revolving years. To that which He has set His seal He stands fast and what His heart decrees, that will He do. He knows no change, He is not a man that He should lie, neither the son of man that He should change His mind.

Moreover, as there can be no change in His decree, so no unforeseen difficulties can intervene to prevent the accomplishment of it. Has He not said, and will He not do it? Has He not commanded and shall it not come to pass? There shall be no unforeseen and unprovided energy required no unexpected impediments shall block up His path. Up till today He has leveled the mountains and bridged the seas. Up till now His own right hand and His holy arm have gotten Him the victory. Up till now no weapon formed against Him has prospered, and every tongue that has risen against Him in judgment, He has condemned. And so shall it be world without end.

As long as there is a work to do, He shall do it. As long as there is an enemy to conquer, that enemy shall be overcome. Conquering and to conquer is Your course, O Lord, and throughout all ages You are the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. One day, in the matter of

change, is to God as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. 3. Yet furtherno doubt the text intends to teach that all time is insig  
nificant to God. Within the compass of a drop of water we are told that

sometimes a thousand living creatures may be discovered, and to those   
little creatures, no doubt, their size is something very important. There is   
a creature inside that drop which can only be seen by the strongest microscope, but it is a hundred times larger than its neighbor, and it feels,   
no doubt, that the difference is amazing and extraordinary. But to you   
and to me, who cannot even see the largest creature with the naked eye,  
the gigantic animalcule is as imperceptible as his dwarfish friend. They   
both seem so utterly insignificant that we squander whole millions of  
them and are not very penitent if we destroy them by the thousands. But what would one of those little animals say if some Prophet of its  
own kind could tell it that there is a creature living that could count the   
whole world of a drop of water as nothing? That it could take up ten thousand thousand of those drops and scatter them without exertion of half its   
power? That this creature would not be encumbered if it should carry on  
the tip of its finger all the thousands that live in that great worlda drop   
of water? That this creature would have no disturbance of heart, even if  
the great king of one of the empires in that drop should gather all his armies against it and lead them to battle?   
Why, then the little creatures would say, How can this be, we can  
hardly grasp the idea? But when that philosopher could have gotten an  
idea of man, and of the utter insignificance of its own self, and of its own  
little narrow worldthen it would have achieved an easy task compared  
with that which lies before us when we attempt to get an idea of God. The   
fact is, it is only because He is infinite that He can even observe our existence. We think of the infinite nature of God in being able to marshal all   
the stars and govern all the orbs which bespangle the brow of night. But I   
take it to be quite as great a wonder that He should even know that such  
insignificant nothings as we are in existence, much more that He should   
count every hair of our heads and not suffer one of them to fall to the  
ground without His express decree.   
The Infinite is as much known in the minute as in the magnanimous,   
and God may be as really discovered by us in the drop of water as in the   
rolling orb. But this is wonderful of God, that He even observes us. What   
do you think now, Brethren? Do you not think that the thousand years   
which we make so much fuss about are only comparable to a drop, and   
that the one day that we think so little of is a particle of that drop and   
that both the drop and the particle are alike to God and are utterly insignificant to Him?   
They are not to be mentioned. They are but ciphers in His great existence. They are but drops in the ocean of His life, they are but one leaf in  
an eternal forest of existence, they are but one grain of sand on the   
mighty shore of the perpetual being of the Eternal One. A thousand years   
are as a day and a day as thousand years.  
4. I think we ought also to learn from the text that all time is equally   
obedient to God. You and I are the servants of time but God is its sovereign Master. I cannot make an hour longer than it isI often wish I   
could. When there is but an hours space between some important labor,  
and more preparation is needed, one would pull an hour at both ends if  
one could. But it is rigidly an hour and refuses to be lengthened. There   
are times when we would make a day, if we could, much shorter. When we  
are racked with pain, we say in the morning, Would God it were evening! We want to bring the two ends of the day together but unhappily they   
refuse to move from their fixed position. Time, inexorable Time, goes on,  
with so many ticks of the clock and though every motion of the pendulum   
may be as the cutting of a sword into our vitals, yet Time will not relent,   
but on he goes. To the miserable he will never be fast, and to the happy he  
will never be slow. He himself, and his footsteps, retain incessantly one   
ordained motion.   
Not so, however, with God. Time is not His master. If He shall say to the   
sun, Stand still and you, moon, in the valley of Ajalon, they must stand   
there eternally, unless He bids them move again. And if, on the other  
hand, He should bid them speed their course till the dial should go forward many degrees, it must be so. The horses of the sun must hasten  
their speed, they must fly onward as God Himself shall ordain, for He is  
their charioteer and the reins are in His hands. To Him, if the days were   
longer, or if they were shorter, it would be nothing. He cares not for these. Oh, Brethren, we understand Him not. But let us adore Him. We cannot comprehend Him, but let us admire Him. I say again, this is wonderful that He is Times Master and bids him move slowly or rapidly and Time   
is obedient to the behests of the Eternal God. One day is with the Lord as   
a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.  
II. Only a few words upon the second headGODS ESTIMATE OF A   
DAY. He can make a day as useful, and to Him it shall be as long as a   
thousand years.  
Brethren, I think this is one of the most brilliant of the Churchs hopes.  
We have been saying, How many converts have been made by the Missionary Society during fifty or sixty years? And we have said, Well, at   
this rate, how long will it be before the world is converted? Ah, At this  
rate. But how do you know Gods rate? God can do as much in a day as   
has been done in a thousand years that are past, if so He wills it. To the   
snail a furlong is a very long distance, but to a stag or a hound, how little   
it is. And then to a steam engine it is nothing. And then to a ray of light it   
becomes nothing at all. And then there may be something that travels as   
much more swiftly than light as light does more swiftly than the snail and   
then where would distance be? It is annihilated. It is gone.   
So is work and labor and toil with God. It is for you and I continually to   
work, work, work. And if our pace is but that of the snail, we must still   
persevere, hoping to reach the end. But the day may come when God shall   
make one minister more mighty than a thousand. When one sermon shall  
be enough to convert a congregation. When that one congregation shall in  
an instant be endowed with fiery tongues and all the Brethren shall go   
forth and themselves become preachers. And before one day, one natural  
day is set, it may be possible for God to have made the light of the Gospel flash from one end of the earth to the other, as quickly as the light of the   
sun travels from east to west.   
Limit not the Holy One of Israel   
*When He makes bare His arm,   
What shall His work withstand?   
When He His peoples cause defends,   
Who, who shall stay His hand?*   
When He comes forth out of His chamber like the sun, what thick darkness shall shade His light? He looses the bands of Orion and guides Arcturus with his sonsshall He not, when He chooses, loose the bands of   
His Church, and guide forth those stars of His right handthe chosen  
preachers of the Gospel of Christ? Only let Him will it, and there shall be   
one day written in the records of the Church that shall be equal in  
achievements, in conquests, and in triumphs, to any thousand years of  
her history recorded previously.   
This should lead us to remember that when God speaks of judging the   
world at the Day of Judgment, He will find no difficulty in doing it. Two   
hundred judges might find it difficult to try in one day all the cases that  
might be brought before them in a single nation. But God, when He holds   
the great assize, shall be able to convict every guilty one and to absolve  
every penitent and that, too, in one day. The Judgment could not be performed better if it lasted through an age. It shall be none the worse because it is confined to a day.   
Oh Master, let us see Your great works! Come forth and once again  
make days illustrious things. When You brought up Your people out of   
Egypt, when You did lead them through the Red sea, You needed not a   
thousand years to break the chivalry of Egypt and to raise a wail from the   
sons of Mizraim. Twas but an uplifted roda few hours of divided sea, a   
terrific union of the parted floods and lo, Egypts horses and chariots  
passed away and they sank like lead in the mighty waters.   
You needed not a thousand years to break the power of Jabin, king of  
HazorYou did but speak and the mighty river, the river Kishon, swept   
them away. The stars fought from Heaven, the stars fought against Sisera.  
The might of the heathen was broken and Israel was free. You did not  
need a thousand years to drive back Sennacherib. Lo, You did put Your   
bit into his mouth and Your hook into his nose and in one night the angel  
of the Lord smote the horse and the rider and they lay dead and you led   
him back into confusion into the house of his god and he fell by the hands  
of the offspring of his heart.   
Glory be unto You, Jehovah! When You rise up in the greatness of Your   
might You shall slay kings and overthrow mighty kings. The two-leaved   
gates of brass shall open and the bars of iron shall be cut in pieces. You   
shall in one day cause the nations of the earth to say, The Lord, He is  
God, the Lord, He is God, the Lord, He is God alone.   
III. But we now turn to notice GODS ESTIMATE OF A THOUSAND  
YEARS. A day is to Him as a thousand years and a thousand years as one   
day. The complaint which is brought by mournful unbelieving Zion is, He  
is long in coming! His widowed spouse waits for Him but the Bridegroom  
tarries. Oh, the long and dreary winter, oh, the dark and dreary winter,   
when will summer come? When shall the rain be over and passed and the voice of the turtle be heard in our land? We have tarried 1860 years and more and yet no coming of the Son of Man. The dweller in the isle brings   
no tribute, the inhabitant of the wilderness bows not to lick the dust. Christ reigns not yet in Jerusalem, nor do His ancients behold His face   
wearing the crown of His Father David. How long, how long? the saints

under the altar cry, How long? And the saints at the altar here today  
take up the same wailing notes, How long? How long? How long? But He   
answers, I am not long. What if I have waited and the time is long to you?  
Yet it is not long to Me. God bids you think for a moment, that if you   
really measure aright, it is no lengthened period of time that He has made   
the vision to tarry. For see you first, my Brethren, the time that has   
elapsed since Christs crucifixion is not long compared with eternity. Try, if you can, to measure eternity. You will find your task impossible.  
Even should another thousand years roll on, what would some three  
thousand years be compared with eternity? You might form a comparison   
between a shell full of water from the sea in the childs hand, and the   
whole of the sea, itself, but it were not possible by human figures to put   
down the comparison between two or three thousand years and eternity.   
No, the comparison cannot be made. It is nothing contrasted with all  
things. It is the unit put in comparison with the infinite. Why, therefore,   
do you think Him long?  
If in all eternity you are to meditate upon the riches of God in Christ revealed to you in these 6000 years, if through all the eternal cycles this is   
to be the subject of your meditation, do you wonder that it should have  
been so long? Marvel you not rather that it should be so short a time?  
Then, again, when you say that God is long in the accomplishment of His   
great purposes, remember that He has no need to be in a hurry. Whatever you and I find to do, we must do it with all our mightfor  
there is neither work nor device in the grave where we are hastening. But  
God lives and lives forever. Our sun goes down. If the laborer would get   
his days work done, he must toil with the sweat upon his brow. But Gods   
sun never goes down. He may, like a God, take His own time and go about  
His work leisurely. Surely He need not run to reach His purpose. When   
two little kings grow offended with one another, straightway they hasten   
into war. But when some mighty monarchy becomes provoked, it can take   
its time and wait and marshal all its troops for the affray.   
You might have seen yesterday the clouds gathering hastily, with the   
winds pursuing them in fierceness. Their black host speedily covered the   
face of the sky, the rain fell in rattling drops and poured upon the earth in  
torrents. There was haste and fury, but we knew from the very haste with   
which the clouds came together, that they only betokened a hurried   
storm. It is when the clouds come slowly up to the great rendezvous  
when at last Gods trumpet sounds to summon His black warriors to the   
battlewhen you behold, at length, the sharp flash, the glitter of His  
spear, who is the Lord of tempests and His mighty ones come up to be   
marshaled in their linethen the trumpet sounds again exceedingly loud   
and long and for many an hour the earth shall be deluged with the rain  
and men shall shake when they hear the voice of God breaking the cedar  
and rending the mountaintops.   
That which gathers long lasts long. The little is always in a hurry but the great can wait. He that believes shall not make haste, simply because believing makes him great. And God, on whom Believers rest, makes no haste because of His greatness. He may well take His time, and go leisurely about His work. There is no need, we say, that the Lord our God, who is rich in years, should spend His time as we must do who have   
but slender store.  
Besides, there is an advantage in His being slowit tests our faith. We   
are getting weary, some of us, because we have little faith. But if the   
Church of Christ shall keep on from this day till another thousand years,  
sending out the pick of her ministry to the most desolate regions to  
preach. If she shall continue to send her young, brave sons, fresh to the   
altar of distant martyrdom. If our Churches at home shall continue to pay  
a spiritual taxation like that which Israel paid when Solomons temple was   
in the building. If everyone of us shall be willing to spend and to be spent  
for God. And if the Church shall keep at that stretch for two thousand   
years to come, (we pray God she may not have the trial), but if she should,  
then there will be honor unto her God, who by His Grace sustained her   
and there will be honor to her faith, which thus honored God. To win a fight when it lasts but for an hour, what is there in it? One   
gallant charge and the enemy has fled. Comrade, that is a battle worthy to  
be written with your Waterloos and your Marathons, when hour after   
hour, and day after day, valor disdains to succumb and patience endures  
the fight while foot to foot the soldiers stand. To see gallant courage   
fiercely longing for the charge but obediently awaiting the signal. Look,  
Brethren, how they stand like lions at bay, stand bearing wounds and agony and the horrors of death, until at last, the captain gives the triumphant signal and they dash upon their foes! The ranks of the enemy are   
broken and the foemen fall at their feet.   
So is it today. We are standing in our Churches, like British soldiers in   
their solid square. We roll our deadly musketry against our enemy but the   
foe is in the distance and we cannot reach him as we would. Great Master, You shall come, and then at one triumphant charge, we shall give but  
one great cheerThe Lord God omnipotent reigns, and they shall fly like   
chaff before the whirlwind and like the mist before the storm. Further, it is well that God should thus be long, because He is unraveling revelation. I fear I have seldom been in the position of those hearers,   
who would wish the preacher to be longerbut there have been books of  
which one could say when we have reached the last page, Would that  
there were another volume, that our interest might continue! Now, what   
is the history of the Church but the great book of Gods revelation of Himself to man? The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed to loose the seals  
and to open the book for us, and year after year He reads another page   
and yet another in the Churchs history. Brethren, if Christ should come   
today, if we should have no more conflicts, no more difficulties, no more  
trials, then we might suppose that the book had come to its brilliant  
golden end.   
But if it keeps on a thousand years to come, so much the betterthe   
glowing eyes of angels wish not for the end of the story and the bright eyes of immortal spirits before the Throne, when it shall be all over, shall not regret that it was too long. No, let it go on, great Master. Let a thousand years run on. Our loving hearts will patiently bear it, as though it were  
but one day.   
And morethe victory of Christ at the end will be all the greater and   
the redemption all the more glorious, because of this long time of strife   
and confusion. I have often admired, in reading history, how in the grand   
duel between good and evil, God has seemed to give all the advantage to  
His foe. Did you notice this in the combat of old between Patience and   
Suffering? God is in Job. Job is on a dunghillthe messengers come in   
such an order as most naturally to break his spiritat last he is touched   
in his bone and in his flesh with sore pains, and yet, in spite of that, Job   
on the dunghill, is master over the Prince of Hell, with Providence at his   
back.   
God gave the foeman the advantage and yet won the victory. So, in the   
greater battle which is waging now. When first the Gospel was preached  
learning, eloquence and powerall these might aid the cause. But Christ  
disdained to take them. No, said He, My enemy shall have the learning.  
The philosophers of Greece shall have the wisdom of men. Their orators   
shall wield all eloquence but not My Apostles. As for power, I have not  
chosen the great ones of this world. So that the eloquence, learning,   
pomp and power of nations were put into the opposite scale and then  
Christianity came out, like a naked wrestler, all unarmed against one that  
was clothed from head to foot in mail of proof.   
The Gospel comes out like a David with nothing but a sling and a stone   
against one, the staff of whose spear, is like a weavers beam. See the   
hosts of Philistia come up armed to the eyes, every one of them, and there   
are thousands of themthere is Gods herohe is but one man. He has   
no weapon but the decayed bone of an asss jaw. But he dashes at them   
right and left, hip and thigh, with a great slaughter, and smites them till   
heaps upon heaps with the jaw bone of an ass has he slain a thousand   
men.   
Brethren, whenever you see anything in the world which would lead   
you to believe that the enemy is getting the upper hand, say, Ah, it is   
only God throwing in the advantage on the side of His enemies. The battle was fair enough before, but He is giving them all on their side, letting   
them have every weapon, bidding them take all the power and all the wit   
and all the eloquence and learning. We will beat them yet! Now in the  
name of Him that lives and was dead once more we, who are Gods servants, full of weakness, throw down the gauntlet against the world that  
seems to be omnipotent! Against your learning and your eloquence and   
your multitudes and your authorities and your dignities, your powers and   
your State alliances, we still throw down the gauntlet.   
Take it up, O earth, if you dare! But remember when we make the challenge, we expect stern fighting. We know from Gods authority, which   
cannot lie, that a glorious victory awaits us. Now see, Brethren, this is   
why God is a thousand years about it! He can shake the old harlot of the   
seven hills tomorrow if He wills. He can knock down the idol gods today if so it pleases Him. Tonight, before you and I go to sleep, every idol might   
be cast to the moles and to the bats if Jehovah willed itbut He does not. No, says He, they shall have their time. They shall have their opportunity. They shall strive against Me. I will hold in My power. I will not go  
forth against them. I will let them lay their plans with deliberation and

execute their schemes at their leisurebut I will laugh at them in their   
preparations, and I will at last crush them in My hot displeasure. And   
then the shout shall be the louder and the choral song shall be the more   
mighty and the everlasting hallelujah shall have a deeper bass and yet it  
shall have a shriller note of glory when at the last the triumph shall be   
won.   
After all the four hundred years of Israels bondage, Egypts power was  
broken and Israel went free. And Miriam took her timbrel and danced before the Lordso we shall also, in a few days, when all the adversaries are   
overthrown, take up for ourselves the same song of Moses and the Lamb  
Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously. The horse and his  
rider has He cast into the sea. So let all Your enemies perish, O Lord, and  
let them that hate You become as the fat of rams.   
I shall now leave my subject to the consideration of the faithful to cheer   
their hearts. If you think the work has been long and tedious, you will not  
think so any more, Brothers and Sisters, if you obey Peters exhortation,  
Be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a   
thousand years and a thousand years as one day. As to those present  
who know not Christ, may the one day of their conversion take place today. And that one day of Gods Grace and favor in their hearts they shall   
find to be as good as a thousand years spent in the pleasures of sin. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, he that believes not  
shall be damned. God help us to believe, for Christs sake! Amen.

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THE WORLD ON FIRE

NO. 1125

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 3, 1873, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness? 2 Peter 3:10, 11.

MEN have frequently inferred liberty to sin from the apparent absence of God from the world. Because the Lord, in His infinite long-suffering, has suffered transgression to go for awhile unpunished, therefore they have wickedly said, How does God know? The Almighty does not regard us. He will neither interfere to punish men nor to reward them, whether they break or keep His Commandments. When for a long time no great changes have occurred in the world, no remarkable judgments, no visitations of famine, pestilence, or war, men are very apt to grow carnally secure and to take license to sin from the merciful respite which ought to halve led them to gratitude, and through gratitude to obedience. At certain periods it has seemed to the Most High to be imperatively necessary to send great calamities upon mankind lest pride, oppression and profanity should cause society utterly to rot.

The fall of dynasties, the overthrow of empires, devastating wars and dire famines have been necessities of Gods moral government, bits in mens mouths, bridles for their arrogance, checks to their licentiousness. The Lord is slow to smite the wicked, for His tender mercy is great and He delights not in the sufferings of men. And therefore He keeps His arrows in His quiver and hangs up His bow. But, alas, men take advantage of His love to grow grossly sinful and to blaspheme His name! Against this spirit the Apostle is arguing in this chapter. The profanely secure had said, Since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were; where, then, is the evidence of Gods existence? The world goes on like a clock, needing no hand to move its wheels or guide its action. There is no God, they say, to interfere, and we may live as we like.

No, says the Apostle, but God has interfered. And though he might have quoted a thousand lesser instances which I have already hinted at, he preferred to forego them for the present, and to put his finger upon the great event of the flood, and say, Here, at least, God did interfere. He could no longer bear the transgressions of mankind and therefore He pulled up the sluices of the great deep and opened the floodgates of

Heaven. He bade the angry floods leap forth from their lairs and they swallowed up the earth right speedily. Thus it is plain that all things have not continued in one coursethere have been interpositions of Divine Justice. The Apostle then tells the scoffer that there will be another interposition before long. But instead of water, fire shall be the instrument of destruction.

Gods mill grinds slowly, but it grinds to powder. Justice loiters to commune with Mercy, but it speedily makes up for its lingering. Long is the blow withheld, but when it falls it cuts to the soul. Gods wrath is long in kindling, but in the end it shall burn as an oven. We shall speak this morning upon the general conflagration foretold in our text. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Then, secondly, we shall discourse upon the practical inferences which the Apostle draws from itWhat manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness?

I. Let us turn our thoughts to THE LAST GENERAL CONFLAGRATION. Information as to the future in Scripture is generally very indistinct in arrangement and though many attempts have been made to form a consistent scheme of prophecy, not one has been even moderately successful. There are, in the Word of God, many clear testimonies as to distinct events in the future, but these cannot easily be arranged in order so as to harmonize with other events. Neither will the most accurate observer, as I believe, ever make a consistent series of them, so as to map them down. They are perfectly consistent and their order is Divinebut we shall need the actual fulfillment to make the plan clear.

So intricate is the architecture of future history that only the Architect Himself knows where this stone and that and the other are ordained to stand. It is not for us to fling any one of the stones away, or censure it as ill-fashioned. We are but children and our little plans of house-building, like children with their toy bricks, are very simple and elementary, indeed. But Gods architecture is of a high class and we cannot, therefore, conjecture where this event will come in, or where that marvel will find its place. But we may rest quite assured that each one will follow in an orderly manner upon the other and, instead of puzzling our brains over projects of interpretation, we may be quite satisfied to take each of the facts separately as we find them, believingly expect them and, above all, deduce from them their legitimate practical conclusions.

The right way of knowing anything is to know how to act in consequence of it. And in spiritual things a man knows nothing until he lives what he knows. If you and I know the Truths with regard to the future, each one as we find them in Scripture, and then act according to the inferences fairly to be drawn from them, we shall be wiser men than if we became inventors of elaborate schemes. In this Epistle of Peter there is one Truth of God very plainly taught, namely, that this present world is to be consumed by fire. We learn, also, that this conflagration will take place in connection with the Judgment, for, the heavens and the earth which now are, are kept in store, unto fire, against the Day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

The former destruction of the world by water was in consequence of sin and was a declaration of Gods wrath against it. It did not happen as an accident, or occur without design. Man sinned, was warned and sinned again, until God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth. The amalgamation of the people of God with the world was the crowning offense of all, for, the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair, and they took them wives of all which they chose. Thus were Church and State set up and the Church and the world were blended till the Lords Spirit was grieved and would no longer strive with man. Floods of sin called for floods of destruction. So will it be with the last fire. It will not happen as an inevitable result of physical causes, but because God intends to purge this material world from all traces of sin.

It has been defiled and whenever He makes it into a new Heaven and a new earth, He will cleanse it as by fire. Under the Levitical dispensation the cleansing of vessels which had been defiled was effected by passing them through the fire, as a type of the intense energy needed to remove sin and the Lords abhorrence of it. Even thus shall this earth dissolve with fervent heat and thus the Lord shall proclaim to the whole universe that He hates even the garment spotted by the flesh. When a house was defiled with leprosy it was destroyed and so must this earth be, for the plague of sin has polluted it. We gather, also, from our text that this fire will burn up all the works existing upon the eartheverything which man has constructed shall perish. We have heard architects speak of building for eternity! Aha! Aha! They have built but for an hour and their noblest fabrics will disappear like childrens castles of sand upon the sea beach.

Down will go the vast cathedrals and the towering palaces in one common crash! Whole cities will flame upon earths funeral pyre, while forests and melting mountains blend their smoke. The pride of power, the pomp of wealth, the beauty of art, the cunning of skillall, all, must go! The sea of flame will overwhelm and devour everything without exception. The massive masonry and rock-like foundations of our vast engineering works shall run like wax in the tremendous heat! So fierce will be the flames that everything capable of being burned will be utterly consumed and the elements, or the solid portions of the earth shall be liquefied by the intense heatrocks, metals, everything shall dissolveand the atmosphere, itself, shall burn with fury when its oxygen shall unite with the hydrogen and other gases liberated by the intense heat.

Chemists tell us that the great noise which Peter speaks of would certainly accompany such a combustion. The whole world shall become one molten mass, again, and this terrestrial firmament shall cease to be.

The heavens shall vanish away like smoke and the earth shall wax old like a garment. God has impressed Nature with His seal today, but He will melt it down, and then, as we hope, pour out the molten matter and stamp upon it a yet more lovely image than it has ever borne before. We may here, note, that the prophecy that the earth will thus be consumed with fervent heat is readily to be believed, not only because God says it, but because there are evidently the means at hand for the accomplishment of the prophecy. Pliny was known to say that it was a miracle that the world escaped burning for a single day and I do not wonder at the remark, considering the character of the district in which he spent much of his time.

In visiting the country around Naples, the same thought constantly occurred to me. Yonder is Vesuvius ready at any moment to vomit fire and continually sending up clouds of smoke. Ascend the mountainside, clambering over ashes and masses of lavaall beneath you is glowing thrust in your staff and it is charred. Then go across to the Solfatara on the other side of Naples. Stand at the vent of that ancient volcano and listen to the terrible rumblings which attend the rush of steam and sulfur. Then stamp your foot or dash a stone upon the ground and hear how the earth resoundsit is evident that you are standing over a vast cavern! Look around you and remark how the earth steams with sulfuric exhalations. Observe, also, how the earth in some places has risen and fallen, again and again.

Down there at Puteoli in the Temple of Serapis there are pillars which have sunk below the tide mark and then have risen above it several times, as you can see for yourself by the mark of the sea worms. In a single night vast hills have risen in one place like bubbles upon the bakers dough, while in other localities there have been equally sudden subsiding of the surface. Yet this volcanic region around Naples is but one of the many vent holes of the great fires which are in the bowels of the earth300 or more burning mountains have already vomited flame. According to the belief of many geologists, the whole center of the earth is a mass of molten matter and we live upon a thin crust which has cooled down, and is probably not so much as one hundred miles thick.

When the miner descends no further than 45 feet he finds that the heat has increased one degree of Fahrenheit, so that it is easy to see how small a distance down the solid shell extends. There is no known rock which would not be entirely liquefied by the heat produced at 60 miles depth. The probabilities are that the whole internal mass is in a liquid and, perhaps, in a gaseous state. It is well known that the earth is flattened at the poles, just to the amount it would be by rotation on its axis had it been a liquid mass, and therefore there is every probability that it was once liquid and is cooling down. Everyone who is at all acquainted with the condition of the globe knows that it only needs the Lords will and the fiery sea, of which yonder volcanoes are but the safety valves, would burst forth and flood the earth with flame. Or, if God so willed it, the thin crust which divides the ocean of water from the ocean of fire might soon be broken through and the result would be disruption and destruction.

Astronomers tell us that within the last 200 or 300 years some 13 fixed stars have disappeared and, according to their belief, they have been burned up. They have watched them blaze up in clear flames in quarters of the heavens where no star had ever been seen before and then they have disappeared forever, being, as it is wisely conjectured, burnt out. If such things happen in other worlds, is there anything improbable in the belief that the like will occur to us? But if there were no internal sea of fire and no instance of other worlds being consumed by fire, who can guess the power which lurks in electricity and other subtle forces? Faraday said that there was enough latent electricity in a single drop of water for an ordinary flash of lightning. What reserves of destructive force there must be in and around the globe!

Gods dreadful armies lie in ambush everywhere. What if I say Gods bodyguard is sleeping in His guard chamber? He has but to speak the word and the servants of His Omnipotence will rise, terrible in their destructive power. He spoke to His ancients of the sea and they marched in gigantic might till they had covered the mountain tops and laid the race of men dead at their feet! Let Him speak to His ministers of flaming fire and they will at once subdue the globe by quenchless burnings. Earth is as a pile of wood and the torch-bearers stand ready to kindle it at any moment! There has always been a cry of fire among men and the cry grows louder every century, for the burning is near. But if there were no such arrangements as these, we should still be bound to believe what God has saidand it is His solemn declaration that the day shall come when the Lord Jesus Christ shall appear as a thief in the night. And the heavens, that is the atmosphere, shall pass away with a great noise, while the elements, or rudimentary substances of the globe, shall melt with fervent heat. The earth, also, and the works that are therein, or thereon, shall be burned up.

We gather from our text that this will happen at a time when it will be very little expected. The dread hour will come as a thief in the night. It was not expected in Noahs day that the world would be destroyed. That was not for any lack of warning, but because men could not conceive it possible. They argued against Noah that all things had continued as they were from the days of their first father, Adam, and that so they would be. They thought Noah a fool for going up and down the world proclaiming an absurdity and frightening people with a bugbear. Thus speak they now, when Gods Word declares that the whole world will be destroyed by fire. They reject the testimony and continue in sin, in worldliness and in rebellion against God! And so will they do up to the very moment when the shrill sound of the trumpet shall convince them that the Lord has come and that the Day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men has

arrived.

No preaching will, of itself, avail to make ungodly men expect the coming of Christ, however clear, bold, consistent and long continued it may be. The world is mad upon its idols. Its ears are too dull to hear the Truth. Charm we never so wisely, this adder will never listen to warning. Mens eyes are blinded. They will not see and so they hurry on to their doom. And then, when they shall say, Peace and safety, sudden destruction shall come upon them, as pain upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. It is well for us to remind you, again, that the long time which has intervened since Peter foretold the destruction of the world by fire is to be understood in the sense of Infinite Mercy. We are not to interpret it according to the wicked suggestion of unbelief, for the Lord will surely be revealed in flaming fire. We are to read it with the eyes of faith and gratitude.

God waits that men may be saved. He tarries that, in this long time of waiting, hundreds everywhere may believe in Jesus and enter into eternal life. And while we may consistently desire to hasten the coming of the Lord, we may be equally content that Mercys day should be lengthened. While I have prayed, Come quickly, I have often felt inclined to contradict myself and cry, Yet tarry for awhile, good Lord! Let Mercys day be lengthened! Let the heathen yet receive the Savior. We may desire the coming of the Lord, but we ought, also, to be in sympathy with the tarrying of the Most High, to which His loving heart inclines Him. Although we read of the world being burned with fire, we are not told that it will be annihilated. We know that nothing has been annihilated yet. No fire has yet been able to destroy a single atom of matter. There is upon the face of the earth, at this moment, just as much matter as when God created itfire changes form, but does not obliterate substance.

This world, so far as we know, will not cease to be. It will pass through the purifying flame and then it may be the soft and gentle breath of Almighty Love will blow upon it and cool it rapidlyand the Divine hand will shape it as it cools into a Paradise more fair than that which bloomed upon the banks of Hiddekel. We believe from various things which are hinted at in Scripture, though we would not dogmatize, that this world will be refitted and renovated. And in that sense we expect new heavens and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness. Luther used to say that the world is now in its working clothes and that, by-and-by, it will be arrayed in its Easter garments of joy. One likes to think that the trail of the old serpent will not always remain upon the globe and it is a cheering thought that where sin has abounded Gods Glory should yet more abound.

I cannot believe in that world being annihilated upon which Jesus was born and lived and died. Surely an earth with a Calvary upon it must last on! Will not the blood of Jesus immortalize it? It has groaned and travailed with mankind, being made subject to vanity for our sake. Surely it is to have its joyful redemption and keep its Sabbaths after the fire has burned out every trace of sin and sorrow. Whether or not it shall be so matters little to the saints, for we shall be with Christ where He is, and behold His Glory! And, as to the futureForever with the Lord may well satisfy us!

II. The Apostle has drawn PRACTICAL INFERENCES. Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness? What does he mean by this? What connection can there be between the burning of the globe and holy conversation and godliness? The first connection is this. Our position as Christians is, at this moment, like that of Noah before the destruction of the world by water. What manner of person ought Noah to have been? He said to himself, This fair and beautiful world in which I dwell will soon be covered with the ooze and slime of a tremendous deluge.

He looked upon his fellow men and he thought and said of them, Except these men fly to the ark and are sheltered with me, they will, every one of them, be drowned. He saw them marrying and given in marriage, feasting and trifling at the very hour when the flood came and he felt that if they would believe as he did they would find something other to do than to be engrossed in carnal pleasures. When he saw them heaping up money he would almost laugh yet weep to think that they should hoard up gold to be submerged with themselves in the general flood. When men added to their estates acre after acre, I have no doubt the Patriarch said to himself, The flood will sweep away all these landmarks and as it carries away the owner so will it destroy all vestige of his barn and his farm and his fields.

I should suppose such a man, daily expecting the rain to descend and the flood to burst up from beneath, would lead a life very free from worldliness, a life the very reverse of the rest of his fellow men. They would reckon him to be very eccentric. They would be unable to understand him. And, indeed, his conduct would be such that no one could understand it except upon the theory that he believed in the destruction of all around him. Now our life ought to be like that of Noah. Look around on the beauties of Nature and when you enjoy them, say to yourself, All these are to be dissolved and to melt with fervent heat. Look up into the clear blue and think that yonder sky, itself, shall shrivel like a scroll and be rolled up like a garment that has seen its better days and must be put aside.

Look on your fellow men, your own children and your household, and those you pass in the street or meet with in transacting business, and say, Alas, alas, unless these men, women and children fly to Jesus and are saved in Him, they will be destroyed with the earth on which they dwell, for the day of the Lord is surely coming and judgment awaits the ungodly. This should make us act in a spirit the opposite of those who now say, Go, let us buy and sell and get gain. Let us heap together

treasure. Let us live for this world. Let us eat and drink, and be merry. They are of the earth, therefore is their conduct and conversation earthy. They build here, on this quicksand, and after their own sort they find a pleasure thereinbut you whose eyes have been opened know better and you, therefore build upon the Rock.

You understand that the things which are seen are but a dream, that the things unseen are, alone, substantial. Therefore set loose by all things below the moon and clutch as with the grasp of a dying man the things immortal and eternal which your God has revealed to you! Such conduct will separate you from your fellow men, as there is down deep in your heart an objective different from theirs. And as you set a different estimate on all things, your conduct will be wide apart from theirs. Being swayed by different motives, your life will diverge from theirs and they will misunderstand you. And while trying to find motives for you, as they do not know the true motive, they will ascribe ill motives to you.

But so it must be. You must come out from among them, be separate and touch not the unclean thing. And the fact that all these things are to be dissolved should make it easy for you to do so, no, natural for you to do so, as it must have made it both easy and natural to the Patriarch Noah. I will, however, not dwell longer upon that thought, but remark further that the nearness of the Lord as suggested by the fact that the world is to be destroyed, according to His Word, suggests holiness. The sinner finds a reason for sin when he says, God is not here. Everything goes on in the ordinary way. God does not care what men do. No, says the Apostle, He is not away, He is here, holding back the fire. He is reserving this world a little while, but by-and-by He will let the fires loose and the world will be destroyed. He is not far off. He is even at the door.

If I give the Greek rendering, it should be, All these things are dissolving. They are even giving to dissolve. They are in the process of dissolution. God is close upon us, can you not hear His footsteps? Christ is returning. He is on His journey now. Faith hears the tramp of His steeds as they hurry on the chariot of His vengeance. Behold, I come quickly, is the word which rings over the mountains of division. The King is coming! He is coming to His Throne and to His judgment. Now a man does not go up to a kings door and there talk treason! And men do not sit in a kings audience chamber, when they expect Him to enter any moment, and there speak ill of him! The King is on His way and almost here. You are at His door. He is at yours. What manner of people ought you to be? How can you sin against One who is so close at hand? How can you rebel against One whose eyes of fire behold and whose hand of vengeance is uplifted to smite the sinner?

The words of the text are very forcible. The Apostle says, What manner of persons ought you to be? Remember he was talking to saints and be teaches us that even saints ought to be more saintly than they are. He is not saying to the ungodly, What manner of persons ought you to be! He might have so spoken, but with how much greater force does he address those who profess to be loved with the everlasting love of God, to have been bought with the precious blood of Jesus, to be affianced unto Christ in eternal wedlock, to be members of His body, parts of Himself? What manner of persons ought you to be? He implies that they are not what they should be and I am afraid there is no man of God but what will grant the truth of the implication in his own case. We have not attained to what we ought to be and I may say to the best child of God here this morning, Dear Brother and Sister, there is a lot beyond.

Yes, Brethren, and the text is so broad in its expression that it plainly teaches the limitless nature of Christian holiness. What manner of persons ought you to be? As if he could not tell what sort of persons they ought to be. As if holiness had in it no Ultima Thule, no pillars of Hercules beyond which the adventurous mariner might not go. There is a lot beyond for us all, if we are to be holy as God is, His is infinite holiness and where can a limit be imagined? He does not say, You ought to be kind, just, loving, prayerful, truthful, and the like. But as if he held up his hands in wonder and could not express the obligations of the Christian, he cries, Because these things are all passing away, what manner of persons ought you to be?

And then he goes on to specify two branches of holy life. In all holy conversation, that is to say, all holy behavior towards men. And godliness, that is, all pious dealing towards God. True religion, by no means, depreciates the duties of the second table of the Law. Some professors think very little of the common virtues of daily life, but they err greatly, and will find themselves in an evil plight at last. My Brother, if the grace you possess does not make you honest, God have mercy on you and take such grace away from you. If you have a kind of grace which does not keep you chaste and make your behavior decent. If you have a sort of grace which lets you cheat and lie. Which allows you to take undue advantage in tradeaway with such grace! It is the grace of the devil and not the Divine Grace of God, and may you be saved from it! If our religion does not make us moral, it is a millstone about our necks to destroy us! If you have not reached morality, how can you dare to talk about holiness, which is a far higher and loftier thing? The best morality in the world will not prove a man to be a Christian! But if a man has not morality, it proves that he is not a child of God.

And then as to Godthe duties of the first table are not to be neglected. We are to fulfill all manner of godliness. God is to be worshipped by us devoutly and we are to take pains to worship Him in His own way. How many people have a kind ofwhat shall I call it?a happy-go-lucky religion? Whatever their mother or their father was, that are they. A great many of you go to certain places of worship, not because you have ever enquired whether the denomination you belong to is right or not, but because you have drifted that way and there you stick! How few take the

Bible and search for themselves. Yet no man has obeyed God aright who has not done so. If I could not honestly say, I am a member of this denomination because I have weighed the Truths of God which are held by my Brethren and I believe them to be according to Gods Book, I could not feel that I had done right towards the Most High.

The idea that there are good people in all denominations is well enough, but a great many have perverted it into an excuse for never caring what Gods Truths or ordinances are. Rest assured that he who neglects one of the least of Christs ordinances and teaches men so, the same shall be least in the kingdom of Heaven. Every Truth of God is important. Trifling with conscience is the sin of the present age. Men have even come to occupy pulpits in churches when they do not believe the fundamental doctrines of the Church. We have heard them even claim a right to retain their pulpits after they have denied the doctrines of the denomination to which they belong. From any power to believe in such a conscience may God deliver every one of us! Be right even in little things! Be preciseyou serve a precise God. Charity towards others is one thing, laxity for yourselves is quite another thing.

Believe that your brother is conscientious though he may be in error, but as for yourself use your conscience and practice your judgment in the careful study of the Truth of God, and then whatever your conclusions, carry them out at all hazards. Though you should lose everything therebyyou will lose nothing in the long run! If you count the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt, you have made a wise choice and will rejoice in having made it! Oh, when I think that all I see about me is to be consumed, there remains nothing worth living for but to glorify God! If we were to live here forever and this world were all, we might, perhaps, think it some gain to sin. But if we are soon to pass away and all around us is to dissolve in smoke, there is nothing to do, if we are wise, but to do our duty in the station in which God has placed us, both towards God and man, resting in the precious blood of Christ for our pardon, and in His righteousness for our acceptance.

For these things will endure when we are dead, according as it is written, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, yes, thus says the Spirit, for they rest from their labors and their works do follow them. The evanescence of all things around us suggests our looking away to eternal things. I saw yesterday with much solemnity of mind the spot where the Bishop of Winchester met with sudden death. A cross is cut in the turf to mark the place. The spot is in the midst of the most lovely scenery conceivable. I have often walked hard by, full of delight at the fair prospect. It is a spot too fair to be darkened by so dark a cloud. Death seems hardly congruous with the beauty which everywhere charms the eye. I could only imagine if anyone knew that he should die just at that moment, what would be his conversation? Riding over the downs what would be the conversation of a man of God who expected to die in the valley below?

Such ought to be our constant conversation. We should live always as if we might die in a moment. Mr. Wesley once said, Now, if I knew I should die tomorrow morning, I would do exactly what I have planned to do. I should take the class meeting at such an hour, preach at such an hour, and be up at such a time in the morning to pray. That good mans life was spent in prospect of sudden departure and it was therefore active and holy. Is ours the same? The motive for holiness becomes stronger, still, if the thought is not merely that I shall die, but that all these things around me shall be dissolved. That breezy down, that towering hill, yonder lofty trees and this overhanging cliff, these rich meadows, the ripening harvest, all, all will, in a moment, be on a blaze!

Am I ready to be caught away to be with my Lord in the air? Or shall I he left to perish amidst the conflagration? How ought I to live! How ought I to stand, as it were, on tiptoe, ready when He shall call me, to be away up into the Glory, far off from this perishing world! It makes us look upon all these things in a different light and upon eternal things with a more fixed eyeand a more stern resolve to live unto God. Observe, if sin, even on the inanimate world, needs such a purging by fire as thisif the fact that sin committed here makes it necessary that God should burn it all up what a horrid thing sin must be! O to be purged from it! Refining fire, go through my heart! Spirit of the living God, sweep with all Your mighty burnings through and through my body, soul and spirit till You have purged me of every tendency to sin.

This ought to be the prayer of the Christian. If all these things will have to be purged, what manner of persons ought we to be in daily purging ourselves by a holy jealousy and a sacred revenge from every unclean wish, every false word and everything that would be inconsistent with that life of God which is in our nature? And if, again, God is so angry with sin that when He comes to judge it He will come with flaming fire and if the terrors of God against the wicked will be utterly overwhelming, what gratitude ought you and I feel for pardoned sin? What joy for safety in the Lord Jesus Christ?

And then, again, as the result of that, what a detestation of the sin which made it necessary that Christ should die to save us from the wrath to come! Oh, Believer, you will never have to sayRocks hide me, mountains fall on me. Believer in Jesus, you will never have to escape from those tongues of flame which will lick up the sea! You will not be alarmed at the melting mountainsyou will be safenot a hair of your head shall be singed! Oh, what do you owe to Sovereign Grace for such an escape as this? Bless the Lord Jesus! Fall down at His dear feet and adore Him! And then, rising up, say, What can I do to glorify You? O Lord, keep me clear of the sin which would have destroyed me and help me to live such a life as becomes one who has been saved from the wrath to come.

Is there not much force in the Apostles inference? I only trust we may all feel it.

Once more, he meant us to feel that the suddenness of all this ought to keep us on our watchtower. This conflagration will come with no signs to herald it which the ungodly will observe. You who are on the watch will observe them. You will see the tokens of His coming. You will rejoice to go forth to meet Him. But to the ungodly His coming will be as much unawares as was His first Advent which happened in the night, when all the world was wrapped in sleep. Men will still be buying and selling, and getting gain, and thinking of nothing so little as of the last Advent. And then the Lord will appear. Christian, let not that day come upon you as a thief! Stand ever watching. Live as if you said to yourself, Today everything I have may be burned up. Today all my lands may run like lava. All my gold may melt like molten lead. Today I, myself, may have done with this world and the world may be consumed. Live such a life as that.

Why, says one, then we should be pilgrims and strangers. That is just how you should be! Then, says another, we should not be minding much about the stock in the bank and laying in for the future. Just so. That is how the Master would have you liveHe would have you duly prudent and provident, but not covetous or anxious. If you feel that all these things are to be dissolved, you will then do all things as in the Presence of God. You will wish to use everything you have as not abusing it and as reckoning that it will perish in the using. God grant you, Brothers and Sisters, so to live.

I would to God that all here present were prepared for the future. You remember John Bunyan makes Christian sit in the City of Destruction at ease until he hears from one called Evangelist, that the city was to be burned up. And then he cries, Alas, alas, woe is me, and I shall be destroyed in it. That thought set him running and nothing could stop him. His wife bade him come back, but he said, The city is to be destroyed, and I must be away. His children clung about his garments to hold him, but he said, No, I must run to the City of Safety, for this city is to be burned up. Man, it will all go! If all you love is here below, it will all go! Your gold and silver will all go!

Will you not have Christ? Will you not have a Savior? For if you will not, there remains for you only a fearful looking for judgment and of fiery indignation! Tempt not the anger of God! Yield to His mercy now! Believe in His dear Son. I pray that you may this day be saved and God be glorified in your salvation. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON2 Peter 3. Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.  
Sermon #1997 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GODS LONG-SUFFERING AN APPEAL TO THE CONSCIENCE

NO. 1997

A SERMON DELIVERED IN THE AUTUMN OF 1886, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation. 2 Peter 3:15.

JESUS is well called, our Lord. Let us, at the commencement, adore Him. Let us each one cry to Him, My Lord, and my God. It is a long time since our Lord went up to Heaven and He said that He would come again. Evidently, some of those who best understood Him misunderstood Him and thought that He would surely come again even in their lifetime. He said that He would come and faithful ones in all ages have looked for Himit is not possible that our Lord can have deceived us. Because He is so sweetly our Lord, our Brethren have made sure that He will keep His word and He will. But certain of them have gone beyond our Lords promise and have felt sure that they knew when He would comeand they have been bitterly disappointed because the hour which they fixed, passed over, and He did not appear. This does not prove that He will not come. The day is certainly nearer and every hour is hastening His coming. Behold, He comes with clouds, and every eye shall see Him.

But why are His chariots so long in coming? Why does He delay? The world grows gray, not only with age, but with iniquity, and yet the Deliverer comes not. We have waited for His footfall at the dead of night and looked out for Him through the gates of the morning. We have expected Him in the heat of the day and reckoned that He might come before yet another sun went down. But He is not here! He waits. He waits very, very long. Will He not come?

Long-suffering is that which keeps Him from coming. He is bearing with men. Not yet the thunderbolt! Not yet the riven heavens and the reeling earth! Not yet the Great White Throne and the Day of Judgement, for He is full of pity, and bears long with men! Even to the cries of His own elect, who cry day and night to HimHe is not in haste to answerfor He is very patient, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy.

But His patience sometimes greatly puzzles us. We cannot make it out. Eighteen, 19 centuries and the world not converted! Nineteen centuries and Satan still to the front and all manner of iniquity still wounding this poor, bleeding world! What does it mean? O Son of God, what does it mean? Seed of the woman, when will You appear with Your foot upon the serpents head? We are puzzled at the long-suffering which causes so weary a delay.

One of the reasons is that we have not much long-suffering ourselves. We think that we do well to be angry with the rebellious and so we prove ourselves to be more like Jonah than Jesus! A few have learned to be patient and show pity to the ungodly, but many more are of the mind of James and John who would have called fire from Heaven upon those who rejected the Savior. We are in such a hurry! We have not the eternal leisure of God. We have but to live, like mayflies, our little day and, therefore, we are in hot haste to see all things accomplished before the sun goes down. We are but leaves in the forest of existence and if something is not done soon, and done quickly, we shall fade and pass away amid unaccomplished hope! And so we are not patient. We are staggered when the Master tells us to forgive unto 70 times seven. When He forgives unto 70 times seven, and still waits, and still holds back His thunders, we are amazed because our mind is not in harmony with the mind of the infinitely patient God!

We are all the more puzzled, again, because the ungodly so sadly misuse this long-suffering of God as a reason for greater sin and as a motive for denying that there is a God at all! Because He gives them space for repentance, they make it into space for iniquity! And because He will not deal out His judgments immediately, they say, Where is the promise of His coming?

We have impatiently wished that He would break the silence. Have I not, in my heart of hearts cried out, O Lord, how long? Can this go on much longer? Can You bear it? Will You not come with the iron rod, breaking Your foes before Your face, most mighty Son of God? It is hard to have the days of blasphemy and rebuke multiplied upon us, and to hear the adversary say in every corner, Where is their God, now? Yet, dear Friends, we ought not to be affected by the hissing of these serpents. Surely we would not have our God change His purposes because of the foolish taunts of men! One said, If there is a God, let Him strike me dead! But God did not smite him and from this he argued that there was no God! From the same fact I argue that there is a God and that this God is truly God, for, if He had been less than Divine, He might have struck him dead. But, being infinitely patient, He bore with him still. Who was that speck that he should cause God to move hand or foot even to crush him? God is not easily moved, even by the blasphemies of the ungodly. He may be provoked, one of these days, for long-suffering has its end, but for a while the Lord pauses in pity, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters, Gods long-suffering with a guilty world He may never explain to us. There are many things which we must not ask to have explained. We get into deep waters and into terrible troubles when we must have everything explained. For my part, I like to believe great Truths which are beyond my reason. A religion without mysteries, seems to me, to be false on the face of it. If there is an Infinite God, it is not possible that poor I, with my finite mind, shall ever be able to understand everything about Him! If the Lord chooses to tarry till thousands of years have passed away, yes, till millions of years have elapsed, yet let Him do as He wills! Is He not infinitely wise and good? And who are we that we should put Him to the test? Let Him tarry His own time. Only let us watch and wait, for He will come, and they that wait for Him shall have their reward!

At this time I am going to speak a little upon this point. First, let us admire the long-suffering of God. And, secondly, let us make a right account of it by accounting it to be salvation.

I. First, I would conduct your minds hurriedly over a few points that may help you to ADMIRE THE LONG-SUFFERING OF GOD.   
Admire the long-suffering of God as to peculiar sins. Look, Brothers and Sisters, they make images of wood or stone and they say, these are God, and they set up these things in the place of Him that made the heavens and the earth! How does He endure to see reasonable beings bowing down before idols, before fetishes, before the basest objects? How does He bear that men should even worship emblems of impurity and say that these are God? How does He bear itHe that sits in the heavens, in whose hands our breath is, and whose are all our ways?   
Others, even in this country, blaspheme God! What an amount of profanity is poured out before God in this city! One can scarcely walk the streets today without hearing horrible language. An oath has often chilled me to the marrowan oath which was not excused by any special circumstance, but rolled out of the mans mouth as a customary thing. We have, today, some among us that might match the devil in blasphemy, so foully do they talk! And oh, how is it that God bears it when they dare imprecate His curse upon their bodies and their souls? O Father, how do You bear it? How do You endure these profane persons who insult You to Your face?   
Besides, there are those who use fair speech and yet blaspheme most intolerably. Men of education and of science are often worse than the common folk because they blaspheme with fearful deliberation and solemnly speak against God and against His Sonand against the precious blood, and against the Holy Spirit! How is it that the Thrice-Holy One bears with them? Oh, wondrous long-suffering of a gracious God!   
And then there are others who wallow in unmentionable impurity and uncleanness. No, I will not attempt any description, nor would I wish to take your thoughts to those things whereof men may blush to think, though they blush not to do them. The moon sees a world of foulness, fornication and adultery! And yet, O God, You bear it! This great blot upon the face of the worldthis huge city of London reeks in its filthinessand yet You hold Your peace!   
And then, when I turn my thoughts another way, to the oppression of the poor, to the grinding down of those who, with the hardest labor, can scarcely earn enough bread to keep body and soul together, how does the Just God permit it? When I mark the oppression of man by manfor among wild beasts there is none that equals the cruelty of man to man how does the All-Merciful bear it? I think the Word of the Lord must often rattle in its scabbard and He must force it down, and say, Sword of the Lord, rest and be quiet!   
I will not go further, because the list is endless. The wonder is that a gracious God should continue to bear all this! Think of the sin involved in false teaching. I stood, one day, at the foot of Pilates staircase in Rome, and saw the poor creatures go up and down, on their knees, on what they are taught was the very staircase on which the Lord Jesus Christ stood before Pilate! I noticed sundry priests looking on and I felt morally certain that they knew it to be an imposture. I thought that if the Lord would lend me His thunderbolts about five minutes, I would make a wonderful clearance thereaboutsbut He did nothing of the kind. God is not in a hurry as we are! Sometimes it does suggest itself to a hot spirit to wish for speedy dealing with iniquitybut the Lord is patient and full of pity.   
Especially notice, next, that this long-suffering of God is seen in peculiar persons. In certain persons sins are greater than the same sins would be in other people. They have been favored with a tender conscience and with good instruction, so that when they sin, they sin with a vengeance. I have known some who have stood at Gods altar and have gone forth from His temple to transgressthey have been Levites of His sanctuary and yet first in transgressions! Yet the Lord spares the traitors and lets them live.   
It is amazing that God should have such long-suffering when we look at the peculiar circumstances under which some men sin. Some men sin against God willfully when they have no temptation to do so and can plead no necessity. If the poor man steals, we half forgive him. But some do so who have all that heart could wish. When the man driven to extremity has said the thing that was not true, we have half excused him. But some are willful liars, with no gain or profit therein. Some sin for the sheer love of sin, not for the pleasure they gain by it, nor for the profit they hope from it, but for mere wantonness! Born of godly parents, trained as you were in the very school of godliness, made to know, as you know in your own conscience, the Lord Jesus to be the Son of God, when you sin against Him, there is a painful emphasis in your transgressions! I speak to some who may well wonder that they are still alive after having sinned with such gross aggravations!   
Some manifest the long-suffering of God very wonderfully in the length of time in which they have been spared to sin. Many men are provoked by one offense and think themselves miracles of patience if they forget it. But many have provoked God 50, 60, 70, perhaps 80 years! You could not stand 80 minutes of provocation, and yet the Lord has put up with you throughout a lifetime! You tottered into this house tonight. You might have tottered more if you had remembered the weight of sin that clings to you! Yet the mercy of God spares you. Still, with outstretched arms, Infinite Mercy bids you come and receive, at the hands of God, your pardon bought with the blood of Jesus Christ! This long-suffering of God is marvelous!   
Remember that it would be easy on Gods part to be rid of you. There is a text where He says, Ah, I will ease Me of My adversaries. Some men bear because they cannot help it. They are obliged to submit. But God is not in that condition! One wish and the sinner will never provoke Him again, nor refuse His mercy again. He will be gone out of the land of hope. Therefore, I say the long-suffering of God is enhanced in its wonderfulness by the fact that He is under no necessity to exercise it except that which springs out of His own love.   
I beg all of you who are unconverted to think earnestly upon Gods long-suffering to you in permitting you to be here, still to hear from the Cross of Christ the invitation, look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth.   
II. Secondly, let us take THE RIGHT ACCOUNT OF THE LONGSUFFERING OF GOD. Account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation. What does this mean?   
Does it not mean, first, as to the saving of the many? The Lord Jesus Christ is, as I believe, to have the pre-eminence. I think that He will have the pre-eminence in the number of souls that will be saved as compared with those that will be lostand that can scarcely be effected except by a lapse of time in which many will be brought to Christ. I am not, however, going into any speculations. I look at it this way. As long as this old hulk keeps beating up against the rocks; as long as she does not quite go down into the sea of fire, it means mans salvation. It means, Out with the lifeboat! Man the lifeboat and let us take off from her all that we can and bring them to shore. God calls upon us until the world is utterly destroyed with fire, to go on saving men with all our might and main. Every year that passes is meant to be a year of salvation. We rightly call each year, the year of our Lord. Let us make it so by more and more earnest efforts for the bringing of sinners to the Cross of Christ. I cannot think that the world is spared to increase its damnation. Christ came not to destroy the world, but that the world, through Him, might be saved. And so, as every year rolls by, let us account it salvation and spend and be spent in the hope that by any means we may save some.

And if we can indulge a still brighter hope that the Kingdom of Christ shall come, and that multitudes shall be converted, and that the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea, so let it be! But always let this be to the frontthat this long-suffering of God means salvationand at that we are to aim.   
So, dear Friends, in the second place, the next meaning of this is to any of you who are unconverted. I want you to account that the long-suffering of God in sparing you means to you, salvation! Why are you here tonight? Surely it is salvation! I met, years ago, a soldier who had ridden in the charge of Balaclava. He was one of the few that came back when the saddles were emptied right and left of him. I could not help getting into a corner and saying to him, Dear Sir, do you not think that God has some design of love to you in sparing you when so many fell? Have you given your heart to Him? I felt that I had a right to say that. Perhaps I speak to some of you who were picked off a wreck years ago. Why was that? I hope it was that you might be saved! You have lately had a fever and have hardly been out before now. You have come here, tonight, still weak, scarcely recovered. Why were you saved from that fever when others were cut down? Surely it must mean salvation! At any rate, the God who was so full of pity as to spare you, now says to you, Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you and you shall glorify Me.   
When Master Bunyan was a lad, he was so foolhardy that when an adder rose against him, he took it in his hand and plucked the sting out of its mouth, but he was not harmed. It was his turn to stand sentinel at the siege of Nottingham and, as he was going forth, another man offered to take his place. That man was shot and Master Bunyan thus escaped. We would have had no Pilgrims Progress if it had not been for that. Did not God preserve him on purpose that he might be saved? There are special interpositions of Divine Providence by which God spares ungodly men whom He might have cut down long ago as cumberers of the ground should we not look upon these as having the intention that the barren tree may be cared for yet another year, if haply it may bring forth fruit? Some of you who are here tonight are wonders to yourselves that you are still in the land of the livingI pray you account the long-suffering of God to be salvation! See salvation in it! Be encouraged to look to Christ and, looking to Him, you shall find salvation, for, there is life in a look at the Crucified One. Account Gods long-suffering to be salvation to you if to no one else!  
Gods long-suffering is one of the great means by which He works for the salvation of His elect. He will not let them die till first they live to God. He will not suffer them to pass into eternity till first His Infinite Love has justified them through the righteousness of Christ.   
Thus I have said what I hope may be embraced by some here present.   
But I must finish. This text seems to me to have a bearing upon the people of God. Indeed, it is for them that it is written, Account that the long-suffering of God is salvation.   
I must turn the text to give you what really lies in it. God hears the cry going up from His own elect and it is written, Shall not God avenge His own elect, though He bears long with them? That long forbearance of God brings to His own people much trouble, pain, sorrowmuch amazement and soul distress. Brothers and Sisters, you must learn to look upon that as salvation! I hear you say, What do you mean? I mean this. The very fact that you are made to groan and cry by reason of Gods long-suffering to guilty men gives you sympathy with Christand union with Christ who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself! Reckon that in being brought into harmony, sympathy, oneness with Christ through enduring the result of the Divine long-suffering, you find salvation! It is salvation to a man to be put side by side with Christ. If you have to bear the jests and gibes of the ungodlyif God spares them and permits them to persecute you, be glad of itand reckon it as salvation, for now you are made partaker of Christs sufferings. What more salvation do you desire?   
Remember, too, that when the ungodly persecute the righteous, they give them the mark of salvation, for of old it was so. He that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit. If you were never reviled, if you were never slandered or traduced, who would know that you are a Christian? But when, through the long-suffering of God with the ungodly, you are made to suffer, account it to be a mark of your salvation. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you.   
Once more. Reckon the long-suffering of God, when it permits the ungodly to slander and injure you, as salvation because it tends to your salvation by driving you nearer to the Lord. It prevents your making your home in this world. It forces you to be a stranger and a foreigner. It compels you to go outside the gate bearing Christs reproach and so, in this way, that which seemed so hard to bear brings salvation to you!   
Therefore, comfort one another, dear children of God! Be not overly cast down and troubled because of your Lords delaying His coming, for He will yet help you and you shall be delivered.   
If the Lord has shown long-suffering to any of you and yet you have never repented or turned to Him, do so tonight! The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and you are not saved. But, oh, that you might be saved before this service ends! The leaves are falling from the trees thick and fast, and before you fall from the tree of this mortal life, think of your God and turn to Him and live! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. May He snatch you from the burning! Amen, and amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON**2 Peter 3**.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK174, 529, 513.

In THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL, I have earnestly asked my dear friends to unite in prayer for the revival of true religion. I wish to press this with all my heart upon my Sermon readers. A visitation from the Holy Spirit would be to our Churches what the springtide is to the sleeping bulbs and leafless treesthe Truth of God and righteousness would seem to blossom from the ground! False doctrine and worldliness are wolves which come down upon the sheepfolds in the winter of lifeless Christianity, but are no more seen in the clear, bright days of Grace. When the Lord clothes the Gospel with the power of His Spirit, error cannot stand in its presence and sin is afraid to show its face. This, then, is what we need and prayer is the one great and effectual method of obtaining it.

How can we promote prayerfulness concerning the present crisis? Let us, each one, be more than ever earnest with the Lord to plead his own cause. Oh, that He would gird His sword upon His thigh and ride forth to the battle because of truth and righteousness! Let us, when we meet by two and three, make a point of bowing the knee together for this objective. This will suggest larger meetings and then, best of all, we will hope that the pastors will call the Churches together and say, There is need of special prayer for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and the overthrow of error. If this could be done by all faithful ministers, the Church would not be long without heavenly refreshment!

Personally, I beg my beloved Brothers and Sisters to praise God with me for very remarkable help lately sent me in an hour of severe trialand also to entreat the Lord on my behalf that I may be kept steadfast, peacefuland made wise under the peculiar circumstances of the present severe conflict. What I have done up to now I have done under pressure of a necessity which no faithful man could have resisted. I have nothing to regret, nothing about which I have a shadow of a doubt. I could do no other than I have done. Unless I had been willing to have been condemned at the Last Great Day with the enemies of the Cross of Christ, I could not have kept silent, nor have continued in an evil confederacy with those who make void the Gospel. I can bear anything but an accusing conscience. C. H. S.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2533 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE EVER-PRESENT CRISIS

NO. 2533

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1897. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 17, 1884.

You therefore, Beloved, seeing you know these things before, beware lest you, also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.   
2 Peter 3:17.

The Apostle has told us that there will come, in the last days, scoffers. We, therefore, know this is to be the case, for we have been informed concerning it. Forewarned is forearmed and now that we see the scoffers and cannot help seeing them, we perceive another proof of the truth of Scripture. Every time a blasphemer opens his mouth to deny the truth of Revelation, he will help to confirm us in our conviction of the very Truth of God which he denies! The Holy Spirit told us, by the pen of Peter, that it would be so, and now we see how truly he wrote.

I do not think it is of any use to sit down and fret about the badness of the times. Ever since I first understood anything, I have always heard that there has been a crisis. Somebody or other has continually assured me that we were just on the brink of something perfectly horrible. I have never been quite able to see that the times at any particular period have been very much worse than they used to be. Thirty years ago they seemed to me to be about as bad as they could beand I could not see any room for their getting much worse! I used to, then, constantly hear laments about the good old times, and I remember saying that the times, then, were the good old times, for time was never so old before. And, taking all things into account, I thought that, perhaps, the evils of that time were not so very much greater than the evils of the ages that had gone before. Still, I do incline a little to the belief that the times have become worse of late. At any rate, in this matter of scoffers!

The scoffers who used to be in holes and corners have now come out into the open and, worse still, they have climbed into the pulpits! And if not there, actually to scoff, they insinuate doubts and undermine the faith of many who formerly believed. The times are certainly now very perilous, whatever they may have been in the past, and, as we look into the Scriptures, we see that the New Testament, even where it does not take the exact shape of prophecy, nevertheless does give us many indications of what we may expect in human historyand those indications are being verified continually all around us! Seeing we know these things before, we are bound to pay the more earnest heed to the lesson of Peter in the text before us which seems to me to be most suitable to the times in which we live!

There is another matter that ought not to be passed over without much searching of heart and much lamentationand that is that in all our churches of every sort there is a very dreadful leakage continually going on. It is so with ourselves. We receive large numbers into fellowship, but there are continually large numbers going out from us, not always by sin, but many, of course, by death and emigration and removal. And there is a large proportion of members who drop out of sight, although, at the time of their admission, they gave credible evidence of conversion, according to the judgment of those who watch over mens souls. Look in any of the lists that are published by any religious body at the column recording the numbers of those who are dropped for nonattendance and so disappear from the church rolland you must be saddened to see how many are thus lost to us who, at one time, appeared to become good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Because of that sad fact, I thought it all the more necessary that I should speak at this time upon the words in our textYou therefore, Beloved, seeing you know these things before, beware lest you, also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.

I. First, dear Friends, there is a TITLE here given to all Believers which is well worthy of our careful consideration for a little while. The Apostle says, You therefore, Beloved.

Peter is not the Apostle of Love. We do not expect to find him speaking in such terms as we have in Johns Epistles. Yet it is very amazing that the greatest praise of love was written, not by John, but by Paul. And here, Peter, without seeming to go at all out of his way, speaks just as affectionately as John might have spoken. I suppose he felt that when he was administering a rebuke, and when he was warning against a great peril, it was right that he should speak in the most affectionate terms. I do not think that we shall ever do people much good by bullying them. I question whether any receive rebukes at all if they are not administered in love. They only resent them if they are spoken in anger. But when the tone of the reprover is that of affection, then even stripes will be accepted, even as it was with David when he said, Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head.

In our text, Peter, very honestly warning those to whom he wrote in plainest terms, calls them, Beloved. Nor was he using a word which was not true. I do not think that it is always a wise thing to call everybody, Dear this, and, Dear that. In fact, if anybody talks like that to me, I always begin to suspect that there is some motive for such endearing terms. It seems to be the natural course of things that if people say, Dear this, and, Dear that, and, Dear the other, they think that, possibly, by such talk they can get something out of us and, therefore, they use those unctuous terms without meaning them in their heart. Have we not known people call each other Brother and Sister when all the while they were gossiping one anothers character away? It was not so with Peterhe really loved those people to whom he was writing. And it was because he loved them that he wrote so plainly to them and gave them the needed warning so very honestly. Let us, in passing, learn this lesson that real affection is a necessary qualification of one who is to be a leader of Gods people. Continually to blend this affection with faithfulness is the part of true wisdom, for we shall be cutting and wounding to no good purpose unless we use the lancet with a very tender hand. If we must cut deep, even to the very heart, then it must be done with great tendernessa lions heart must be linked to a ladys hand.

Why did the Apostle Peter love these people and call them, Beloved? I think we can answer the question by putting ourselves, in our inferior ministry, in a similar position. All those who are converted and brought to Christ are truly beloved by Gods people for Christs sake. Wherever we can see anything pertaining to Christ, we wish to give the love that is due to Christ. Where we see that the Holy Spirit has worked the life of God in any Believers, we feel that the life which is in us is in sympathy with the life which is in them. There must be, on the part of a minister of Christ, a deep and intense affection towards all those whom he believes to belong to Christ. Especially is this the case with our own convertsthere is a tie of the nearest and most powerful kind which unites us to those who have been brought to the Lord Jesus by our instrumentality. Do they flourish? Then we also flourish. Do they decline? Then our heart languishes. They are our epistles and when they are blotted, we feel that there is a spot upon ourselves. But when they are legible and men read them to the glory of God, our soul is full of delight! I trust that we can say of all those whom we have brought to the Saviorand whom we have seen united in the fellowship of the Churchthat without using the word unmeaningly, we can call them, Beloved, And it is because they are beloved that we long to see them steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. We pray the Lord to have them always in His holy keeping, to preserve them from the temptations which are in the world through lust, to deliver them from the power of their own inbred corruptions and make them perfect in every good work, to do His will, working in them that which is well pleasing in His sight.

Workers for Christ, learn the lesson of this title before we pass on to the next part of our subject. Go, in the spirit of love, to deal with those whom you would bless. Love them to Christ if they are unconverted! Bind them to the Cross with cords of love if they are converted. And if, being converted, they have wandered away from their Lord, draw them back with cords of a man, with bands of love, remembering, yourselves, lest you, also, be tempted to stray from your Savior! There, then, is the title which Peter here usesBeloved.

II. The second thing which I notice in the text is, A WATCHWORD given by Peter to those whom he addressed. You therefore, Beloved, seeing you know these things before, beware.

That word needs to be sounded in the ears of young converts very soon after they come to know the Lord. They are men and women given to appetite and they are very apt to eat whatever is set before them which looks like spiritual meatand many a disease may be engendered in them by eating unwholesome spiritual food! This warning word, Beware, needs to be spoken, today, with much earnestness. Beware of many of the books that are given you to read! Beware of much of the teaching that is rife in the present day! Beware of the example of some who are called Christians! Beware of the deceitful talk of some who would make a gain of you and lead you away from Christ! Beware, above all, of yourselfbeware of leaning to your own understanding, beware of giving the reins to your own will, beware of trusting in your own grace and believing that you are beyond the gunshot of the enemy! This is not the best watchword we can give you for your comfort, but it is oftentimes a necessary watchword. Going round the camp at night, we may well whisper in the ear of the sentinel, Sleep not, but beware! And waking up the army in the morning, we may well sound the word down the ranks, Beware! All day long, all night long, in every place, from every quarter, beware, for the world is full of adversaries! Every bush conceals a foealmost every tuft is at the verge of a rifle-pit. Beware, you are in an enemys country! You have no right to sleep, or to say, I am perfectly safe and need not watch. This is the watchword we give you, even as Peter gave it long ago, Beware.

Be not credulous Beware. Remember how the Apostle John says, Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Drink not in every novelty, listen not to every new teacher, be not carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they are in wait to deceive, but, beware.

Be not too confiding Beware. Trust in the Lord with all your heart, but watch against men, for there are some who would, if it were possible, deceive even the very elect! They are watching to see how they can deceive you. If they cannot lead you into some great and gross error, they will insinuate doubts and questions. They will leave behind a spark, if they cannot kindle a fire. Just as when Captain Cook went round the world, he landed on every shore and scattered all manner of English seeds broadcast, so there are some who go up and down the land sowing tares among the wheatand they are never better pleased than when they drop a handful of the evil seed in the mind of some youngster who has but lately come to Christ and who does not, as yet, know the devices of the adversary! Therefore, Beloved, beware. Be not too confiding, but be always on the watch against evil of all kinds.

Above all, be not careless, but, beware. I know some who have said, Really, it does not matter what we believe, as long as we are right on the main points. But it

does matter, for they who neglect any of Christs Words shall fall by little and little. Every Truth of God is a diamond of untold value! I do not know whether there is such a thing as an unimportant Truth of God. Somewhere or other, near to it, there may lie certain consequences that we know not of and, the Truth of God being neglected, an error may fill its placeand that error may become pregnant with mischief from generation to generation! It is an ill time for the Church of Christ when she begins to walk blindfolded, or when she even desires to neglect any of the precepts or the doctrines which Christ has left behind Him. Moses was to make the tabernacle according to the pattern shown to him in the mountand Ezekiel was to remind the people of his day of the exact pattern of the house of the Lordand we need constantly to be put in mind of all that makes up the palace of Truth where Christ dwells. May we be helped to escape all carelessness by giving heed to this Apostolic watchword!

I pass on the watchword, Beware, to you, dear Friends, and pray especially that you may beware of the errors of the wicked. There are plenty of them. May you watch both against the errors which are matters of doctrine and the wickedness which is matter of practice! And may you be kept from both of these!

III. Advancing a little further, I want you to notice, thirdly, AN ARGUMENT in our text. There are really two arguments. You therefore, Beloved, seeing you know these things before, beware lest you, also, fall.

First, seeing you know these things before, beware. If you are deceived, you will be culpably, guiltily deceived because you have been warned. If you should be led away from Christ and His Truth, from holy living and holy thinking, you will be led astray willfully because you have already received the intimation that you must watch and pray lest you enter into temptation! Peter here tells you, first, that there are scoffers. Then mind that you get out of their way. He tells you, also, that there are

seducers and that they shall wax worse and worse. Take care that you do not let them seduce you. Of course they will not come to you with the name, seducer, printed on their foreheadsthey will appear to you not as messengers of Satan, but as angels of lightand they will pretend to be very nice, excellent people, when all the while they will be only excellent in doing mischief. And Satan will think well of them because they serve his purpose.

You are warned that these people will twist the Scriptures. They are great hands at that evil employment. They assert that anything can be taught from the Bible and so it can if a man is only wicked enough to twist it from its proper meaning! There is no book under Heaven that cannot be made to say the exact opposite of what its author intended, if a man is only sufficiently delivered from the power of principle to twist it. Such a man is a thief, for he steals words and uses them for his own wicked purposes when they were meant for quite another end! No doubt he can make any misuse that he likes, even of Holy Writ. But the Scripture as God gave it to us is plain enoughon all the great Truths of God, it is a childs book. There are certain great Truths, undoubtedly, in the Word of God, which are hard to be understood, but even those are not difficult because of the language in which they are proclaimed, but because the Truth, itself, is mysterious and deep. Therefore, dear Friends, if we come honestly to the Scriptures and seek to be taught of the Spirit, we shall learn the things of God. But we must not be surprised if others act dishonestly and twist the Scriptures to their own destruction, for it has been foretold that they will do so. You know this before, therefore, beware! Be on your guard.

Then the second argument is, Beware lest you, also, fall. As some have turned aside, twisting the Scriptures to their own destruction, you may do the same, for you are of the same nature as they are. Say not with Hazael, Is your servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? Left to ourselves, we are dogs, enough, for anything, Brothers and Sisters! If we are without the Grace of God, neither dogs nor devils are worse than we are! We are quite capable of believing a lie and of clinging to it until we perish if the Grace of God does not keep us to the Truth and preserve us to the end. Let us never begin to think ourselves exempt from the weaknesses of human intellects, or even from the perversities of human minds. But watch, for with the same nature as other men, the same danger is around us as is around other men. And unless God, in His infinite mercy, shall preserve us, we, too, shall apostatize, forsake the faith and become worse than infidels.

IV. Now, in the fourth place, let us briefly notice A CATASTROPHE which is foreshadowed in the text. Beware lest you, alsofall from your own steadfastness.

Beware lest you fall from your steadfastness as to belief of the revealed Truth of God. Beware lest you neglect this truthful doctrine and that, till, at last, you drift into a sea of error. Do not believe what some tell you, that it is of no consequence what we preach, or what you hear. On the contrary, cleave closely to Holy Scripture. Judge everything that we say, or that anyone else says, by the supreme test of the Inspired Word. If I say anything to you merely on my own authority, reject it! But if it is on the authority of Gods Word, reject it at your peril! Hold that fast which is really written in this Book and pray that it may be written on your heart by Gods Holy Spirit. Be prepared at all times to judge by the Law and by the Testimony, that which you hear, for, if it is not according to this Word, there is no Light of God in it. Take care that you do not depart from the steadfastness of your faith in these Truths of God, for there are some who have not really drunk in any error, yet they do not believe the Truth in the very power of it. They adopt a creed as a mere letter, but what is the use of that? One dead creed on the shelf is as bad as anotherwe need to know in our own soul the Truth of God is. The Truth concerning sin so as to hate itthe Truth concerning the Atonement so as to prize itthe Truth concerning the Deity of Christ so as to rejoice in it!

I cannot stay to mention all the Truths of God in detail, but these and every other Truth are to be laid home to the soul and tested and proved in the daily life. Oh, that none of us may fall from our steadfastness in this matter! As with an iron grip, hold what you hold in these evil times of doubt and unbelief. To my mind, it is a pleasant thing, nowadays, to meet with a person who really believes anything. I have found a man up to his neck in error and yet holding firmly some one Truth of God. I have said to him, Sit down, my Friend, and let us have a talk, for you believe something, and so do I, and so far we can get on together. But it is different where there is nothing at all believed, where it is, Whichever you please, you pay your money and you take your choice. We are told that we must keep abreast of the times. And, truth is always advancing. If it is so, then one thing was true in the year 1800, and another in the year 1830, and a different thing was true in the year 1840, another in 1860, another in 1880and we are going on to a new truth for 1900! Some seem to think that the Truth of God changes like the moon, or like the weather! In their opinion, it is never at one stay, but ebbs and flows like the troubled sea when it cannot rest! But we believe in the Truth of God that never alters and never can be altered, but stands Immutable as God, Himself! May we be kept steadfast in our belief of that!

And, dear Friends, it is a painful thing when men are not steadfast in their practice. Of all the griefs the Church ever feels, the keenest is when those who once stood in her midst dishonor the name of Christ by unholy living. Are there not many such? They did run well, but what has hindered them that they do not still obey the Truth? Once they were regularly at the Prayer Meetings. Once, they were among the most earnest Sunday school teachers and Christian workers, but where are they now? Eaten up with worldliness, honeycombed with the desire after amusements that are, at least, questionable, their spiritual life is reduced to the lowest ebb, and even their morals begin to be very doubtful. God save you, beloved Friends, from such a catastrophe as that! We cannot live too near to Christthe very marrow of religion lies in that which some men think to be the too great precision of it. I am certain that the full enjoyment of true religion does not belong to the great mass of Christian professorsthey do not get near enough to the center and heart of it all to realize what its sweetness is. They do not sufficiently consecrate themselves to their Lord and Master, or live in such complete fellowship with Him as to really get at the marrow and fatness which are stored up in the central regions of true godliness. The Lord help us to get there, and when we do get there, may He keep us in that blissful spot!

And, oh, to be steadfast in our labors for Christnot diligent, today, and sluggish tomorrow! Let us always be like the racer who is intent on reaching the goal, pressing forward as though he could not go fast enough to win the prizeso let us always be panting to do more for the glory of God. We have many professors who are like runners that are short-windedthey could win a sharp, short race, but they cannot hold on through lifeand who among us could do so unless the Lord should hold us up? This is the point of Peters warning, let us see that we fall not from our steadfastness of Christian progress, but always be as if we were arrows shot from the bow of the Eternal that must speed onward till we reach the target of perfection! Beware, therefore, lest you fall from your steadfastness, for that would be, indeed, a terrible catastrophe.

V. And now, fifthly, just for a minute, notice that here is A WARNING. Beware lest you, also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.

A man does not usually go bad all of a sudden. Oh, says one, there is So-and-So, who was with us a little while ago, but he has gone into gross sin. Just so, but long before there were any outward signs of evil, there was the undermining going on in his character, depend upon it. When men fall, it is often the case that they have been led away. Somebody gets hold of your ear and leads you away. Some get a hold on your empty pockets and lead you away because of your needs. Some get hold of your eyes and lead you away by your eyelids. There are many points where a man may be grasped by one who is seeking to destroy him, but, dear Friends, I beg you not to be easily led away by anybody! Know what you know for yourselvesdo your own thinking! When you want to find the Truth of God, work your passage to itstudy the Scriptures for yourselves, always seeking the instruction of the Holy Spiritand then, if you are led, do not be led away. It would take a great deal to lead me away from what I know, from that Refuge wherein I have hidden, from that Rock whereon I have built for time and for eternity. My Lord

*To whom or where could I go,   
If I should turn from You?*

If you are led away, dear Friends, do not be led away by error. If somebody can teach you more than you now know, and it is really Gods Truth, go and learn it. If there is an upper room at the feast and the King says to you, Come up higher, go up higher by all means! We do not want you at the lower end of the table if there is better fare at the higher end of it. But do not let men lead you away with error, especially when it is the error of the wickedand you can soon determine that. I will tell you how you can detect men who would lead you away with the error of the wicked. You can always be sure that those who would make you think lightly of the Scriptures are leading you away with the error of the wicked! He is no good man who thinks little of the best of booksthe Book of God! I will have nothing to do with that man who makes me think less of the Word of God than I used to think! I know at once where he comes from and understand what his objective isif possible, to lead me away with the error of the wicked! Have nothing to do with any man who would make you think less of Christ than you do! His error must be the error of the wicked!

If he begins to point out to you some defect in Christs teaching, or some fault in His life, or tells you that He is not very God of very God, get out of his society at once! I would have you do what John is said to have done with Cerinthus who denied the Deity of Christ. John was in a bath, to which the unbeliever came, and it is said that John hurried out at once, for fear that he should be contaminated by contact with Cerinthus, or lest the bath should fall on them both! Something of that kind of spirit the most loving followers of Christ will be sure to have. You can be sure of this, that he will do you no good who does not honor your Lord and Master, so get out of his company as soon as you can.

And shun also those people who would make you think less of prayer, for they would lead you away with the error of the wicked. You know how some of them talk, No doubt it is a very proper thing for people to pray. It does them good and relieves their mind, but to suppose that God hears prayer and answers it is positively ridiculous! Yet for all that, they say that they would not discourage us from praying. Now, personally, I feel inclined to say to a man who tells me that, My dear Sir, you have as good as called me an idiot, and I am very much obliged to you for the compliment. No, he says, I did not call you an idiot. But I am an idiot if I go on praying when I know that God does not hear me! I say that a man is a natural fool who, believing that God never hears and answers prayer, yet goes and kneels down to pray. Why, he might as well go to the top of a hill and whistle to the winds! Surely, if there is no effect produced by prayer, it is idle to say that it will do us good to pray! We are not so foolish as to believe that! When we get to that state of mind, we hope to be taken in at Earlswood or at Bethlehem. But we have not come to that condition just yet and, when any speak ill of prayer, we understand that they do not know even the elements of true religion! If a person were to say to me, I will teach you to read, and he began by saying of the first letters of the alphabet, That is not A, and that is not B, I would say, Oh, thank you, I will not trouble you any longer. I knew better than that when I was quite a little boy!

That man, again, who begins to speak lightly of sin, will lead you away with the error of the wicked. You know how he talks, Do not listen to those old-fashioned Puritan notions! You can go and mix in society, you can indulge in this and that amusement and yet you can be a Christian all the same. Ah, yes! I constantly see persons trying to see not how near they can live to God, but how far they can live from God and yet be called Christians! There are some who seem to be inculcating on our youth this kind of doctrine. Do not keep away from temptation, but go into temptation. Do not burn yourself, but just singe your hair. Do not, by any means, actually kill yourself in the machinery, but get a finger cut off every now and thenthen you will know something of the nature of steel and of how it operates when it cuts through a bone. That is very instructive, no doubt!

This is the typical of the talk that we hear from many in this evil age, Of course you must know a little about life. Young people are not to be always tied to their mothers apron stringsthey must go out and learn a little for themselves. That is, drink a little poison every now and then just to see how it operates on you. Take a drop of acid and see what it will do for you. My advice isKeep clear of all such things! Let this warning be always remembered, Beware, beware, beware. I have never yet come under a rule of life that seemed to me too severe. On the contrary, I still find myself all too apt to wander in thought, if not in act, and I would be glad if I could not only be bound, but nailed right up to the Cross.

Oh, says one, what do you mean by that expression? I mean that I wish I could realize the truth of Pauls words, I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me. I would gladly have no liberty to do anything that is even questionable! I would find my liberty in being perfectly holy. Oh, that God would help each one of us to reach that point! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:   
**2 PETER 3.**

Verse 1. This second epistle, Beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance. The purest minds need stirring up at times. It would be a great pity to stir up impure minds. That would only be to do mischief. But pure minds may be stirred as much as you please and the more the better! There are hallowed memories in the minds of all Christians, but those memories are apt to lie asleepit is well to ring the alarm bell and wake up all the memories within the Believers heart, even as Peter did when he wroteI stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance.

2. That you may be mindful of the Words which were spoken before by the holy Prophets, and of the commandment of us, the Apostles of the Lord and Savior. Peter believed in the Inspiration of the very Words of Scripture. He was not one of those precious advanced thinkers who would, if they could, tear the very soul out of the Book and leave us nothing at all. He wrote, That you may be mindful of the Wordsthe very Words which were spoken before by the holy Prophets. Oh, says one, but words do not mean anythingit is the inward sense that is really important. Exactly sothat is just what the fool said about eggshells. He said that they did not matterit was only the inward life-germ of the chick within that was important! So he broke all the shells and, thereby, destroyed the life that was within! We contend for every Word of the Bible and believe in the verbal and plenary Inspiration of Holy Scripture, believing, indeed, that there can be no other Inspiration but that. If the Words could be taken from us, the sense, itself, would be gone.

3. Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers. A prophecy which has been abundantly fulfilled! You need not go far to find themthey come in the form of living menand they swarm in the form of their books. They are to be met with almost everywhere! Like the locusts, they fill the air and hide the light of the sun! There shall come in the last days scoffers.

3 *.* Walking after their own lusts. Errors of doctrine are almost always attended with errors of practice and, certainly, they legitimately lead that way. Those who scoff according to the lusts of their intellect are very likely to live according to the lusts of their flesh! The two things are congruous. They are born from the same cause, they flourish for the same reasons, and they tend to the same ends! Walking after their own lusts.

4 *.* And saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. Only the modern scoffers have tried to improve upon their predecessors, for they say, All things have developed by evolution from the beginning, which never had a beginning, but which somehow or other has always existed. Thus the scoffers change their tune, but they never alter their spiritit is always an attack upon the revealed Truth of God! Indeed, they scarcely seem to believe that there is any revealed Truth, and they will only accept that which they might, themselves, have invented! Notwithstanding what these men say, all things have not continued as they were since the beginning of the creation, for there have been great interpositions of Divine power in the past, as Peter goes on to show.

5-7. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the Word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same Word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the Day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men. Admire the power of Gods Word! It was by the Word of God that the heavens were made, by the Word of God that the earth was drowned, by the Word of God that it has been preserved ever sinceand will be preserved until, by that same Word, fire shall come to devour all the works of men. As surely as Noahs flood came, so surely shall there be a burning up at the appointed season. The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same Word are kept in store, reserved unto fire.

8. But, Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. You are in a hurry. You do not understand the infinite leisure of the Eternal One. The wondrous system of Divine Grace seems to have hardly room and scope enough in the few years that men give to it by their prophetic calculations! But Gods prophecies are being fulfilled to the very letter. It may be that the length of time for their accomplishment will be far greater than any have imagined, yet to God it shall still be a very little while. One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. We cry, How long? How long? Yet, according to Gods reckoning, it is but the day before yesterday that Christ died, and only about a week ago that Adam was expelled from Eden. A thousand years is, after all, a very brief space of time. If it is measured by our life, it seems long. But what is the life of a man? Measured other waysand there are many other modes of measurementit grows even longer. But measured by the eternity of God, it is a vanishing point altogetherthere seems to be nothing left of it.

9. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. So He hurries not. He gives the sinner space and time enough in which to repent. Oh, that man would turn to God, moved by that gracious long-suffering of His!

10. But the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. It is impossible to tell when it will come, but the Day of the Lord will come and, to the great mass of mankind it will come as a thief in the night. Though often warned, they will not expect it. The Lords saints will watch for Him, for they are not in ignorance that that Day should overtake them as a thief. But, to the ungodly, the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.

10. In the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth, also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Men make great boasts concerning what they build and there are many wonderful works of men upon the face of the globe. But the day will come when there will be no trace of them left, for they will have utterly disappeared! Why, then, should you and I live for these thingsfor the things which are seen, which are temporal? O Beloved, live for the things which are not seen, which are eternal!

11. Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness. These are garments which we should wear in prospect of eternity! These are things which no fire can touch, for holiness and godliness will outlive even the flames of the Last Great Day!

12, 13. Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the Day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness. We believe that God will, in the end, have a complete victory over sin, and that even this poor world of ours, purified by the fire, shall be lifted up, in a sevenfold splendor, to be a part of the great Kingdom of our God. New heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.

14. Therefore, Beloved, seeing that you look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless. Be diligent to get rid of all those spots which sin has made. In one sense, you are cleansed from them, already, but in another sense, the purifying work must constantly go on. You are to overcome your besetting sin you are to vanquish all your tendencies to evilevery thought is to be brought into captivity to the mind of the Lord.

15, 16. And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul, also, according to the wisdom given unto him, has written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable, twist, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction. If Peter, here, alluded to the Doctrine of Election, and the great doctrines that spring out of predestination, that is no argument why they should not be preached, for if they are not to be preached because men twist them, then nothing is to be preached, seeing that we are here told that they also twist other Scriptures unto their own destruction! Any rope will do for a man to hang himself withand any doctrine will surface for a man to ruin himself with if he wishes to do so. The doctrine of Divine Mercy has been twisted into a reason why we should live in sin! The doctrine of Human Capability has been twisted into this falsehoodI can repent when I like, or believe when I like and, therefore, I may leave it to the very last. There is no form of opinion which cannot be rendered mischievous! Our business is to study the Word of God and preach it as we find itand if men will twist it, we cannot help that. Is it not so that the Truth of God will always be a savor of life unto life to those who believeand a savor of death unto death to those who perish?

17, 18 *.* You therefore, Beloved, seeing you know these things before, beware lest you, also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in Grace. The only way to prevent falling is to growthe tree that grows will not fall over!

18. And in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen. An ascription of praise to Christ is never out of place at the beginning or at the end of an Epistle, or in the middle of it! You may praise the Lord Jesus Christ anywhere, at any timeit shall never be a waste of time to sing unto His name! To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen.

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GROWTH IN GRACE

NO. 2700

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1900.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON A LORDS-DAY EVENING, IN THE AUTUMN OF 1858.

But grow in Grace, and in the knowledge   
of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.   
2 Peter 3:18.

IT is worth while to remark that this passage immediately follows the 17th verse, where the Apostle says, Beloved, seeing you know these things before, beware lest you, also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in Grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He puts the one after the other, as if the one must be the means of the other. There had been some, in the Apostles day, who had twisted, to their own destruction, certain expressions in the Epistles of Paul which Peter said were hard to be understood. And, therefore, he warned Christian men and women to take heed lest they, being led away with the error of the wicked, should fall from their own steadfastness.

In order that they might know how to stand and to be preserved from falling, he gave them this directiongrow in Grace, for the way to stand is to grow. The way to be steadfast is to go forward. There is no standing except by progression. If you see even such a simple thing as a childs top rolling along your floor at home, you will observe that it will always stand upright as long as it keeps on rollingbut when it stops, down it goes! So is it with the Christianas long as he is in motion, he stands but if it were possible for the motion to cease, then the Christian would fall from his steadfastness. Glory be to God, he will be kept from falling, and he shall be presented faultless before the Throne of God! The way to stand, then, is to go forward. The way to be steadfast is to progress. The way to be alive, according to the Apostle, is to grow in Grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We will offer, first of all, two or three remarks upon growth in Grace in general. And, secondly, a few remarks upon growth in Grace being intimately connected with growth in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I. First, then, we shall offer some remarks upon GROWTH IN GRACE IN GENERAL. What shall we say about it?   
The first remark we make is that there is a sense in which there is no such thing at all as growth in Grace. If you understand the word, Grace, as signifying free favor and the love of God towards His people, there is not, and there cannot be any growth in that at all   
*The moment a sinner believes,   
And trusts in his crucified God*   
he is, by the Grace of God, then and there justified and complete in Christ Jesus! And if he lives till his hair is gray, he will never be more justified, and never be more beloved than he is the very first moment in which he believes in Christ. As soon as ever I have a vital connection with the Lamb of God, I am in Grace. Let me live on, let my Grace grow, let my faith increase, let my zeal become warmer, let my love be more ardent, yet I shall not be more in Grace than I was before! God will not love me more, He will not have a deeper and a purer affection in His heart to me then than He has the very first moment I turn to Him, nor will His Grace the less justify me, or less accept me, the first moment when I come to Him with all my sins about me, than it shall do when I stand before His Throne! We never grow in the Grace of election. We are always, as Peter says in his first Epistle, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. And in that sense of being, in Grace, there is neither growth nor any retrograde movement. So also is it in the matter of justification

*In union with the Lamb,   
From condemnation free,   
The saints forever were,   
And shall forever be.*   
And they are at any one time as much justified as they are at any other time. Give me to be justified today, then I was justified yesterday, and I shall be justified tomorrow. As soon as I put my trust in the Savior, I became complete in Grace, so far as that was concerned, I was made perfect in Christ Jesus. I cannot be more than perfect and, therefore, I cannot in that respect grow in Grace. I cannot receive more justifying mercy. I cannot receive more pardoning Grace, for I have had it all at once and have so become perfect in Christ.   
But you will remark that our text does not say anything about Grace growingit does not say that Grace grows! It tells us to grow in Grace. There is a vast difference between Grace growing and our growing in Grace. Gods Grace never increasesit is always infinite, so it cannot be more. It is always everlasting. It is always bottomless, it is always shoreless. It cannot be more and, in the Nature of God, it could not be less. The text tells us to grow in Grace. We are in the sea of Gods Gracewe cannot be in a deeper sea, but let us grow, now that we are in it. We cannot be more in it than we are, or than we have always been. We are in Gods Grace. We are in the Covenant. We are in the scheme of redemption. We are in union with Jesuswe cannot be more or less so, for we are eternally secure through the blood of our Savior. But while it cannot grow, we can grow more in it and so we shall grow in Grace.   
I must make another remark. It is certain that while the Grace of God toward us does not grow, yet there is such a thing as the development of Grace. There are some persons who strongly object to the Doctrine of Progressive Sanctification and to our mentioning anything like growth in Grace. My Brothers and Sisters are welcome to object if they like, but I am sure, if they read the Scriptures (they will surely not object to Scriptural terms), they will find growth in Grace very frequently mentioned. If that does not mean progressive sanctification, then I do not understand the term, growth in Grace, at all! It is quite certain that there are degrees in the development of Grace. You will surely not say that the young man who has been converted only for the last few months, knows as much of Grace, understands as much about it, and has as much faith and as much love, as the man who has for the last 20 or 30 years been earnestly engaged in his Masters service!   
You will not tell me that one man, who is scarcely ever seen coming up to the House of God, and who is daily in a state of religious starvation, stands on a par in Grace with a man who is laboring for his Master, whose love is evident to all, and whose faith is testified before the whole congregation! You will not tell me there is a dead level in Christianity which all alike reach. If you do say so, I shall tell you that you have no eyes, or that you do not look about you. For it is certain that there are some who are further advanced than others are, some with greater faith than others have. There are great faiths as well as little faiths, great loves as well as little loves! There are men of ardent spirits who have Grace more fully developed in them than it is in others. It is true, they are not more loved of God than others are, and not more justified, nor more accepted, for in that respect we all stand on a level, and there is no difference. But as to the development of Grace in our souls and the display of Grace in our lives, everyone must admit that there is a difference between different saints.   
I cannot understand the difference existing between various ministers of Christ, if it is not because of the difference in the degrees of Grace which they possess. Some have just started in the Christian ministry and have preached a little about redemption, but they have not gone far enough to preach about election, or, at least, not about the vital union of every blood-bought child of God with the person of Emmanuel. Or if they should now and then preach upon that blessed Truth of God, they cannot talk about the eternal security of the saints and declare how, against wind and tide, they shall all sail safely into the heavenly harbor. They have not grown enough in Grace to preach on such themes as theseso will not everyone admit that there are degrees of development in Grace while it is also true that there are none of us more justified, more elect more chosen of God and loved of Him than any other Believers are?   
Now for a third remark, which is that growth in Grace is not to be measured by weeks, months and years. There are persons who think that the age of a man will tell how much he knows about Divine things. Oh, say some, So-and-So is such a young manwhat can he know about Divine Grace? There is a hoary-headed father therehe must know a great deal more. If you talk like that, you will soon find out your mistake. God often delights to show how He scorns and scoffs at all the distinctions of man. He makes the young men prudent and He even gives to children, knowledge and discretion! Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings He ordains strength because of His enemies. It is truewe do believe and we should believe that there is more knowledge beneath the gray hairs than under the youths curly locksgenerally speaking, it is so. Yet God, in order to display His Sovereignty, has so arranged that He sometimes puts His treasures into an earthen vessel that has not been fashioned more than a few years!   
Do not suppose that persons grow in Grace according to their years. Some grow faster in Grace in five minutes than others do in 50 years. I believe that some saints progress further in Grace in one single month than others do in 12 months or 12 years. I am sure I may speak concerning myself. I have sometimes grown more in Grace in one hour, than I have at other seasons in a week, a month, or a yearwhen God, in His Infinite Wisdom, has been pleased to give me a vision of the Savior, or to break up the fountains of wickedness that lay hidden in my soul. I have learned more in one hour, when the Holy Spirits hand has been upon me, than I have in weeks and months simply with my own study. Gods people grow like trees grow. Sometimes they take a start and grow upward. At another time, they are growing downward. Sometimes, apparently, the sap sleeps within the brancha winter time comes over it and it is asleep.   
Do not imagine, my dear Friends, that because you are getting old, you are growing in Grace. People are continually warning young men of their danger. No doubt we are in danger, but let me remind you that there is not an instance in Sacred Scripture of a young man disgracing his professionbut there are instances in Scripture of men of middle age and of gray hairs doing so. It is thus we, who are young, are in the greatest danger and, therefore, God upholds us to show the power of His Grace. But some of you older folk conceive that you are not in peril and, therefore, God allows you to fall, that He may stain the pride of your selfglorying and let you see that it is not anything in fleshneither age, nor standing, nor rank, nor condition which ensures our safetybut that He holds up the humble and casts down the proud! David did not fall into his great sin until he had certainly come to maturity and into the very prime of lifethen he sinned with Bathsheba. Lot did not transgress so grossly before he became an old man.   
If you turn to the pages of Scripture, you will notice that wherever there has been a lamentable fallas in the case of Peterit has been a man who has grown up and become strong in years. God thus shows us that it is not mere years that can teach us Gracein fact, that years, and age, and learning, and talent have nothing to do with Graceand He could, if He pleased, take a child six years old and pour wisdom and knowledge into the lips of that child that could puzzle the seers of this world! He often takes the most unlikely instruments and uses them for the accomplishment of His purposes. And because men have said that experimental preachers must have gray heads, he says, No, it shall be a youth who shall lead the multitude! It shall be a child, out of whose mouth I will pour words of wisdom, for I will overthrow all human glory and show mankind that it is not the preacher who is to be praised, but God. Salvation is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs but it is God that shows mercy! It is not the man who preaches, who accomplishes the work, but God working through the man. He could dispense with the man altogether if He pleased. At any rate, He will have the man He pleases, and at what age He pleases, and qualify him as He pleases.  
Once more, growth in Grace is not to be estimated by our feelings. There are some of you, Beloved, who think you are not growing in Grace because you do not feel so lively as you used to do. Ah, you say, when I was young, everything was bright. What peaceful hours I then enjoyed! I would go over hedge and ditch to hear the Gospel preached. I had such an intense desire to hear about God and Jesus Christ, such love to the Gospel that when I once got to hear a minister preach, it mattered not whoever he might be, it all seemed sweet. But now I am so depressed that I cannot enjoy the Truth of God as I used to do. Do not think because your wild heat is gone, that you have not grown. When we light a fire, we always put the straw and kindling at the bottom. And when we first light it, there is a deal of flame and a great deal of smoke. But, afterwards, when the flame gets hold of the coals, there is not so much blaze, but there is really more heat. You may have lost some of your flame and smoke, but you have more solid fire! We would rather warm our hands by the coals than by the straw, for that must soon go.   
So is it with Divine Graceit begins with a flame which catches the lighter substances and lays hold on the imagination and the passions. But, later in life it appeals to the judgment, and makes the man one solid lump of burning fire. He is not a little flame, rising towards Heaven, that the wind might blow out with a puff, but he becomes so strong a fire that the wind shall but increase the flame, and shall make the heat the greater! So it may be with you. Perhaps you have become more solid though you are less fiery.

Do not suppose, when you are depressed, that, therefore, you are not growing in Grace. Many of Gods plants grow best in the dark and He often puts them in the dark to make them grow. When you are growing upwards, remember that there is such a thing as growing downward. You may have had, yesterday, a Divine manifestation that took you up to the top of the Delectable Mountains. You must not think you are big because you are up on high, for pigmies perched on Alps are still pigmies. And if you were ever so little, it would not make you any bigger if you were taken to the top of St. Pauls. If, on the other hand, you are deep down in a mine, do not imagine that you are any the smaller for that reason. I can tell you that you will often grow faster in the dungeon than on the top of a mountain, but it is not a pleasant place to be. When our depravity is revealed to us, when our desolation of spirit and our utter hopelessness and powerlessness are uncovered and made manifest by Gods Holy Spirit, we grow, I believe, even faster than we do when, on the wings of seraphs, we are privileged to mount on high! So, do not measure your growth in Grace by your feelings. Some of you make a kind of barometer of your feelings. Do not do so! If we are in Christ, we are in Christ by faith, and not by feelings, and remember, whether your feelings are good or bad, you are no more or less a child of God. Your faith, Sinner, unites you with the Lambnot your feelings! Trust Him in darkness, trust Him in distress, lean on Him when you cannot see Him. And when there seems nothing to walk on, still walk, for the ground is firm beneath the foot of faith!   
Just by way of warning, let me urge you not to think that you are growing in Grace because you happen to be doing a little more for the church externally. Oh, we often say, now I am progressing, am I not? I am busy in the Sunday school, laboring hard there! I am preaching! I am doing this, or that, or the othernow I am truly growing in Grace. Ah, it is a proper thing to be diligent in good works and to be abounding in acts of righteousness, but if you begin to say, Now I am growing, because of this or because of that, you have made a great mistake! It often happens that when we are very full of public labors, we are very short in private devotions. I must confess that it has been so with meand that is a very lamentable thingfor then I was not really growing at all. A man may have his hands ever so full before the world and think he is doing much, but he may not be really growing in Grace, after all.   
Do not think that this is an excuse for anybody who is not doing much, you Issachar-like people, like a strong ass between two burdens, too lazy to lift either! I am not giving you a word of comfort. You are not growing, for you are doing nothingand those who are doing something must not boast of their growth. It has more to do with private devotion than with public exercise. It has more to do with meditation than with explanation. It has more to do with contemplation and adoration than with public service. We must look more to the state of the internal matters, keeping up private prayer and attending to the reading of the Scriptures. If we do not, however much we may seem to progress outwardly, we are not any richerwe are only beating out the little gold we had into a thinner plate, and spreading it over a wider surface. The more we do for Christ, the more He will do for us, but let us take heed that while we water other peoples vineyards, our own is not neglected, and that the stones of the hedges are not cast down. May God grant you, Brothers and Sisters, to grow in Grace!   
II. Now we come to the second thought, THAT GROWTH IN GRACE IS INTIMATELY CONNECTED WITH GROWTH IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. In fact, there cannot be any Grace at all except as we know Christ! And there can be no growth in Grace except as we grow in our knowledge of Christ. We may always test whether we are growing by this questionDo I know more of Christ today than I did yesterday? Do I live nearer to Christ today than I did a little while ago? For increase in the knowledge of Christ is the evidence as well as the cause of true growth in Grace. In order to prove this, I will mention one or two Christian virtues, and you will see that they must increase as we know more of Christ.   
With regard to love, some of us say, How little we love Christ! Many of you sing   
*Tis a point I long to know,   
Oft it causes anxious thought   
Do I love the Lord, or no?   
Am I His, or am I not?*   
That is a very good hymnI find no fault with itbut please do not sing it too often! Now and then, you are welcome to it, but get through it as quickly as you can. I would far rather hear you sing that grand hymn of Topladys   
*A debtor to mercy alone,   
Of Covenant mercy I sing!   
Nor fear, with Your righteousness on,   
My person and offering to bring.*   
Oh! you say, I long to grow in love. I want to know that I love Jesus. I want to feel my heart going out after Him, and my soul knit to Him. Well, the way to grow in love is to know more of Christ. The more you know of the Savior, the better you must love Him. The more you discover of His beauties, of His excellences, of His virtues, of His perfections, and of His glories, the more your soul will be drawn towards Him. I tell you who do not love Christ at all, it is because you do not know Him, for if you knew anything of Him, you would love Him in proportion to your knowledge! The more you know of my Master, the more you will love Him. You have only lifted one corner of the veil that shrouds His forehead, you have seen but one portion of His visage, so you love Himbut if you had faith to lift the veil entirely, to see all of His blessed Countenance, to mark the majestic sweetness which sits enthroned upon His lofty brow. If you could focus on His eyes, which are like the fish pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-Rabbimif you could describe Him as being altogether lovely, ah, you would love Him more!   
Blessed are the men that improve upon acquaintance! Jesus Christ is one of those blessed onesthe more you know of Him, the more you love Him. Sweet Jesus! When I first saw You, I loved You! When first Your wounded hands and bleeding side were uncovered to me, then I loved You. Ah, but that love is nothing compared with what I have now. And oh, when I shall see You as You arewhen my soul becomes changed into lovethe love I have now shall seem to have been nothing but a spark compared with that vehement flame of love which I shall have to You then! Know more of Christ. Read more of Him. Think more of Him. Ask about Him more because you will be sure to grow in the Grace of love in proportion as you know more of Christ!   
So is it with regard to faith. What is the reason why so many of us groan because our faith is so feeble? It is because we do not know enough of Christ! There are many people who need to know a great deal more about Jesus than they know at present. And if they knew more about Jesus, they would have more faith. Oh, says one, when I look at myself, I think, Oh, what is to become of me? Then I search to see if there are not some evidences of Grace. That is all wrong! You have no business to look thereyou will not grow in faith by looking at yourself! One look at Jesus is worth 50 at yourself! If you would have more faith, keep your eyes on Jesus! The wounds of Christ on Calvary are the mothers of faiththese are the breasts from which faith must draw its nourishment. If you would grow in faith, you must live near to the Cross. The sweet flower of faith was first sown in Christs precious bloodand it must be watered by it every day. Know more of Christ! Think more of Him and your faith will increase! Your little faith would soon get strong if you lived more on Jesus. If you would become Great-Hearts, by-and-by, and knock those giants about as terribly as Mr. Great-Heart did of old, live near to Jesus! Live with Jesus. Feast at His banqueting table, for there is no food so strengthening to the spirit as the flesh of your Lord, and no wine can so invigorate your soul as the blood of Jesus Christ your Savior.   
So is it with regard to our courage, for that is a Christian Grace, and one in which many are terribly deficient. Our Christian courage will always increase in proportion as we know Christ. We have far too many timid Christians who have not enough courage, I was about to say, to speak to a cheese-mitethey would not be able to profess the name of Christ before the smallest creature in the world! They would almost be ashamed to declare that they loved the Savior even within bare walls, for fear some bird of the air should hear them and go and tell the tale. They are so ashamed of their own faith (and yet it is real faith) that they scarcely dare to speak! The smallest stone in the road would make them stumble. A straw would be almost as great to them as a range of mountains like the Himalayas would be to others. They would be entirely cast out of the road if they had the least prospect that there could be a shadow in it for them to pass by! It is because we do not know enough of Christ that we are afraid of anything.   
I believe that when we come truly to know Christ, we shall be afraid of nothing at all. Shall we be afraid of man? No! We shall say, Whether it is right to obey God rather than man, you judge. Shall we be afraid of the devil when we know Christ? No! We shall say, Christ has the devil chained and He can always pull the dog of Hell in when he attempts to bite us. Christ has hold of the dragon and he cannot inflict deeper wounds than Christ wills. We shall not be afraid of the messenger of death, for we shall regard him as an angel of the Covenant sent to fetch Gods people up to Heaven! Courage will always be increased in proportion as we know more of Jesus and if we could have Christ for our daily and hourly Companion, I believe all the hosts of Hell, marshaled in battle, would no more frighten us than would a flock of small birds that might settle upon our path! But we would say, In the name of the Lord, we will destroy them. If you would have more true Christian courage, get more of the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

So is it with regard to our zeal, which is a Grace sadly lacking in these times. If we would be more zealous, we must live nearer to Christ. If the Son of Man were to come now, would He find zeal upon the earth? His own question was, Shall He find faith? But, would He find zeal? It would be difficult even for Him to discover much of it among Christians. There is sound orthodoxy, but no zeal. There is heterodoxy, but still no zeal. Where do you find it? Just here and there. There is a remnant, according to the election of Grace, who are zealous for God, but, in these timeswe are sorry to say itreligion has degenerated into a kind of formality. It is a fashionable thing to be pious. We have been going on in the same track as other peoplethere is an old cart-rut, and we all drive along it. We have kept on at the same pace as our fathers, but, oh, if we knew more of Christ, we would have more zeal!   
I cannot think it possible for men to lack zeal when they know Christ. They would then say, Did my Savior shed His blood for me and shall I fear even to die for Him? Did He come all the way from Heaven to earth to save souls and shall not I also seek to win them for Him? Would we have so many lazy preachers if they had more of Christ in their hearts? If they understood more of Jesus, would we have so many slothful, sluggish members in our churches, with so many who can make any excuse rather than labor for Christ, patching up any empty apology for idleness? No, Brothers and Sisters, if we knew more of the Savior, if we had more frequent visions of Him, if we saw Him more often on His Cross and viewed Him more frequently sitting with the crown upon His head, we would say, I vow revenge against my sloth! All I can do will be too little for so good a Lord   
*All that I am, and all I have,   
Shall be forever Thine.   
Whatever my duty bids me give,   
My cheerful hands resign.   
Yet if I might make some reserve,   
And duty did not call,   
I love my God with zeal so great,   
That I should give Him all.*   
It is no use to try to get more zeal except in the right way, knowing more of Christ. And if we seek to grow in zeal as certain people we might mention have done, we shall have a zeal like a house on fire! It will do more mischief than it will do good. There may be some heat and a great deal of illumination, but it will die away, by-and-by, into black ashes, poisoning the churches everywhere. I have seen a certain kind of revival in England and I can always tell where such revivals have been by the scarred state of the places after them. These so-called revivals have been worked by excitable meetings, held by sundry preachers who have invented strange doctrines, but have said nothing about the Grace of God. They have for a time stirred up the people to a kind of religious furor, and they have left behind them a very desert. Before them it was like a garden of the Lord, but behind them barrenness and desolation. The church has been dividedthere has been a reaction, and the people have sunk into the most lamentable condition. If we would have true zeal, it must be by the preaching of the good old doctrine, proclaiming Jesus Christ and Him Crucified, for anything else comes of the devil, and to Hell it shall tend. Its issue shall be destructionnot salvation!   
But if we keep to the Truth of God, there will be revival enough. We want nothing but the good old-fashioned Gospel to stir the world again. Though men have tried new schemes, God will not claim them. All these heresies must be swept away and the true Gospeldistinguishing Grace of God in all the Sovereignty of electionmust yet again be preached! And when it is preached in all its fullness, then shall the church be zealous and then shall Zion arise and shake herself from the dust, and put on her beautiful garments.   
Further, if we would grow also in the Grace of brotherly kindness, we must know more of Christ. O Beloved, we must lament that there is too little brotherly kindness in the world! There is a great deal of that mawkish, mistaken kindness which says, We must never say anything contrary to anybody elses opinion. If we know of a doctrinal error, we must not expose it, because love of our brethren implies that, even if they are wrong, we would not tell them of it. But I think true brotherly kindness is always to preach the Truth of God and tell our brethren where they are wrong and give them the opportunity of getting set right. Brotherly kindness is to preach whatever we believe to be true, and to maintain what God has taught us. And then, after all, to say, Well, Brother, you differ from me. I am not infallible. I still love you. But that is no love which makes us hide the Truth of God! True love will make us honest, zealous and affectionate.  
Why dont we love one another as much as we ought? It is because we do not love the Savior enough, and we have not seen enough of Him. If we had known more of the Savior, I am sure we should love Him better. I met with a strange idea the other day when reading a book by old Burroughs. He says, If Jesus Christ were to come down to His Church now, He would see some of His children with black eyes. Some others would be seen scratched in the face and some bruised all over. He would say to them, What have you been doing? If one should answer, Lord, I have been fighting with my brother, and he did this, the Lord would say, Children of one family fight? The birds of one nest disagree? How sad it is! It is a strange thought, but it may be a profitable one, for if our Lord Jesus Christ finds His people quarrelling, what will He say?   
You may remember a story I have told you before. An old Scotch elder had been disputing with his minister at an elders meeting. He said some hard things and almost broke the ministers heart. Afterwards, he went home and the minister went home, too. The next morning, when the elder came down, his wife said to him, Eh, Jan, you look very sad this morning. Whats the matter wi you? Ah, he said, you would be sad too if you had had such a dream as Ive had. Weel, and what did you dream about? Oh, I dreamed I had been at an elders meeting and I said some hard things, and grieved the minister. And as he went home, I thought he died, and went to Heaven. A fortnight after, I thought I died, and that I went to Heaven, too. And when I got to the gates of Heaven, out came the minister, and put out his hand to welcome me, saying, Come alang, Jan, theres nae strife up here, and Im happy to see you. The elder went to the minister to beg his pardon, but he found that he was dead. And he laid it so to heart that, within a fortnight, the elder, himself, departed. And I should not wonder if he did meet the minister at Heavens gate, and hear him say, Come along, Jan, theres nae strife up here. It will be well for us to remember that there is no strife up there. Glorified saints have no strife among themselves and we would love one another more in brotherly kindness if we thought more of Heaven, and more of our blessed Jesus!   
Lastly, there is another Grace in which we need to grow. That is, the Grace of humility. I am sure we would increase in that Grace if we lived nearer to Christ. O Humility, most precious thing, you are most rare! He who talks most of it has least of it. He who preaches of it best, full often is least the subject of its power! O Humility, I have sometimes thought that you were a phantom, and that pride was the reality! Humility, where are you? The depths of poverty say, You are not in me, for the poor are often proud. The heights of riches say, You are not here, for the rich are often proud, too. O Humility, you are not to be found in science, for philosophy puffs up. You are not to be found in ignorance, for that is the mother of pride. O Humility, where can I find you? Where are you? Nowhere can I see you, or know what you areunless I sit at the feet of Jesus and behold myself a lost, ruined sinner purchased by Divine Love. If you, dear Friend, would be truly humble, you must look at your Savior, for then you will say   
*Alas, and did my Savior bleed?   
And did my Sovereign die?   
Would He devote that sacred head   
For such a worm as I?*   
You will never feel yourself such a worm as when, by faith, you see your Savior dying for you! You will never know your own nothingness so well as when you see your Saviors greatness. When you grow in the Grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, you will be sure to grow in humility!   
Growing Christians think themselves nothing, but, full-grown Christians think themselves less than nothing. The nearer we get to Jesus, the smaller self will appear to be. Self and Christ can never come close together. When I stand near self, Christ is small. When I stand near Christ, self is small. May God grant to you, dear Friends, to grow in the knowledge of Christ! Read the Scriptures more. Seek more the influences of the Holy Spirit upon them. Spend more time in devotionask God the Holy Spirit to give you a fresh sight of Calvary. Be more often on the Mount of Transfiguration, in the Garden of Suffering, in the Hall of Agony, under the Cross of Crucifixion! Live with Jesus and near to Himand so, changed from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord, you shall, each one of you, grow unto the stature of a perfect man or woman in Christ Jesus!

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #427 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A PSALM FOR THE NEW YEAR

NO. 427

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 5, 1862, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen.   
2 Peter 3:18.

BEHOLD, Beloved, our perpetual dangers. Where can we go to escape from peril? Where shall we fly to avoid temptation? If we venture into business, worldliness is there. If we retire to our homes, trials are there. One would have imagined that in the green pastures of the Word of God there would have been perfect security for Gods sheep. Surely no lion shall be there and no ravenous beast shall go up from there! Alas, it is not so. For even while we are reading the Bible we are still exposed to peril. Not that the Truth of God is dangerous, but that our corrupt hearts can find poison in the very flowers of Paradise.

Mark what our Apostle says of the writings of St. Paul, Wherein are some things which are hard to be understood. And mark the danger to which we are exposed, lest we, being unlearned and unstable, should wrest even the Word of God itself to our own destruction. With the Bible before our eyes, we may still commit sinpondering over the hallowed Words of Inspiration we may receive a deadly wound from the error of the wicked. Even at the horns of the altar we need that God should still cover us with the shadow of His wings. It is a very pleasing reflection that our gracious Father has provided a shield by which we may be sheltered from every ill and in our text the evil of heterodoxy finds a suitable preventative.

We are in danger, lest misinterpreting Scripture we should make God say what He does notand lest by departing from the teaching of the Holy Spirit we should wrest the letter of the Word and lose its spiritand lest from the letter draw a meaning which may be for our souls ruin. How shall we escape this? Peter, speaking by the Holy Spirit, has in the words before us, pointed out our safeguard. While we search the Scriptures and grow in acquaintance with them, see to it that we grow in Divine Grace. And while we desire to know the doctrine, long above all to grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christand let our study of Scripture and our growth in Divine Grace and in the knowledge of Christ still be subservient to that higher objectthat we may live to bring glory both now and forever to Him who has loved us and bought us with His blood.

Let your hearts say evermore, Amen to the doxology of praise, so shall you be kept from all pestilent errors and you shall not fall from your own steadfastness. It appears, then, that our text is adapted to be a heavenly remedy for certain diseases to which even students of Scripture are exposed. I am persuaded it may serve also as a most blessed directory to us

through the whole of the coming year.

I might divide my text, this morning, as good old Adams does. He says there are here two trumpets. One is blown from Heaven to earthGrow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The other sounds from earth to HeavenTo Him be glory both now and forever. Or I might quote him again. He says here is first a point of theology, Grow in grace. Secondly, a point of doxology, To Him be glory both now and forever.

We will take the text in the same natural divisions with other headings and notice, first, that we have here a Divine injunction, with a special direction. And secondly, a grateful doxology, with a suggestive conclusion.

I. To begin, then, at the beginning, we have here first of all, A DIVINE INJUNCTION WITH A SPECIAL DIRECTIONGrow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Grow in grace. What is this? It must be, in the outset, implied that we have been quickened by Divine Grace, otherwise this text cannot apply to us at all. Dead things cannot grow. Only those who are alive unto God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead have in them any power or capability of growth. The great Quickener must first implant the seeds of life, then afterwards those seeds can germinate and grow. To you, therefore, who are dead in trespasses and sins, this text has no application. You cannot grow in Divine Grace, because as yet you are under the curse of the Law and the wrath of God abides on you. Tremble, repent, believe and may God have mercy on you!

But being alive from the dead and quickened by the Spirit of God which is in you, Beloved Brethren, you who are born again are bid to grow, for growth shall prove your life. A post planted in the earth grows notbut a tree, rooted there, increases from a sapling to a forest king. Drop a pebble into the richest soil and it will be a pebble still of the same size, but put in there the grain or the seed, and it will spring up and produce its stalk and its flower. You who are alive unto God, see to it that you grow in all the Divine Graces.

Grow in that root-grace, faith. Seek to believe the promises better than you have done. Go from that trembling faith which says, Lord, I believe: help You my unbelief, upward to that which staggers not at the promise, but which, like Abraham, believes that He who has promised is able also to perform. Let your faith increase in extent, believing more, the Truths of Godlet it increase in firmness, getting a tighter grip of every Truth. Let it increase in constancy, not being feeble or wavering, nor always tossed about with every wind. Let your faith daily increase in simplicity, resting more fully and more entirely and more completely upon the finished work of your Lord Jesus Christ.

See to it that your love, also grows. If you have loved with a spark, pray that the spark may become an all-consuming flame. If you have brought little to Christ, pray that you may bring your all, and may offer that all in such a fashion, that like Marys broken alabaster box, the King, Himself, may be satisfied with the perfume. Ask that your love may become more extendedthat you may have love unto all the saints. And even more practical, that it may move your every thought, your every word and deedmake them more intensethat you may become as burning and shining lights whose flame is love to God and man.

Pray that you may grow in hope, that the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, you may know what is the hope of His calling and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. Pray that you may be looking for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. That the hope not seen as yet may enable you with patience to wait for it. Pray that you may, by hope, enter into the joys of Heaven while you are on earth. Pray that hope may give you immortality while you are yet mortalmay give you resurrection before you diemay give you to see God, while as yet the glass darkly parts you from Him.

Ask that you may grow in humility till you can say, I am less than the least of all the saints. That you may grow in consecration till you can cry, For me to live is Christ: to die is gain. Pray that you may grow in contentment till you can feel, In whatever state I am, I have learned to be content. Pray to advance in likeness to the Lord Jesus, that your very enemies may take knowledge of you, that you have been with Jesus and have learned of Him. Finally, if there is any virtue, if there is any praise, if there is anything that is lovely and of good repute, if there is anything that can increase your usefulness, that can add to your happiness, that can make you more serviceable to man and more glorious towards Godpray to grow in itfor you have not yet attained, neither are you yet already perfect.

Following up an illustration furnished by the Holy Scriptures, let me remind you all, you faithful Believers in Christ, that you are compared to treestrees of the Lords right hand planting. Seek to grow as the tree grows. Pray that this year you may grow downward. That you may know more of your own vileness, more of your own nothingnessand so be rooted in humility. Pray that your roots may penetrate below the mere topsoil of the Truth of God, into the great rocks which underlie the uppermost stratum. Pray that you may get a good hold of the doctrines of eternal love, of immutable faithfulness, of complete satisfaction, of union to Christ, of the eternal purpose of God, which He purposed in Christ Jesus before the world was.

These deep things of God will yield a rich and abundant sap and your roots shall drink from the hidden fountains of the depth which lies under. This will be a growth which will not add to your fame, which will not minister to your vanitybut it will be invaluable in the hour of storm, a growth the value of which no heart can conceive when the hurricane is tearing up the hypocrite and hurling into the sea of destruction the trees whose fruit withers, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots.

As you root downward, seek to grow upward. Send out the top shoot of your love towards Heaven. As the trees send out their spring shoots and their midsummer shoots, and as you see upon the top of the fir that new green child of springthe fresh shoot which lifts its hand towards the sunso pant to have more love and greater desires after God. Seek a nearer approach towards Him in prayer, a sweeter spirit of adoption, a

more intense and intimate fellowship with the Father and with His son Jesus Christ. This mounting upwards will add to your beauty and to your delight.

Then pray to grow on either side. Stretch out your branches. Let the shadow of your holy influence extend as far as God has given you opportunities. But see to it, also, that you grow in fruitfulness, for to increase the bough without adding to the fruit is to diminish the beauty of the tree. Labor this year, by Gods Grace, to bring forth more fruit unto Him than you have ever done. Lord, give to this congregation more of the fruits of penitence for sin, of faith in the great sacrifice, of love to Jesus, of zeal for the conversion of souls. We would not be as the gleanings of the vintage when there is only here and there a cluster upon the uppermost bough, we would be as the valley of Eshcol, whose presses burst with new wine. This is to grow in Divine Graceto root downward, to shoot upward, to extend your influences like far-reaching branchesand to bring forth fruit unto the Lords glory.

But we will borrow another figure from Scripture. Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ, we are not only compared to trees but to children. Let us grow as babes do, nourished by unadulterated milksteadily, slowlybut surely and certainly. Little each day but much in years. Oh that we may grow as a child does in strength, till the little tottering limbs of our faith shall be firm muscular legs with which the young man may run without weariness, and feet upon which the strong man may walk without fainting. As yet our wings are immature and we can hardly leave the nest.

Lord, bid our growth proceed till we can mount as with the wings of eagles towards Yourself, surmounting clouds and storms and dwelling in the serene Presence of the Most High. Let us grow in the development of all our powers. Let us ask that we may be no more little infants of a span long but that many cubits may be added to our stature till we ripen to perfect men in Christ Jesus. And let us specially pray that we may grow as healthy children, uniformly.

Brothers and Sisters, it is an ill sign if a childs head enlarges but not the rest of his body, or if its arm or foot should be swollen to an ill proportion. Beauty consists in the proportion of every part. A vigorous judgment should not be yoked with a cold heart, nor a clear eye with a withered hand. A giants head rides ill on a dwarfs shoulders. A virtue nourished at the expense of others is a fattened cannibal fed upon the flesh and blood of its murdered kinsmen. And it ill becomes a Christian to harbor such a monster. Let us pray that faith and love and every Divine Grace may be developedthat not one power of the man may be left unnurtured or ungrownfor only thus can we truly grow in Divine Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

But do you inquire why we should thus grow in Divine Grace? Let us say, Brethren, that if we do not advance in Divine Grace it is a sorrowful sign. It is a mark of sickness. It is an unhealthy child that grows not, a cankered tree that sends forth no fresh shoots. Moreit may not only be a sign of unhealthiness but of deformity. If a mans shoulders have come to a certain breadth and his lower limbs refuse to lift him aloft, we call him a dwarf, and we look upon him with some degree of pity. He is ill-formed. O Lord, let us grow, for we would not be abortions, we would not be deformities. We would be children like unto God our Fatherwe would be comely ones, everyone of us like the sons of a king.

Not to grow may be, moreover, the sign of death. It may say to us, Inasmuch as you grow not, you live not. Inasmuch as you do not increase in faith and love and Divine Graceand inasmuch as you do not ripen towards the harvestfear and tremble lest you should only have a name to live and be destitute of life. Fear, lest you should be the painted counterfeita lovely picture drawn by the painters skillful hand, but without reality, without the life-power which should make it bud and germinate and blossom and bring forth fruit.

Advance in Divine Grace, because not to progress foretells many evil things and may result in that worst of all thingsthe want of spiritual life. Grow in Grace, because, Beloved, to increase in Grace is the only pathway to enduring nobility. Oh, do you not wish to stand with that noble host who have served their Master well and have entered into their eternal rest? Who among you does not wish to have his name written with the missionaries of modern timeswith Judson and with Carey, with Williams and with Moffat? Who among us is there who has no ambition to find his name written among those servants of GodWhitfield, Grimshaw, Newton, Romaine, Toplady and others who preached the Word with power?

Are there any of us who wish to go back to the vile dust from where we sprung, unwept, unhonored, and unsung? Then let us be as we are. Let us cease our march. Meanness lies at your doorbe stunted and be ignoble. But if we would be princes in Gods Israel, if we would be mighty warriors for the Cross of Christ, let us pray this prayer, Lord, bid us grow in Your Grace, that we may be faithful servants and receive Your commendation at the last.

But, my Brothers and Sisters, to grow is not only to be noble, it is to be happy. That man who stops growing, refuses to be blessed. With most men in business, if they do not win, they lose. With the warrior, if he gains not in the battle, his enemy is getting an advantage. That wise man who gets no wiser, grows more foolish. That Christian who does not know more of his Lord and become more like He, knows less of his Lord and becomes less like He. Our armor, if unused, will tarnish, and our arms, if not strengthened by effort, will be weakened by indolence. Our happiness declines as our spirituality fades.

To be happy, I say, we must go forward. Forward is the sunlight! Forward is victory! Forward is Heaven! Forward is Christ! But here, to stand still is dangerno, it is death. O Lord, for our happiness sake bid us advance, and for our usefulness sake let us ascend. Oh, if we as a congregation and as a Church grew more in Graceif we were stronger in faith, mightier in prayer, more fervent in heart, more holy in lifewho can tell how much we might effect our age? Men who walk but lightly, leave but faint steps. But men who tread with the tramp of Roman soldiers stamp their footprints on the sands of time, never to be erased. So let us live

that in our day, and in after days the world may be the better and Christs Church the more prosperous for our having lived. For this reason, if for no other, let us grow in Divine Grace.

Oh, could I fire you with some hallowed ambition today I would be but too happy! Could I snatch from some ancient altar a live coal such as that which fell upon the lip of Isaiah, I would say unto you, Lo, this has touched your lipgo forth in the Spirit and power of God, even the Most Highand live as they lived who counted not their lives dear unto them that they might serve their Master and be found in Him. I point you to the spirits who have entered within the veil and who rest upon the couches of eternal glory, and I say, they won the victory by Divine Graceand growth in Divine Grace was the means of their triumph. Emulate them! Press forward as they did and through Grace you shall inherit their rest and their triumph and sit down with them forever.

But do you inquire how you shall grow in Divine Grace? The answer is simple. He who gave you Grace must give you more of it. Where you first received your Grace, there you must receive the increase of that Divine Grace. He who made the cattle and who created man, was the same who afterwards said, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. So He that has given you Grace must speak with the fiat of His omnipotence in your heart and say to that Grace, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the soul till its native emptiness shall be filled, and the natural wilderness shall rejoice and blossom like a rose.

But at the same time we would have you use the means. And those means are much prayer, a more diligent search of the sacred Scriptures, a more constant fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christgreater activity in His cause, an earnest attendance upon the means of Gracea devout reception of all revealed Truths of God, and so forth. If you do these things you shall never be stunted or dwarfed, for He that has given you life will thus enable you to fulfill the word which He spoke to you by His Apostle, Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I have thus explained the Divine exhortation. But you perceive it contains a special injunction, upon which we must pause a moment. And in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

My Beloved Brethren in the Lord Jesus, we must see to it that we ripen in the knowledge of Him. Oh, that this year we may know more of Him in His Divine nature and in His human relationship to us in His finished work, in His death, in His resurrection, in His present glorious intercession and in His future royal advent! To know more of Christ in His work is, I think, a blessed means of enabling us to work more for Christ.

We must study to know more of Christ also in His Characterin that Divine compound of every perfection, faith, zeal and deference to His Fathers willin His courage, meekness, and love. He was the lion of the tribe of Judah and yet the Man upon whom the Dove descended in the waters of Baptism. Let us thirst to know Him of whom even His enemies said, Never man spoke like this Man, and His unrighteous judge said, I find no fault in Him.

Above all, let us long to know Christ in His Person. This year endeavor to make a better acquaintance with the Crucified One. Study His hands and His feet. Abide hard by the Cross and let the sponge, the vinegar and the nails be subjects of your devout attention. This year seek to penetrate into His very heart and to search those deep far-reaching caverns of His unknown lovethat love which can never find a rival and can never know a parallel. If you can add to this a knowledge of His sufferings, you will do well.

Oh, if you can grow in the knowledge of fellowshipif you shall this year drink of His cup and be baptized with His Baptismif you shall this year abide in Him and He in youblessed shall you be! This is the only growth in Divine Grace which is true growth. And all other growth which leads us not to increase in the knowledge of Christ is but the puffing up of the fleshnot the building up of the Spirit. Grow in the knowledge of Christ, then, my Brothers and Sisters.

And do you ask me why? Oh, if you have ever known Him you will not ask that question. He that longs not to know more of Christ, knows nothing of Him yet. He that ever sipped this wine will thirst for more, for although Christ does satisfy, yet it is such a satisfaction, that we want to taste more and more and more and more. Oh, if you know the love of Jesus, I am sure as the hart pants for the water brooks, so will you pant after Him. If you say you do not desire to know Him better, then I tell you, you love Him not, for love always cries, Nearer, nearer, nearer.

Absence from Christ is Hell. But presence with Christ is Heaven. And, as we get nearer to Him, our Heaven becomes more heavenly and we enjoy it more and feel more that it is of God. Oh, may you, this year, come to the very well of Bethlehem and not merely receive a vessel from it, as David did, at the risk of the lives of three mighty menbut may you come to the well and drinkdrink from the well itself, from that bottomless wellspring of eternal love. Oh, this year may the secret of the Lord be with you and may you be in the secret place of the Most High!

My Master, should You permit me to ask You one thing as a special favor, it should be thisthat I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, being made conformable to His death! Nearer to You, blessed Lord, nearer to Youthis is all our cry shall be. The Lord grant that our cry may be heard, that we may grow in the knowledge of Christ! We wish to know Christ this year as our LordLord of every thought and every desire, of every word and every act. And as our Savior, tooour Savior from every indwelling sin, our Savior from every evil past, from every trial to come.

All hail, Jesus! We salute You as Lord. Teach us to feel Your Kingship over us and to feel it every hour. All hail You, crucified One! We acknowledge You as Savior. Help us to rejoice in Your salvation and to feel the plenitude of that salvation in all and every part of spirit, soul and body, being wholly saved by You.

I have thus, Brothers and Sisters, sought to expound the point of theology. I lift up my heart in prayer for you all that you may grow in Divine Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. II. In the second place, we have A GRATEFUL THANKSGIVING WITH A

MOST SUGGESTIVE TERMINATIONTo Him be glory both now and forever. Amen.

The Apostles, we must remark, very frequently suspended their writing in order to lift up their hearts in praise. Praise is never out of season and it is no interruption to interrupt any engagement in order to laud and magnify our God. To Him be glory. Brethren, do not let me preach now but let me interpret your emotions. Let it be not so much my utterance, as your utterance by my lips. Let every heart joyously feel this doxology, To Him, the God that made the heavens and the earth, without whom was not anything made. To Him who in His infinite compassion became the Surety of the Covenantto Him who became a babe of a span long.

To Him who was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefto Him who on the bloody tree poured out His hearts life that He might redeem His peopleto HIM who said, I thirst, and, It is finished!to Him whose lifeless body slumbered in the grave to Him be glory! To him that burst the bonds of deathto Him who ascended on high and led captivity captiveto Him who sits at the right hand of the Father and who shall soon come to be our Judgeto Him be glory.

Yes, to Him, you atheists, who deny Himto Him, you Socinians, who doubt His Deityto Him, you kings, who vaunt your splendor and will not have this Man to reign over youto Him, you people, who against Him stand up, and you rulers who against Him take counselto Him, the King whom God has set upon His holy hill of Zionto Him be glory! To Him be glory as the LordKing of kings and lords. Wonderful, Counselors, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. And yet again Hosanna in the highestHallelujah, King of kings and Lord of lords! To Him be glory as LORD! To Him be glory as SAVIOR!

He alone has redeemed us unto God by His blood. He alone has trod the winepress, and comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength. To Him be glory. Hear it, you angelsTo Him be glory. Clap your wings. Cry Hallelujah, to Him be glory. Hear it you spirits of the just made perfectsweep the strings of your celestial harps and say, Hallelujah, glory to Him who has redeemed us unto God by His own blood. To HIM be glory. Church of God respond! Let every pious heart say To HIM be glory. Yes, unto Him be glory, you Fiends of Hell, as you tremble at His Presence and see the key of your prison swinging at His girdle. Let Heaven and earth and Helllet things that are, and were, and shall be, cry, To Him be glory.

But the Apostle adds, nowto Him be glory, now. O Brethren, postpone not the day of His triumph! Put not off the hour of His coronation. Now, NOW

*Bring forth the royal diadem,*

*And crown Him Lord of all.*   
Now, now. For now, today, He has raised us up together and made us sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. Beloved, now are we the sons of Godnow are our sins forgiven. Now are we robed in His righteousness! Now are our feet upon a Rock and our goings are established. Who is there among you that would defer the time of your hosannas? To Him be glory now. O cherubim above, To Him be glory now! For you continually do cry, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts. Adore Him yet again, for, To Him be glory now.

And forever. Never shall we cease our praise. Time! You shall grow old and die. Eternity! Your unnumbered years shall speed their everlasting course. But forever, forever, forever, to Him be glory. Is He not a Priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec? To Him be glory. Is He not king forever?King of kings and Lord of lords, the everlasting Father? To Him be glory forever. Never shall His praises cease. That which was bought with blood deserves to last while immortality endures. The glory of the Cross must never be eclipsed. The luster of the grave and of the resurrection must never be dimmed.

Oh, my beloved Brothers and Sisters, my spirit begins to feel the ardor of the immortals. I would anticipate the songs of Heaven. My tongue, had it but celestial liberty, would begin even now to join those thricemelodious sonnets sung by flaming tongues above. O Jesus! You shall be praised forever! As long as immortal spirits liveas long as the Fathers Throne enduresforever, forever, forever, unto You shall be glory!

But now, there is a conclusion to this of the most suggestive kind, Amen. Brethren, I want to work this amen outnot as a matter of doctrine, but as a matter of blessed transport. Come, give me your hearts again. To Him be glory both now and forever, Amen. What does this Amen mean? Amen has four meanings in Scripture. By the way, the Puritans remarkit is a very remarkable thingthat under the old Law, there was no amen to the blessings. The only amen was to the curses. When they pronounced the curses, All the people said Amen.

Under the Law there never was an amen to the blessing. Now, it is an equally remarkable and more blessed thing, that under the Gospel, there is no amen to the curses, the only amen is to the blessings. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God our Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all, Amen. If any man loves not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha. No amen. There is no amen to the curse under the Gospel. But all the promises of God are yes and amen, in Christ Jesus.

Now, the Amenand here I am greatly indebted to good old Thomas Adamsmeans four things. First, it is the desire of the heart, Behold, I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. We say amen at the end of the prayer, to signify, Lord, let it be soit is our hearts desire. Now, Brethren, give me your hearts, thenfor it is all a heart-matter here. To Him be glory both now and forever, Amen. Is that your hearts desire? If not, you cannot say amen to it. Does your heart long, pant, thirst, groan and cry out after Christ, so that you can say, every time you bend your knee, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven, for Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever, Amen?

Can you say, Amen, Lord, let Your kingdom come? Brethren, if you can say it in this sense, if it is your hearts desire that Christs glory should be extended and His kingdom should come, say Amen, aloud this morning. Now join with me, for my heart glows with it. I can say itand the Judge of All knows how my heart longs to see Jesus magnified. Join with me then, you who can do it honestly, while I repeat the doxologyTo Him be glory both now and forever. Amen. [The congregation very heartily, aloud, said, Amen.]

So be it Lord. You hear Your Church as it cries Amen! Verily, it is our hearts desire   
*Amen, with joy Divine, let earths   
Unnumbered myriads cry;   
Amen, with joy Divine, let Heavens   
Unnumbered choirs reply.*

But it signifies more than this. It means the affirmation of our faith. We only say amen to that which we really believe to be true. We add our affidavit, as it were, to Gods promise, that we believe Him to be faithful and true.

Have you any doubts but that Jesus Christ is glorious now and forever? Do you doubt His being glorified of angels, cherubim and seraphim, today? And do you not believe, my Brethren, that they that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him and that His enemies shall lick the dust? If you so believe, if you have faith today amid the worlds obstinacy and the sinners pride, amid abounding superstition and dominant evilif you have faith still to believe that Christ shall be glorious forever and ever, then join with me and again say Amen. To Him be glory both now and forever, Amen. [The congregation again said Amen.]

Lord, You hear it, though it is a feebler cry than aforetime, for there are more who can desire it than there are who believe it. Nevertheless, You abide faithful

*This little seed from Heaven   
Shall soon become a tree;   
This ever-blessed leaven   
Diffused abroad must be   
Till God the Son shall come again,   
It must go on. Amen! Amen.*

But there is yet a third meaning to this amen. It often expresses the joy of the heart. When of old they brought forth a Jewish king, the high priest took a horn of oil and poured it on his head. Then came forward a herald, and the moment he had sounded the trumpet, one with a loud voice said, God save the king! God save the king! and all the people said, Amen. And one shout went up to Heaven, while with joy of heart they saluted the king in whom they hoped to see a prosperous ruler through whom God would bless them and make them victorious.

Now, what do you say? As you see King Jesus sitting upon Mount Zion with death and Hell beneath His feet. As today you anticipate the glory of His Advent. As today you are expecting the time when you shall reign with Him forever and ever, does not your heart say, Amen? I can remember, in a season of the greatest darkness of mind and weakness of body, there was one text which used to cheer me beyond all measure. There was nothing in the text about myself. It was no promise to

me but it was something about Him. It was thisHim has God highly exalted and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven and things in earth and things under the earth.

Oh, it seemed so joyous that He was exalted. What did it matter what became of me? What did it signify what should become of all of us? King David is worth ten thousand of us. Let our names perish but let His name last forever. Brothers and Sisters, this morning I bring forth the King to you. I bring Him before the eyes of your faith today. I proclaim Him king, again, and do you, if you desire Him to be king, and if you rejoice in His reign, say Amen? Here, here He stands in vision before your eyes. Crown Him! Crown Him! Lo, He is today crowned afresh. To Him be glory both now and forever. Joyous hearts lift up your voices and with one accord say Amen. [The congregation again said Amen.] Amen, Lord, be You King in the midst of us all

*Yes, amen, let all adore You,   
High on Your exalted Throne!   
Savior, take Your power and glory;   
Claim the kingdoms for Your own   
O come quickly! Hallelujah, Come, Lord, come.*

But, lastly and this is a very solemn point. Amen is sometimes used in Scripture as an amen of resolution. It means, I, in the name of God, solemnly pledge myself that in His strength I will seek to make it so. To Him be glory both now and forever. Now I shall not want you to say, Amen to this aloud, but I shall pause to let you say it silently in your own souls byand-by.

I walked last week through the long galleries which vanity has dedicated to all the glories of France. You pass through room after room where especially you see the triumphs of Napoleon in writhing bodies and in the blood and vapor and smoke. Surely as you walk through the pages of Scripture, you walk through a much more marvelous picture gallery, in which you see the glories of Christ. This Book contains the memorials of His honors. In another place in Paris there stands a column made with the cannons taken by the Emperor in battle. A mighty trophy, certainly. O Jesus! You have a better than thisa trophy made of forgiven soulsof eyes which wept but whose tears have been wiped awayof broken hearts that have been healed and of saved souls that forever more rejoice!

What trophies Christ has to make Him glorious, both now and forever trophies of living hearts that love Himtrophies of immortal spirits who find their Heaven in gazing upon His beauties! What must the glories of Christ be forever when you and I and all the ten thousand millions He has bought with His blood shall be in Heaven. Oh, when we have been there many a thousand years we shall feel as fresh a rapture as when we came there! And if our spirits should be sent on any errand from our Master, and we should have to leave His Presence for a moment, oh, with what wings of a dove we will fly back to behold His face again!

When we shall all surround that Throne, what songs will I, the chief of sinners, saved by blood, give Him! What hymns will you give Him, you who have had your iniquities cleansed and are today saved? What praise will all those multitudes give Him who have all been partakers of His Grace? But this has more to do with forever. Now, what do you say about our glorifying Him now? Oh, Brothers and Sisters, make it your prayer this morning, Lord, help me to glorify You. I am poor, help me to glorify You by contentment. I am sick, help me to give You honor by patience. I have talents, help me to extol You by spending them for You. I have time, Lord, help me to redeem it, that I may serve You.

I have a heart to feel, Lord, let that heart feel no love but Yours and glow with no flame, but affection for You. I have a head to think, Lord help me to think of You and for You. You have put me in this world for something, Lord, show me what that is, and help me to work out my lifepurpose. For I do desire to say amen. I cannot do muchmy amen is but a feeble onebut as the widow put in her two mites, which made a farthing, which was all her living, so, Lord, I put my time and eternity, too, into Your treasury. It is all yours, take it, and thus I say, Amen to Peters doxology.

And now, throughout this year will you go forth, my Brothers and Sisters, and say amen to this? I pray you do so. You who do not love Christ cannot say amen. Remember you are under the Law. There is an amen to all the curses for you. There is none to the blessings while you are under the Law. O poor Sinner under the Law, may this be the day when your slavery to the Law shall come to an end! How can it be? you say. By faith in Christ, I answer. He that believes on Him is not condemned. Oh that you may believe on Him, and then your joyful heart will say amen!

Then will you say, Loudest of all the saints in Heaven, I will shout amen, when I see the royal crown brought forth and Jesus is acknowledged Lord of all. May God grant that this year may be the best year this Church has ever had. This year concludes eight years of my ministry among you and seven years of Printed Sermons are now before the public. How much of blessedness God has caused to pass through our mind and how much He has been pleased to own His Word, we cannot fully measure. But we know that He has been with us in deed and in truth.

Now that we begin this year, may the Lord make it so that all the past shall seem to be as nothing compared with that which is to come. I bless you my Brothers and Sisters in the name of the Lord, and commencing this year, I beg again for renewed tokens of your affection by a renewal of your prayers. And on my part, I only trust that it may be mine through this year and as long as I live, to be giving my amen to that doxologyTo Him be glory both now and forever. Amen.

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THE FATHER AND THE SON   
NO. 2905

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And truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. 1 John 1:3.

THE 12 Apostles were favored with the most intimate communion with our blessed Lord, but I can hardly say that they entered into fellowship with Him during His life on earth. Each of them might have been asked the question that our Savior put to one of themHave I been so long a time with you and yet have you not known Me, Philip? But after Christ had ascended to Heaven and the Spirit of God had rested upon His disciples and in proportion as the Spirit did rest upon them, all that they had seen, heard and handled of their Lord became a means of communion between Himself and them. They were then able to realize what a very near, dear, deep and familiar communion had been possible to them through having spent some three years or so with Him in public and in private and having actually seen Him, heard His voice and felt the touch of His hands.

Now, since their literal hearing, seeing and touching Christ did not create communion with Him apart from the work of the Spirit, we need not so much regret, as we might otherwise have done, that we never saw, or heard, or touched the Saviorbecause we, also, without seeing, or hearing, or touching Him, can believe in Him and rejoice that He said, Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. And, further, as it is through faith, rather than by sight, or hearing, or feeling that the Spirit of God operates upon us, when we believe the witness of the Apostles concerning Christ, the Spirit of God will bless their message to us and we shall enter into the Apostles fellowship! What the Apostles learned, they learned in order that they might tell others. All that John saw, he was prepared to speak of according to his ability, that others might have fellowship with him and, dear Friends, remember that if you ever learn anything of Christif you have any enjoyment of His Presence at any timeit is not for you, alone, but for others to share with you! When fellowship is the sweetest, your desire is the strongest that others may have fellowship with you and when, truly, your fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, you earnestly wish that the whole Christian brotherhood may share the blessing with you. My great desire, just now, is not so much to preach to you as to lead you, by the Holy Spirits gracious assistance, into the actual enjoyment of that which the Apostles possessed, that, believing, as we do, their testimony, we might thereby enter into their fellowship!

First, I am going to try to answer this question, What is this fellowship with the Father and with His Son in general? Secondly, I want to show you how we can enjoy this fellowship in meeting, as we do, to celebrate the sacred Supper in memory of our ascended Lord.

I. First, then, WHAT IS THIS FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER AND WITH HIS SON WHICH THE APOSTLES ENJOYED AND WHICH THEY WISHED US TO SHARE WITH THEM?

Let me give you an illustration to show you what fellowship is. Yet, while I use it, I regret that it falls so far short of the Truth of God I wish to illustrate, yet I know not of a better one. Suppose that a great plague raged in London, like that which carried off so many of the population in years gone by? And suppose that there lived, in this city, a father and a son whose one care was for the healing of others. Suppose you lived in the same house as they lived in and that you saw the intimate affection existing between them? And suppose that you were in their council chamber when they consulted together as to what was to be done for the perishing citizens? You would mark the resolve of the son to make a sacrifice of himself from day to day by going into the homes of those who were dying with the plague. You would observe him as, with his fathers smile resting upon him, he went forth to his work. You were privileged to live in the house while the work of rescue was going on and you saw how the sick ones were being plucked from the grip of the terrible disease, like brands from the burning. You watched the fathers love and the sons self-sacrificeand you were filled with admiration of them.

Now, that being taken as a supposition, feeble as it is, I want to ground upon that my description of what is meant by fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. You must not, however, confuse fatherhood and sonship, as they exist among men, with these relationships as they stand towards God, for it is the eternal Father and the eternal Son with whom we are to be brought into fellowship and the terms that are used in speaking of them are accommodated to our poor understandingsbut they are not to be literally construed and, they are especially not to be understood in any carnal sense, nor to be applied to the unregenerate.

Well, suppose we are living in such a house as I have tried to describe to youthe first thing necessary for fellowship with such a father and such a son would be mutual communication. To live in the house where they were, yet never to speak to them, or to be spoken to by them, would be no sort of fellowship! Merely to know that there were such persons in the house and to know that they were engaged in such blessed work as that would not make us partakers with them and would not give us communion with them. We must speak to them and they must speak to us. And the speaking, on both sides, must be of a kind, loving sortnot, on our part, that which would offend them, nor, on their partthat which would imply anger towards us. That is the very beginning of our fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. There must be mutual communication between us. We must have heard the voice of God in our hearts and we must have spoken to God from our hearts. You cannot enjoy this fellowship, my Friend, whatever you say, unless your soul has learned to speak with God in prayer and praiseand unless your ears have learned to listen to whatever He says to you through His Book and by His Spirit, through His ministers and in Creation and Providence. His voice is sounding everywhere and, in order to fellowship with Him you must have the ears that hear and the heart that believes what He says to you. And you also must have a tongue that responds to His voice, for there can be no true communion without mutual communication. Do you not perceive the kinship of the two words, communion and communication, communion and conversation? This there must be or there will be no true fellowship.

Now think of our illustration again, but transfer it to the higher sphere. You are living in the house and you are sick with the plague. Yet, suffering in that fashion in the house where the one business carried on is the healing of the sick, I will suppose that you refuse to put yourself under the care of the son, who is the great physician. If you despise his remedies, or delay receiving them, you cannot be said to have any true fellowship with him. Evidently you do not appreciate his efforts on behalf of others, or you would be willing to accept his services on your own account. It is his business to save, yet you are not saved. He is quite close to you and he is able, with a single touch of his hand, to heal you, yet you will not permit his skill to be exercised upon you. Then, clearly, you do not believe in him, for you do not desire to submit yourself to him! And it is equally clear that you have no fellowship with him and cannot have any. If we are to have any fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, we must, first of all surrender these poor sinful souls of ours into His dear handsand we must go to the Father and say to Him, Father, we have sinned. And as we gaze, by faith, upon the atoning Sacrifice, we must say, But although we must confess that we have sinned, there is the blood that makes atonement for sintherefore, Father, accept us because we put our trust in Your only-begotten Son.

This is essential to true fellowship and, as you will see, it is a part of it. So here you are, first of all, in communication with the Father and the Son and, secondly, reconciled to God by the death of His Sonhealed of the awful, soul-destroying plague of sin. And thus you have taken two steps upon the great highway of fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ! And you can sing with Toplady

*For Your free electing favor, You,   
O Father, we adore!   
Jesus, our atoning Savior,   
You we worship evermore!*

But it is necessary, further, supposing us to be living in the house with this father and son and desiring to have full fellowship with them, that we should have an intelligent apprehension of the work they are doing. Suppose we know as a matter of general knowledge that they are healing the sick, but we are not aware of the self-denials to which that well-beloved son has exposed himself, or of the bountiful heart of that generous father who was willing even to yield up his son to endure all the perils of the plague for the sake of those who were smitten by it? If we do not know as much as this, we cannot have anything like full fellowship with the father and the son, but in proportion as we study the details of their workand perceive the adaptation of what they are doing to the great end they have in viewwe shall be sure to have fellowship with them. So, Beloved, when you are yourselves saved, study to know more and more about both Christ and the Father! Dive deeply into the great mystery of the Divine Purposes of Love and Mercy. See how the Father ordained, before the foundation of the world, that in the race of mankind He would find exponents of His boundless love who will make known to principalities and powers, in the heavenly places, throughout eternity, the manifold riches of His Grace. See, too, how He laid upon His Son the work of healing this sin-smitten world. Study every detail that you can ascertain concerning the Father and the Sonthe minutest touch upon the canvas is worthy of a centurys study, so full is every point of deep mystery and rich instruction to the soul. And I am persuaded that as you increase in the knowledge of the Father and of His Son Jesus Christ through the Revelation of the Divine Spirit, you will also increase your fellowship with the Father and with His Son!

We advance still further when this work, which is being done by those whom we are in such close contact, commands our intense approbation and admiration. Turning, for a minute, simply to our illustration, think of the heroic father and of his self-denying son and say to yourself, How amazing it is that these plague-stricken people should be allowed to come and howl and rage against him under his very window! Yet all the while he is living for themhow strange it is that these very people who in the madness that follows from their disease, even seek the life of his son, the great physician! Nevertheless they are the objects of that great physicians sedulous care and he is ready to lay down his life for them if he may save them! You would thus find your heart going out in admiration of that father and son and such undeserved and disinterested love as theirs would bring you into fellowship with them. Now lift the illustration again into the higher sphere, and see, through it, the grand design of God to make His foes His friends, to change rebels into loyal courtiers, to make ingrates into sons and daughters and to lift up the heirs of wrath and cause them to sit with Him as kings and priests upon His Throne! When you see how Christ comes down to raise this world up from the gulf into which it had fallen and, like another Atlasonly far greaterto bear upon His shoulders the weight of the worlds sin, you cannot help admiring Him! And as you admire and approve, you enter into a still higher measure of fellowship with the Father and with His Son.

You get on to a further stage when, at last you are able to enter into sympathy with the Divine Workers. Suppose (to go back to our illustration), you lived in the house with that father and son and saw this work of mercy going on day after daypoor starving and dying people being picked up, placed in the hospital and healedand that great physician, the son, perpetually suffering in order that he might heal them, enduring all manner of insults and ignominy at their hands, yet always determining to save them? You would come, at last, to feel such sympathy with both father and son that the plague-stricken people would be almost as much the objective of your care as of theirs! You would be worked up into enthusiasm for the poor sufferers and you would feel that it was such a blessed work to help in caring for them that if it were possible, you would wish to be engaged in it. You begin to take an interest in all the details of the service and you rejoice as you hear of one and another of the sick ones being restored. You feel that you must love the self-denying physician who is giving up comfort, ease, honoreverythingto save the suffering and dying people. You feel such sympathy with him in the work that he is doing that you could kiss his feet. And when you hear of his being despised and rejected, you feel that you could wash his feet with your tears of regret that he should be treated in so shameful a fashion.

You are getting into fellowship with him now! And when I look at my dear Lord and Master and think of the Father and the Son planning and working with heart and soul for the salvation of the chosen. And when I see sinners saved one by one, or even by hundreds delivered from sin and made fit for Heaven, my soul feels a deep sympathy with this glorious work! Do you not also feel it, dear Friends? Do you not wish that sinners may be saved? Do you not pray that they may be? Does not your heart feel intense sympathy with the eternal purpose of the Father and the gracious work of the Savior? If so, you are having fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ!

I can suppose that living in the house with that father and son, you would want to go still further and share their work. If you had been cured by the skill of the physician, you would feel so intensely sympathetic with him in the great work that he is carrying on that, somewhat timidly and humbly, you would venture to say, Can I be of any use? Can I carry the medicine, or put on the bandages, or give a cup of cold water to fevered lips, or wipe a tear from a weeping eye, or sit up at night with the sick who need to be watched and tended? Or can I even clean the floor of the house, or unloose the laces of the physicians shoes?

*My God, I feel the mournful scene,   
My heart yearns over dying men   
And wishes my pity would reclaim   
And snatch the firebrands from the flame.*

And if, as will be sure to be the case when you are doing something for Christ, some of the patients begin to mock you, as they mocked Him, that will reveal to you another phase of fellowship with Him. Then you will understand why He was so patient, for you will need to ask Him to make you patient. And when your words of warning, or instruction, or comfort are rejected, as His were, you will go to Him and say, O Savior, I understand now a little of what Your griefs were when You were despised and rejected of men, for they have rejected Your Word which You did put in my mouth. In struggling to do good to others, you will meet with such rebuffs, misrepresentations, difficulties and direct oppositions that you will go to the Savior and say to Him, O my Lord, I can now understand You betternot that I am anything like what I ought to be, but even my failures help me to see more of Your Sovereign patience and Your mighty love. O Divine Self-Denierwondrous Self-SacrificerI would never have had such fellowship with You as I now have if You had not permitted me to take some humble part in this, Your great and glorious work!

So now you see. You have reached a point a long way ahead of where we started. You are now enjoying fellowship with the Father and with the Son because you have become a co-worker with God! We put our puny hands to the great work which He has undertaken and He strengthens our weak hands to do marvels for His names sake. He works mightily within us and so we are able to work for Him and to have fellowship with Him. To come to the climax of all, I will suppose that you are living in that house of mercy which has been my figure all along and that you throw your whole soul so completely into the work that is carried on there that you say to the father and son, This work so fully commands my sympathy and so delights my heart that I am quite carried away with enthusiasm for it. I admire the characters and I love the persons of those with whom I dwelland now I ask that all I am and all I have may be used for the furtherance of this workthat I may not be reckoned merely as a lodger in this house, but be regarded as one of the family and that from henceforth, I, in my poor, humble capacityfor I am less than nothingmay never be personally mentioned again, but may be considered as part and parcel of this great mysterious firm whose existence means nothing but good to the city, and whose influence is all being employed for the health of the inhabitants.

You know what I meanlifting the illustration to the higher sphere and it is well if you can say to the Lord, at last, My Lord, henceforth for me to live shall be to do what You will and to give myself wholly up to seek those for whom Christ lived here below and upon which the Fathers heart has always been set. Father, You will that Your Truth should be known wherever lies have, at present, the dominionthen give me Grace, I pray You, to will it, too, and to publish Your Truth everywhere according to the measure of my ability. You will that the nations of the earth should be subdued unto your Son and become His loyal subjectsthen, I pray You to put me into the ranks of the legions by whom You will achieve this glorious victory.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, you will indeed have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ when you are nothing and Christ is everything! When you do not live to make money, or to attain to earthly honor, or to gain comfort, or anything else for yourselves, but when each of you can say, This one thing will I do, for Christ will I live, and for Christ will I be content even to die so that to the utmost ends of the earth His name and fame may be made known.

*I want to live as one who knows   
Your fellowship of love.   
As one whose eyes can pierce beyond   
The pearl-built gates above.   
As one who daily speaks to You,   
And hears Your voice Divine,   
With depths of tenderness declare,   
Beloved, you are Mine!*

II. Now, in the second place, I have to briefly answer the second questionHOW MAY FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER AND WITH THE SON BE ENJOYED IN THE CELEBRATION OF THE LORDS SUPPER?

As you all know, the Lords Supper is the memorial feast in which we are to show, or proclaim, the Lords death till He comes. Come He will and our hearts cry to Him, Even so, come quickly, good Master! This Supper sets forth His death and the way in which we derive benefit from it, namely, by receiving Him spiritually into our souls even as we take the bread and wine literally into our bodies and assimilate them so that they become part of ourselves. Well, then, how can we have fellowship with God in showing forth the death of Christ by means of this memorial supper?

I think we can do so, first, by coming to the conclusion that the Sacrifice of Christ was an absolute necessity. We are fully persuaded that God the Father would never have given up His only-begotten Son to die for human guilt if there had been any other way of saving lost sinnersand also that Jesus Christ would never have taken upon Himself the awful burden of human guilt and agreed to be bruised of the Father if it had not been absolutely essential that He should die, or that man should, or that justice shouldit had to be one of the three! God the Father agreed with God the Son that this colossal Sacrifice was necessary. My Soul, do you also agree that it was necessary? Do you see that there was no loophole for your escape except through the bleeding Saviors wounds? Will you now admit with all your heart that the Fathers wisdom was right and that the Sons wisdom was right? Has the Spirit of God taught you that this was the best plan of salvation that could possibly have been devised? Looking all around, have you come to the conclusion that there is no salvation by works, no salvation by tears and no salvation anywhere but by the blood of Gods only-begotten and well-beloved Son? If any of you have come to that conclusion, you have thereby entered into fellowship with the Father and with the Son, for they have long ago come to the same conclusion!

Then, next, dear Friends, while you are sitting around the Communion Table, endeavor to think of the sufferings of Christ so that you will, in your measure, enter into the moods of His mind while He was suffering for you. As He felt a great horror of sin, pray the Lord to make you feel intense horror of itand let the very thought of it wound you as it wounded Him. He felt the shame of sinthen ask the Holy Spirit to teach you how shameful it is. In your mind and heart, crown sin with a crown of thorns like that with which it crowned your Lord. And spit at sin, and scoff at sin, even as sin did scoff and spit at your Lord! Yet further, our Lord Jesus felt that justice must be honoredso feel in your soul, as you come to the Table, that the Justice of God must be honored, magnified and glorified. Have fellowship with Christ in feeling that, cost what it may, God is never unjust. Agree to that in your heart of hearts and you will be having fellowship with the Father and with the Son while you are so agreeing!

Go over in your mind all the griefs and woes that your dear Lord endured and remember how He resolved that for the joy that was set before Him, they were all things to be despised. Do you feel that any losses and cross which you may have to bear for His sake, or any scorn or persecution that may ever come upon you because you belong to Christ are things that are only to be reckoned as the small dust of the balance in comparison with the glory of God? Then you are drinking of Christs cup and being baptized with His Baptismand having fellowship with Him in His sufferings. Let your thoughts travel along the road to Gethsemane and from Gethsemane to the accursed gallows on the hill of Calvary. In your meditation follow your Lord and ask Him to let you drink of the brook by the way, as He did, that you also may lift up your headand in that way you will have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. You may even adopt the rapturous language of Faber and sing

*I love to kiss each print where   
Christ did set His pilgrim feet,   
Nor can I fear that blessed path   
Whose traces are so sweet.*

Then, again, Beloved, I pray the Holy Spirit to help you and to help me to glorify God concerning the death of Christ while we are at His Table. As you eat the bread and drink the wine, think of what Christ suffered and of the mysterious way in which His sufferings have brought Glory to the Fathers name. I do verily believe that when Christ bore the sins of His people up to the treeand away from the treethe Justice of God was more honored than it would have been if all the elect had been sent to Hell forever! If our sins had been punished upon ourselves with the utmost rigor of the Divine Law, that Law would not have been as honored throughout the entire universe of intelligent beings as it now must be when they hear that God, Himself, would sooner pay the penalty of sin than allow His Law to be broken with impunity! O august death of Christ in which God, Himself, becomes the sacrificial Victim and bleeds and dies rather than that on the spotless tablets of His Law, any stain should be made, even though it should be by the finger of His mercy! Glorify God, then! Praise Him and let your whole soul extol Him for this wondrous arrangement of Grace

*So just to God, so safe for man*   
for so you will be having fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. You probably remember that the line I just quoted was written by Dr. Watts in praise of the Gospel. And I hope that you can say with him

*What if we trace the globe around,   
And search from Britain to Japan,   
There shall be no religion found   
So just to God, so safe for man!   
How well Your blessed Truths agree!   
How wise and holy Your commands!   
Your promises, how firm they be!   
How firm our hope and comfort stands!   
Should all the forms that men devise   
Assault my faith with treacherous art,   
Id call them vanity and lies,   
And bind the Gospel to my heart.*

Next, you can enter into fellowship at the Communion Table by loving Christ, your Mediator, as well as by glorifying God the Father. You know that God loves Jesus Christ. I mean, the Man Christ Jesus, God and Man in one Person. He loves Him not only in His essential Godhead, as He must always love Him, but He also loves Him for His works sake. With what delight do the Fathers eyes rest on His Son! How sweetly does He say to Him, Well done! How does He delight to honor and glorify Him! Do you not also feel something of the same sort of love to Christ as you gather around His Table? Ask the Spirit of God to cause you to be enamored of Christ and to make Him to be altogether lovely in your eyes. Pray for such a view of Him that your inmost heart shall melt under the Divine passion of love to your dear Lord. Let His wounds be the charm to win you. Let His spotless Character be the beauty to enthrall you. And when you thus love Christ, you will perceive that as God the Father loves Christ even more than that, you will have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ!

We do not invite you to come and kneel around the Communion Table, for there is nothing upon it to be worshipped. But when the breaking of bread is being celebrated, we ask you to sit as much at your ease as you can, just as the Last Supper was instituted by our Lord. Those who gathered round that table reclined in the Oriental posture of repose. We cannot do that, nor would it be in harmony with our usual idea of what is reverent and seemly. At the paschal feast they stood with their loins girded and their staves in their hands, for they were about to depart in haste into the wilderness. You have no need to do that, but you may sit at this Table as one who is at restand so you may have fellowship with Godfor do you not know that this feast celebrates Christs rest? His blood has been shed, His body brokenHe has become food for our souls! His Redemption work is finished! He has gone His way until He shall come, the second time, to drink the new wine in the Kingdom of His Father. Christ rests, so if you also rest you will be in sympathy with His finished work.

Remember also that God rests. When Noah offered a sacrifice to God, Jehovah smelled a sweet savor of restnot in Noahs sacrifice, but in what Noahs sacrifice typified and symbolizedthat is, in the Sacrifice of Christ. If I may use such an expression concerning You, O blessed God, Your Sabbath was broken by mans sin. It grieved God that He had made man because he so rebelled against Him and dishonored Him. And, therefore, the Lord had no rest. But when He saw Christ on the Crossa Man who had done all His will, suffering all His willGod, as well as Man, bearing human sin in His own Personit pleased the Lord to bruise Him and to put Him to grief. But when He had done it and the Son had finished His Sacrifice and come home, then the Father rested! He could rest in His love and rejoice over His Church with singing, for the ransom price for her Redemption was paid, the battle was fought and the victory won forever! Sin was overcome, the old serpents head was broken, Hell was vanquished and death was doomed to die! And it is now only a matter of time when the gleaming banners of Christ, lit with the light of victory, shall be borne aloft after the final fight of Armageddon and when that is over there shall go up this mighty shout which every star shall hearwhile Heavens heights shall echo and re-echo the strain and the deeps of Hell are stirred with the wondrous chorus of the redeemed, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigns reigns because of the Crossreigns because Christ was there able to say, It is finished!

Come then, Beloved, and rest, for so you will have fellowship with God, Himself! Let no sense of sin disturb youno distracting thoughts annoy you. Say to yourself, God is satisfied with Christs work and so am I. God has said, It is enough and what is enough for the Infinite God is surely enough for me. The Lord bless you, as you come to His Table, for His Sons sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **1 JOHN 1; 2:1-6.**

May that Divine Spirit who inspired every Word of this wonderful letter, bless it to all our hearts as we read it!   
1 John 1:1. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, of the Word of life. You remember how John begins his GospelIn the beginning was the Word, and how, a little later, he says, In Him was life. The Holy Spirit seems to have recalled those expressions to his mind, for He moves him to use them again. Note how clearly, how explicitly John writes concerning the Logos, the eternal Word. He says, That which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the Word of life...that declare we unto you. The facts of Christs history on earth are recorded by eyewitnesses who could not be deceived concerning them. They exercised their various senses with regard to Christhearing, seeing and touching Him again and again. They were veracious witnesses and they died in testimony of their faith in what they asserted. And when anything has been heard, seen, inspected and even touched and handled by a company of reliable witnesses, the testimony of such witnesses concerning it must be accepted as true.   
2. (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us). John and his fellow Apostles were eyewitnesses of the coming to earth of God in human fleshthe indwelling of the Word of Life in a body like our own.   
3, 4. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. Hear this, you people of God! The objective of the Revelation of Jesus Christ is that you may have joyyes, that you may have a heart full of joy and that you may know what full joy means, for here below we get but drops and dashes of joy unless we are brought into fellowship with God through Jesus Christ! But then, we have the very joy of God in our souls! Oh, the delight of it! Oh, that you could all know it to the fullest!

5. This, then, is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. That is to say, God is knowledge, God is truth, God is purity. God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. There is no darkness of sin, or ignorance, or error about God.   
6. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not tell the truth. He who walks in ignorance and sin is in fellowship with the powers of darknesshe is certainly not in fellowship with God who is light!   
7. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. So that in the very highest state to which we can attain in this world, namely, walking in the light, as God is in the light and having fellowship with Him, even then we shall sin and shall still need the blood of Christ to cleanse us from its stain. So those exceedingly err who say that the Christian can or does live utterly free from sin! Either they have lowered the standard by which they judge the actions of men, or they excuse themselves on some Antinomian principleor else they must be altogether ignorant of the Truth of God about the matterfor if we walk in the light, as God is in the light and have fellowship with Him, still, the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. And, therefore, there is sin needing to be cleansed, for Christ does no work as a superfluity! But what a mercy it is for us to feel the continual cleansing of the precious blood of Jesus so that if we sin through ignorance, or if we sin by omission or by commission, that precious blood constantly keeps us so pure that we can still walk with God!   
8. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. It does not matter, either, in what sense we say it! We may try to beguile ourselves with the idea that we say it in some peculiar Gospel sense, but, we deceive ourselves if we say it in any sense whatever, for we have sin and we do sin!  
9. If we confess our sins. That is the point! And he who says that he has no sins will not confess them! He who believes himself to be perfect cannot enjoy the blessing described in this 9th verse. To deny that we have any sin is to walk in darkness and to show we are without the light which would reveal our sin to us! And if we are walking in darkness we cannot be in fellowship with God. But to see sin in ourselves from day to dayhumbly to confess it and mourn over itis to walk in the light. And walking in the light we shall have fellowship with God who is light. If we confess our sins   
9, 10. He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.  
1 John 2:1. My little children, these things I write unto you, that you sin not. That you may abstain from it, abhor it and not indulge in anything that would lead you towards it.   
1. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. We are to seek to live a perfectly holy life, but inasmuch as we constantly fall short of that ideal, here is our comfortwe still have an Advocatewe still have One who undertakes our cause and pleads for us before His Fathers Throne!   
2. And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. Whoever comes to Him shall receive deliverance from sin. Neither Jew nor Gentile is exclusively considered in the offering of the Atonement of Christthose for whom He died are of every race, color, class and kin.  
3-6. And hereby we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that says, I know Him, and keeps not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him. He that says he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked. May the Holy Spirit graciously lead us all to this extraordinary walk of Grace, for our Lord Jesus Christs sake! Amen.

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FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD   
NO. 409

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 15, 1861, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

That which we have seen and heard we declare unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.   
1 John 1:3.

FELLOWSHIP with God was one of the richest privileges of unfallen man. The Lord God walked in the Garden and talked with Adam as a man talks with his friend. So long as he was willing and obedient, Adam ate the fat of the land. Among the rich dainties and wines on the lees well refined, of which his soul was a partakerwe must number first and foremostunbroken communion with God, his Father and his Friend. Sin, as it banished man from Eden, banished man from God. And from that time our face has been turned from the Most High and His face has been turned from uswe have hated God and God has been angry with us every day.

Christ came into the world to restore to us our lost patrimony. It was the great object of His wondrous sacrifice to put us into a position which should be equal and even superior to that which we occupied in Adam before the Fall. And as He has already restored to us many things that we lost, so also among the bestfellowship with God. They who have by His grace believed and have by the precious blood been washed, have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. They are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God. They have access with boldness into this grace wherein we stand. So they who are in the kingdom and under the dispensation of the second Adam have restored to them in all its fullness that fellowship which was lost to them by the sin and disobedience of their first federal head.

The Apostle John was among the number of those who had enjoyed this privilege with Christ in His flesh. He had been Christs chosen companion, elect out of the elect to a choice and peculiar privilege. During the incarnation he was one of the favored three who had enjoyed the closest intimacy with the Redeemer. He had seen Christ in His transfiguration, had witnessed the raising of the dead maid, had been with the Lord in the garden and he had lingered with Him even when the thrust was given after death and the blood and water flowed from His pierced heart.

John had the nearest, the dearest, the closest fellowship with Christ in the flesh. As he had laid his head upon Christs bosom so had he laid all his thoughts and all the emotions of his mind upon the hearts love and divine affection of his Lord and Master. But Christ was gone. It was no more possible to hear His voice, to see Him with eyes, or to handle Him with hands. Yet John had not lost His fellowship, though he knew Him no more after the flesh, yet he knew Him after a nobler sort.

Nor was his fellowship less real, less close, less sweet, or less divine than it had been when he had walked and talked with Him and had been privileged to eat and drink with Him at that last sacred feast. John says, Truly our fellowship isnot wasis with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

And now my Brothers and Sisters in the common faith of our Lord Jesus, this morning I trust that many of us can say, Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. Did the Apostle John need to say, Trulyas much as though some doubted or denied it? We, too, have sometimes an occasion to make as solemn an affirmation as he has done. There are certain sects who exalt the form of their church government into a sine qua non of piety and they say of us that it is impossible that we should have a fellowship with Christ because we follow not after them.

Because we reject not the ministry which God has appointedto take up with some newly-devised scheme by which everyone is to instruct his brothertherefore we have not the fellowship which is reserved for their sect and party. We have been led, when they have spoken very bitterly, to question ourselves. But after deep searching of heart, in reply to them we can say, Brethren, whether you are right, or we are right in the matter of church discipline or organization, yet we can assure you that truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

And oftentimes the man who thinks more of the doctrine of Christ than of the Person of Christand couples therewith the conceit that he himself must be right and all others wrong. Because we may not be able to endorse all the heights of his doctrine, or, on the other hand, may not be able to join with him in his legal statementshe says, O these people! There are many of them, but they can have no fellowship with God, because they do not sound our Shibboleth. They do not join with us in every separate dogma which we teach and therefore the Lord is not with them.

Ah, but we can say to them, Brethren, we are content to leave these doctrinal disputes to the Great Arbiter of right and wrong. We have formed our opinion of Scripture. We hope, as in the sight of God and as before the Most High, we can say we have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God. But whether this is so or not, we protest to you, Truly, yes, truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And perhaps the experimentalistthe man who attaches undue importance to his own particular form of experiencemay cry out that this minister has not had the same experience of human depravity as himself.

He may condemn us utterly because we do not give prominence to a certain favorite but unhealthy standard of spiritual conviction. Well, we can say to him, We have preached what we know, we have testified what we have seen and if we cannot go to all the heights and depths and lengths and breadths, as yetwe hope to grow. But we can say, even should you doubt our declaration, Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

This brings me immediately and directly to the text. You will perceive that there is suggested by the text a quiet investigation leading to a most solemn affirmation. Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And then there is, secondly, in the former part of the text, a most affectionate desire leading to appropriate action. Our desire is that you may have fellowship with us and, therefore, that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.

I. First, then, let us in all quietude and stillness of heart talk this matter over with one another and see if it is not so that we have had and do have real FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER AND WITH HIS SON JESUS CHRIST.

Now, Brethren, we have had fellowship with the FATHER. In order to have fellowship with any man there must be a concord of heart. Can two walk together unless they are agreed? At the very bottom of fellowship there must be a likeness. We must have like wishes, like desires. We must have espoused like ends and our spirits must be welded together in the intention to effect like purposes. Now I think we can avow, this morning, in the first place, that we do feel a sweet concord with God in His eternal purposes. I read the Book of God and I find that He has ordained Christ to be the Head of His Church and that He has chosen unto Himself a number that no man can number.

I find it revealed in the Word of God that He is a God of distinguishing and discriminating grace. That He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy and will have compassion on whom He will have compassion. That He will bring many sons unto glory, to the praise of the glory of His grace wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved. Brethren, cannot you and I say, as in the sight of a heart-searching God, we have full accord with God in His purposes? Why, we love them, we delight in them! The decrees of God are satisfactory to us. If it were possible for us to alter the roll in which His divine intentions are written we would not do it.

We feel that whatever He has ordained must be right and as for His ordination of His people unto eternal life and His loving them above all people that are on the face of the earthwhy this is one of the richest joys that we know! The doctrine of election is a sweet cordial to the child of God. I can cry, My Father, You are King, You have chosen the base things of this world and things that are not to bring to nothing the things that are. And in this I have fellowship with You, for I can exclaim, I thank You, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth that You have hid these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seems good in Your sight.

Again, we have fellowship with God in the object for which the purpose was first formed, namely, His own glory. Ah, the deeds of the Most High tend to manifest His majesty and glorify His Godhead. O Brethren, do not we sympathize with God in this object? Give glory unto Him, give glory unto Him, O creatures that His hand has made! The highest aspiration of our spirit, when it is most enlarged and most inflamed is that He in all things may be glorified. He knows, for He can read the heart, that oftentimes, when we have ourselves been bowed down and we have been made as the very dust of the earth, we have said, This is still my comfort, that He is exalted, that He still reigns and does as He wills among the armies of Heaven and among the people of this lower world.

Do you not desire His glory as He desires it? He has purposed to stain the pride of all human boasting and to make the world know that Jehovah is God and that beside Him there is none else. Do you not also desire the same? Do you not daily pray, Let Him be magnified from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof? Let all creatures call Him blessed, let all that have breath praise, laud and magnify His name? In this, thenin His purpose and in the object of His purpose, we have fellowship with the Father.

And now have we not fellowship with Him in the plan by which He effects that purpose? It pleased Him that in the fullness of time, He should send forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. He laid one foundation and one only and He said concerning it, that other foundation shall no man lay but that which is laid. God has chosen the Stone which the builders refused, that it might be made the Headstone of the corner. This is the Lords doing and cannot we say, It is wondrous in our eyes? As He is unto God the chief corner stone, elect, precious, so unto you that believe He is precious.

Looking at all the plan from the beginning to the end, do you not agree with it? Does it not strike you as being the wisest, the most gracious, the most glorious scheme that could have been devised? And as from its first fountain in predestination onward to the ocean of glory, you traverse the ever-flowing streamdo you not say of it in all matchless course, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has chosen us in Him from before the foundation of the world and who having, chosen us, will glorify us and bring us to Himself at the last?

Yes, there is not a single word that we would alter. There is not a line in this Divine Scheme that we would wish to change. If it approves itself to Him, it certainly approves itself to us. If He chose it as the plan of Divine Operation, we adore His choice, we reverence both the wisdom and the love which planned and carried out the design.

And yet more I think we may add we have fellowship with God in the most prominent characteristics of that plan. Throughout the whole way of salvation we have seen displayed the justice and the mercy of God, each with undimmed luster. We have seen His grace in forgiving the sinner but we have seen His holiness in avenging sin upon the Substitute. We have seen His truthfulness acting in two ways, His Truth in threatby no means sparing the guilty. His Truth in the promisepassing by transgression, iniquity and sin.

Throughout the whole Divine Plan of salvation there is not a single blot upon any of the attributes of the Most High. Holy! holy! holy! Lord God of Sabbath, is still the song of angelseven when they see sinners who were once the vilest of the vile brought to share their joys and sing their songs. And, Brethren, do not you and I feel we have fellowship with God in this? Would you have Him unjust that you might be saved? I think you would say, Never! Never! Not even for my sake let Him be unjust. Would you have Him unloving to others, that He might make you His favorite? No! And there is no trace of anything like this.

You would not have him retract His threat, for then you might fear that He would forget His promise. I am sure as you look upon the character of God as He manifests it in the face of Jesus Christyour soul is filled with ineffable and delightful adoration. You can sing unto Him, Great are You, O God. Your mercy endures forever. And taking up the words of David, you can say, I will sing of mercy and of judgment. Unto You, O God, will I sing! In the purpose, then, in the object of that purpose, in the plan by which the purpose is achieved and in the characteristics of that plan, the believer in Christ has fellowship or sweet concord with the Father.

But to proceed a step furtherwe have a most divine and precious communion with the Father in the objects of His love. When two persons love the same thing their affection becomes a tie between them. The two may love each other but when in the course of Providence children are brought into the house, their children become another bond between their parents. Each parent mutually gives their hearts to their little ones and feels that their hearts are yet more fully given the one to the other. Now there is a tie between God the Father and our souls, for did not He say, This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased? And cannot you and I add, Yes, He is our Beloved Savior, in whom we are well pleased?

Is it not written, It pleased the Father to bruise Him? And do we not feel that we have found a divine pleasure and satisfaction in looking into His wounds, His agonies and His death? And has not the Father determined to glorify His Son Jesus? And is not the fondest thought of our heart that we may help to glorify Him here on earth and may spread His glories even in Heaven by telling to the angels and principalities and powers, the height and depth of His loving kindness? Does the Father love the Son?even so do we love Himnot to the same infinite extent, for we are finite beingsyet with sincerity, even as the Father loves Jesus, so sincerely do we love Him

*A very wretch, Lord! I should prove,   
Had I no love for You;   
Rather than not my Savior love,   
O may I cease to be!*

So in this, then, we have fellowship with the Father, seeing that we are both agreed in loving the Son. Does the Father love the saints?even so do we. Does He declare that precious shall their blood be in His sight? Does He bear and carry them and show His interest for them? Has He not said that His delight is in His people and that they are His peculiar portion and his choice heritage? My Soul, can you not say, in the midst of all your doubts and fearsI know that I have passed from death unto life, because I love the Brethren? Can you not protest, O my Heart! The excellent of the earth are all your delight. Where they dwell, I would dwell. Where they die, I would dietheir portion shall be my portion, their God shall be my God forever and ever? In this, too, we have fellowship with the Father.

But you know, Brethren, the word fellowship not only signifies concord of heart but it implies a carrying out of that concord a little further, in converse or mutual communication. May the Holy Spirit grant that we may not say a word which is not strictly verified by our experience. And I hope we can say we have had converse with the Divine Father. We have not

seen Him at any time nor have we beheld His shape. It has not been given to us, like Moses, to be put in the cleft of the rock and to see the back parts, or the train of the invisible Jehovah.

But yet we have spoken to Him. We have said to Him, Abba, Father. We have saluted Him in that title which came from our very heart, Our Father, who are in Heaven. We have had access to Him in such a way that we cannot have been deceived. We have found Him and through the precious blood of Christ we have come even unto His feet. We have ordered our cause before Him and we have filled our mouth with arguments. Nor has the speaking been all on our sidefor He has been pleased to shed abroadby His Spirit, His love in our hearts.

While we have felt the spirit of adoption, He, on the other hand, has showed to us the loving kindness of a tender Father. We have felt, though no sound was heard. We have known, though no angelic messenger gave us witnessthat His Spirit did bear witness with our spirits that we were born of God. We were embraced of Himno more at a distance. We were brought near by the blood of Christ. I trust, my Brothers and Sisters, you can each of you saythough you wish it could be more intense than it isI have in all these things had fellowship with the Father, for I have conversed with Him and He has spoken to me.

You can join in the words of that hymn   
*If in my Fathers love   
I share a filial part,   
Send down Your Spirit like a dove,   
To rest upon my heart.*

Furthermore and to conclude upon this point of fellowship with the Father, we can, I think, refer ourselves to the All-wise One and we can say we have had fellowship with God in this respectthat the very thing which is His happiness has been our happiness. That which has been the delight of His Holy Being has been a delight to us. And what is that? you say. Why, Brethren, does not God delight in holiness, in goodness, in mercy and in loving kindness?

And has not that been our delight, too? I am sure our greatest miseries here have been our sins. We do not murmur at our afflictions. O, if we could but get rid of those sins which bind us down and hamper us when we would mount towards Heaven. Holiness is our pleasure, purity is our delight. O, if we could but be perfect even as He is perfect and freed from sin, even as God our Father is freed from everything like iniquitythen we should be in Heavenfor this is our happiness. The same happiness which God finds in purity and righteousness, we find in it, too.

And if it is the happiness of the Father to have communion with the Persons of the Trinityif the Father delights in His Son, even so do we delight in Him. And such a delight that if we told it to the stranger he would not believe us. And if we spoke it in the worldlings ear he would think us mad. Jesus, You are the sun of our soul. You are to us the river of which we drink, the bread of which we eat, the air we breathe. You are the basis of our life and You are the summit of it. You are the prop, the mainstay, the pillar, the beauty, the joy of our being! If we have but You, we can ask nothing besidesfor You are All in Alland if we have You not, we are wretched and undone.

So, then, we have fellowship with the Father because that which is His happiness is most certainly our happiness. And so, also, that which is the Fathers employment is our employment. I speak not of you all, He knows whom He has chosen. We cannot join with the Father in upholding all worlds. We cannot send forth floods of light at the rising of the sun. We cannot feed the cattle on a thousand hills, nor can we give food and life to all creatures that have breath. But there is something which we can do which He does. He does good to all His creatures and we can do good also. He bears witness to His Son Jesus and we can bear witness, too.

The Father works hitherto that His Son may be glorified and we work, too. O You Eternal Worker! It is Yours to save souls and we are coworkers with You. We are His husbandry, we are His building. He scatters the seed of Truth, we scatter it, too. His words speak comfort and our words comfort the weary, too, when God the Spirit is with us. We hope we can say, For us to live is Christ,, and is not this what God lives for, too? We desire nothing so much as to glorify Him and this is the Fathers will, as well as Jesus Christs prayer, Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You.

Do you not see, Brethren, we stand on the same scaffold with the eternal God? When we lift our hand, He lifts up His eternal arm. When we speak, He speaks, too and speaks the same thing. When we purpose Christs glory, He purposes that glory, too. When we long to bring home the wandering sheep and to recall the prodigal sons, He longs to do the same. In that respect we can say, Truly we have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

2. And now I must turn with some brevity to announce also and to affirm the fact, that we have fellowship with the Son as well as with the Father. In both these matters we are like little children that have begun to speak or learn their letters. We have not yet attained. O Brethren, though I say we have fellowship with the Father, yet how little we have of it compared with what we hope to have! This fellowship is like the river in Ezekielat the first it is up to the anklesafterwards it is up to the knees. And then up to the loins and then it becomes a river to swim in.

There are, I fear, few of us who have waded where there is a river to swim in. But, blessed be God, though it IS only up to the ankles, yet we have fellowship and if we have but a little of it, that little is the seed of more and the certain pledge of greater joys to come.

Well now, we have fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, I think we can sayfor our hearts are united to Himwe cannot speak of this but I think we can weep about it

*Jesus, we love your charming name,   
Tis music to our ears.*

We may sometimes have to sing   
*Tis a point I long to know   
Oft it causes anxious thought;   
Do I love the Lord or no?   
Am I His, or am I not?*

But I think we can come back after all and answer, Yes, Lord, You know all things, You know that I love You. At any rate, it is strange that I should never be happy without You. It is singular that I can find no peace anywhere but in You. If I did not love You, should I have such longings after You? Would I have such mourning and such sorrow when You are gone? Would it be so dark without You if I still were blind and would it be so bright with You if I did not see a glimmering of Your light and some rays of Your beauties? Brethren, Satan may say what he will and our sense may seem to contradict the statements but still our soul follows hard after Him. He is to us all our salvation and all our desire. We have, then, fellowship with Christ since His heart is set in us and our heart is knit to Him.

Further, we have had some small degree of fellowship with Him in His sufferings. We have not yet resisted unto blood striving against sin, but we have carried His Cross and we have suffered His reproach. There have been some who could say

*Jesus, I my cross have taken*

*All to leave and follow You.*   
And others of us, whose path has been somewhat smoother, have nevertheless felt the cross within usfor the new spirit within us has had to contend with all that once we loved. There have been wars and fights and a perpetual conflictnot only from withoutbut what is far more severe, from within also. Yet if it should cause more sorrow we still would follow Him, for we count it as our riches that we may bear the reproach of Christ as He bore reproach for us.

I trust, my Brothers and Sisters, you that profess to be His followers do not blush to own His name. I hope you do not turn your backs in the day of battle. If you do, you may question whether your fellowship is with the Son Jesus Christ. But if you can welcome shame and hail reproach because He remembers you, then in this you have been conformed unto His death and have been made partakers of His sufferings.

I have sometimes thought it were worth all the bitterness if we might drink of His cup and be baptized with His baptism. We can have no Gethsemane with all its bloody sweat, yet we have had our Gethsemanes, too. We cannot die on Calvary, but I hope we have been crucified with Him and the world is crucified to us and we unto the world. We cannot go into the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, yet we have been buried with Him in baptism unto death, that like as Jesus Christ rose from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also might rise to newness of life.

And I hope, inasmuch as He has risen and ascended up on high though our bodies are still hereyet we have set our affection on things above and not on things on the earth. And as He has been raised up and made to sit together with His Father, I hope we know the meaning of that passage, He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. And as He is to come and reign, I hope we know also something of thatfor He has made us kings and priests unto our Godand we shall reign with Him forever and ever.

From the manger to the Cross and from the Cross to the millennium, there should be in the Christians experience a blessed fellowship. We ought to know Christ in His obscurity and littlenessthe babe Christ being in our hearts. We ought to know Him in His wilderness temptations ourselves being tempted in all points. We ought to know Him in His blasphemies and slandersourselves being accounted by man to be as Beelzebub and as the offscouring of all things.

We must know Him in His passion, in His agony and in His death. Then, Thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, we may know Him in His triumphs, in His ascension upon high, in His seating at the right hand of God and in His coming to judge the quick and the dead. For we, too, shall judge angels through Jesus Christ our Lord. We have, I hope in some humble measure in these respects, fellowship with the Son Jesus Christ.

But our fellowship has assumed also a practical form, in that the same desires and aspirations which were in Christ when He was on the earth are in us now. Oh, we have uttered feelingly the very words of Christ, Did you not know that I must be about My Fathers business? And when we could not do all we wouldwhen there seemed to be some insuperable obstacle in the path of our usefulnesswe have nevertheless said, My meat and my drink is to do the will of Him that sent me. And when at any time we have been wearied in the Masters service, we have yet found such good cheer therein that we could say with Him, I have meat to eat that you know not of. The zeal of Your house has eaten me up.

And at times, in the thoughts of serving God and even of suffering for Him we have said, I have a baptism to be baptized with and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! For we have desired with desire to eat that Passover, that we, too might say of our humble work, It is finished, and commend our spirit into the eternal hand. Oh, have you ever wept with Christ as He did over poor Jerusalem? Did Londons vices ever bring the tears into your eyes? Did you ever weep over hard-hearted souls, perhaps in your own family?

Have you ever cried as He did, How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but you would not? Oh, I hope, without egotism, without saying more than we have really felt, we have thirsted and panted to bring others up out of their degradation and their fall till we have felt that if we might be offered ourselves, if by our sacrifice souls might be saved, we would be willing to have it said, He saved others, himself he cannot save. In this, then, we have had fellowship with Christ.

And yet, furtheras I have said, fellowship requires converse. Oh, you daughters of Jerusalem, have we not had converse with Him? Tell of that happy day when we went forth to meet king Solomon and crowned him with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals. And in the day of the gladness of his heart. When he took us up into his chariot, the bottom whereof was of silver and the sides thereof lined with love for the daughters of Jerusalem and we rode in covenant safety and in royal pomp with him.

When the king came into his palace and he said, Let the fatlings be killed, eat, You ate abundantly and drank abundantly, O Beloved! And we ate of all His sweet wines and of all His luscious fruits which He had laid up in store for His Beloved till we said, Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick with love, His left hand is under my head

and His right arm does embrace me. Brethren, we have leaped right out of the body to embrace Himat least so we have thoughtfrom excessive joy and that, too, when there was nothing in the world to give us contentment! When our prospects were blighted, when our health has failed us, when the sun of this world was quenched. Then He came forth, even He who is All in All and lifted the light of His countenance upon us.

You have had, I hope, some few of these in-flowings of love when you have eaten angels food, when you have forgotten the dry bread and moldy crusts that you had in the wallet of your experience and did eat the new corn of the kingdom and did drink the new wine with your Blessed and Divine Master. You no longer traveled in rumbling chariots but your soul was like the swiftly-speeding chariots of Amminadib. You flew after your Beloved in transport so divine that tongue can never tell and lips can never describe the sacred rapture. Yes, Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

We have but a few minutes remaining for the second head which might very well demand an entire discourse.   
II. There was, secondly, AN AFFECTIONATE DESIRE LEADING TO APPROPRIATE EFFORT. This affectionate desire was that others might have fellowship with us. Having found the honey, we cannot eat it alone. Having tasted that the Lord is gracious, it is one of the first instincts of the new-born nature to send us out crying, So everyone that thirsts, come to the waters and he that has no money come, buy and eat. You all come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. We would that others had fellowship with us in all respects except our sins. For we can say with the Apostle, I would to God that you were not only almost, but altogether such as I am, except these bonds!  
But these bonds of sin we would not wish that any should bear. Brethren, we would that you had fellowship with us in the peace we feel with God our Father, in the access which we have to His Throne, in the confidence which we have in the Truth of His promise, in the overflowing joys we experience when He manifests Himself to us! We would that you had our hopesthat you could look forward to death and the grave with the same delight as we canexpecting to be transformed into His image and to see Him as He is! We wish you had our faith, only more of itthat you might have the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen!   
We wish that you had fellowship with us in prevailing prayer, that you knew how to cast your burdens upon the Lordthat you understood how to bring every blessing from on high by pleading the merits of the Savior! We wish to gather up all in one, that in everything which is lovely and of good repute, in everything which is happy, ennobling, divine and everlasting you might be made partakers and have fellowship with us!   
And this desire leads the child of God to make use of an appropriate effortand what is that? It is to tell to others what he has seen and what he has heard. Now I shall try to use that means this morning, for I think, perhaps, the illustration of fact may be better than any illustration of words. Do I not address many here who never had any fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ? Perhaps you hardly know what it means and when you hear what it means, you attach no importance to it. It is nothing to you to talk with God. You never dream of such a thing as speaking to Christ and Christ speaking to you. Ah, if you knew its sweetness you would never, never be content till you had ityou would thirst with such a thirst that you would never ceasebut thirst till you drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate.   
Well now, Soul, that you may have fellowship with us in these things, let me tell you what I have heard and known and seenfor this is what the text tells me to speak of. I have known and seen that Christ is One who is ready to forgive youable to forgive you. Oh, shall I never forget when I first went to Him, laden with iniquity and black with sin. I was bowed down by five years of conviction, which had rendered my fears despair and my doubts had gathered till they seemed impenetrable to the light! I went to Him and I thought He would reject me.   
I thought Him to be hard and unwilling to forgive. But I only looked on Him, only looked at Himone glimpse of a tearful eye at a crucified Savior and at that moment without a pause the burden rolled away. The guilt was gone, peace of mind took the place of despair and I could sing, Im forgiven, Im forgiven! I had many sins, but He took them all away. Some of those sins were deeply aggravated. I would not tell them in a human ear but they were gone, in one instant, toonot because of any merit, but gone freely and graciously of His own abundant mercyaccording to the riches of His loving kindness in Christ Jesus the Lord.   
Now what we have seen and heard we do testifythat you also may have fellowship with us, for, Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. Still He is willing to receive you, He is able to forgive you. Laden with guilt and full of woe, come to that full relief! Make no tarrying! Linger not in all the plain! Let not your heavy heart tempt you to refrain yourself from Him! He stands with open arms ready to pardonwith open heart, willing to receive. No, He runs! Methinks I see Him. Though you are yet far off He runs and meets you. He falls upon your neck. He kisses you. He says, Take off his rags, clothe him in the best robe. Put shoes on his feet and a ring upon his hand and let us eat and be merry, for the dead is alive and the lost is found.   
But I testify yet again, Soul, that after you have once believed in Christ and received your pardon, you will find Him to be willing to keep your soul from sin. I thought that even if Christ forgave me, it would be impossible for me to break off evil habits and the lusts of the flesh. And I have known many scores of men who were swearers and they said they should never be able to rinse their mouths of their oaths. They were drunkards, too and they said that drink would get the upper hand of them yet.   
But we have seen and we have testified that when we believe in Christ, He changes the heart. He renews the nature, makes us hate the things we loved before and love the things we once despised. We have seen it and we testify it. O drunkard, He can make you sober! Unchaste man, He can make you virtuous! There is no lust which His arm cannot subdue, no mighty sin which He cannot drive out. He shall make you run in the way of His commandments with delightyou shall neither turn aside to the right hand nor to the left.   
But says another, if He did uphold for awhile I should never be able to hold on. What I have seen and heard, that I do declare unto you. Blessed be His name, I am yet young in grace but He has been faithful to me. The child believed and the child now testifies that God is faithful and has not once forsaken nor left him, but preserved him. I half wish this morning that gray hairs were on my head that I might give force to this testimony of what I have seen and heard. I remember well, when declaring that God was a faithful God, my good old grandfather who was sitting behind me in the pulpit. He came forward and said, My grandson can tell you that, but I can bear witness to it. I have passed my three score years and ten but still He has been faithful and true

*Even down to old age, all His people shall prove His sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;   
And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn, Like lambs they shall still in His bosom be borne.*   
We testify this to you that you may have fellowship with us, for our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. I have this much to say and if I should never preach again and if this might be the last discourse I should ever deliver in this world, I would wish to make this my final testimony. There is that joy in religion that I never dreamed of. He is a good Master whom I have served. That is a blessed faith which He has bestowed upon me and yields such blessed hope, that *I would not change my blessed estate   
For all the world calls good or great.*   
And if I had to die like a dog and there were no hereafter, I would still prefer to be a Christian and the humblest Christian ministerto being a king or an emperor. For I am persuaded there are more delights in Christmore joy in one glimpse of His face than is to be found in all the praises of this harlot-world and in all the delights which it can yield to us in its sunniest and brightest days. And I am persuaded that what He has been till now He will be to the end. And where He has begun a good work He will carry it on.   
Yes, Sinners, Christs Cross is a hope that we can die bywhich can take us down to the grave without a fearwhich can make us short in the midst of the swelling waters of Jordancan make us transported with delight even when we are bowed down with physical pain or nervous distress. There is that in Christ, I say, which can make us triumph over the gloomiest terrors of grim death and make us rejoice in the darkest of tempests which can blacken the grave.   
Trust! Trust in the Lord, for our testimony and that of all His people is that He is worthy to be trusted. Wait on the Lordbe of good courage and He shall strengthen your heartwait, I say, on the Lord.

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HOW TO BECOME FULL OF JOY   
NO. 3272

A SERMON   
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
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And these things write we unto you that your joy may be full. 1 John 1:4.

IT is a wonderful proof of our Savior s deep attachment to His people that having made their salvation sure, He is also anxious concerning their present state of mind. He wishes that His people should be not only safe, but happythat they should not be merely saved, but that they should rejoice in His salvation! It does not delight your Master for you to bow your heads as does the bulrush, or for you to go mourning all your days. He would have you rejoice, for again and again by His Apostles does He exhort you to rejoice in Him. We will go at once to our text. Let our first point be

I. A CHRISTIANS JOY NEEDS LOOKING AFTER. If it were not so, our text would not have been written, for we would not have had John writing to promote what would stand and progress well enough of itself. John seems to put the whole of the Apostolic band with himself into the verse when he says, These things write we unto you that your joy may be full, as if their joy would not be full unless Inspired Apostles should be commissioned of God to write in order to promote it. The Christians joy needs looking after.

I do not doubt but that you have the proofs of this in yourselves, in your eternal circumstances. You cannot always rejoice, because although your treasure is not of this world, yet sometimes your affliction is here. Poverty is sometimes too heavy a cross for you to sing under it. Sickness casts you on a bed upon which you have not as yet learned to rejoice. There will be losses in business, disappointment of fond hopes. The forsaking of friends, the cruelty of foes and any of these may prove the winter nights and nip the green leaves of your joys and make them fade and fall from your bough. You cannot always rejoice, but sometimes there is a necessity that you should be, in heaviness through manifold temptations. None of us, I suppose, are so perfectly happy as to be without some external trials and our joy will, therefore, need to be looked after lest these floods should come in and quench it. We shall need, indeed, to cry to Him who alone can keep the flame burning, to trim our lamps and supply them with fresh oil.

I suppose, too, that you have that within which makes you feel that it is no easy matter to maintain perpetual joy. If you have not, I have. Sometimes there will come deep depressions of heartyou can scarcely tell why. That strong wing on which once you could mount as an eagle, will seem to flap the air in vain. That heart of yours which once flew upwards as the lark rising from amidst the dew will lie cold and heavy as a stone on the earth. You will find it hard, indeed, to rejoice. Besetting sins, too, will cripple your holy mirth so that when, like David before the Ark, you, too, would dance for very joy, internal corruptions will make it almost impossible! Beloved, it is not easy to fight evil in our own souls and to sing at the same time. Christian soldiers we know, ought to do it and march to battle with songs of triumph, nerving their spirits to deeds of desperate valor, but oh, how often the garment rolled in dust and blood compels them to stay for a while the shout of certain victory. Trials from withinfrom Satans suggestions, from the uprising of the black fountains of corruptionare not easy to bear and we have reason enough, if our joy is to remain full, to be guarded and strengthened by a power not our own, even from God Himself!

And yet, have we not learned, Beloved in Jesus Christ, how exceedingly necessary it is that our joy should be full? When that joy is full, we are more than a match for all the devils of Hell! But when it is weak and low, then we tremble and, like Peter, can be vanquished by a pert little maid! When our joy in the Lord is at its fullest, we can bear that the fig tree should not blossom, and that the herd should be cut off from the stall, and the flocks from the fieldsbut how heavy our trials become when that joy has fled! When we can see the Savior s face without a veil between, then temptation has no power over us, for all the glittering gems that sin can offer by way of pleasure are eclipsed in tender brilliance and Divine attraction by the heavenly Pearl of Joy in the dear Savior which we posses! Than we can sing with intense truthfulness

*I would not change my blest estate   
For all the world calls good or great!   
And while my faith can keep her hold   
I envy not the sinners gold.*

Thus the Christian, by his holy joy out-braves temptation and is strong to endure. Why, Christian, you can do anything when the joy of the Lord is within you! Like a roe, or a young hart, you leap over mountains and make them as stepping stones across the brook! The heaviest tempest that can lower over you cannot chill or dismay your courage, for your strong wings pierce it and mount above it all into the clear blue sky of fellowship with your God! But when this joy is gone, then we grow weak, and

*Like Samson when his hair was lost*

*Meet the Philistines to our cost.*   
We become victims to temptation and if we do not yield to it, yet it harasses us and robs us of the power with which we once glorified God. The Christians joy, then, needs looking after. If any of you have lost that joy of the Lord, I pray you do not think that your loss is a small one. I have heard of a minister who once said that a Christian lost nothing by his sinand then he addedexcept his joy. Well, what else would you have him lose? Is not that quite enough? To lose the light of my Fathers Countenance, to lose my full assurance of my interest in Christis to lose my best and purest delightand is this not a loss quite great enough? Let us walk prayerfully, let us walk carefully so that we may possess unbroken peace and joy to the fullest. Let none of us sit down in misery and be content to be there! There is such a thing as becoming habituated to melancholy. My own tendency is sometimes to get into that state of mind, but, by the Grace of God, I shake it off, for I know it will not do. If we once begin to give way to this foolishness, we shall soon forge chains for ourselves that we cannot easily break. Take down your harp from the willow, Believer! Do not let your fingers neglect the wellknown strings. Come, let us be happy and joyful! If we have looked sad for a while, let us now be brightened by thoughts of Christ! At any rate, let us not be satisfied until we have shaken off this lethargy and misery, and have once again come into the proper and healthy state in which a child of God should always be found, namely, a state of spiritual joy!

II. Again, A CHRISTIANS JOY LIES MAINLY IN REVEALED THINGS. If this were not so, it would not find its fitting sustenance in Inspired Words. If the Christians joy consisted in the wine vat, the feast, or his riches, John would not have written as he doesthen it would only be necessary that the vineyard should yield plenteous clusters, that the harvest should be crowned with abundance and that God should prosper trade and send to the merchant all that his heart could wish. But the Christians deepest and best joy does not depend on these things. They cannot satisfy his nobler nature. He thanks God for all earthly joys, but he cannot feast his soul upon themhe needs something better. When John writes, These things write we unto you that your joy may be full, there is nothing about prosperity in this world, but all about fellowship with Christ, from which I infer that everything revealed to us in the Scriptures has for its supreme purpose the filling up of the Believers joy!

But what is the Scriptures great theme? Is it not, first and foremost, concerning Christ Jesus? Take this Book and distil it into one wordand that one word will be Jesus! The Book, itself, is but the body of Christ and we may look upon all its pages as the swaddling bands of the infant Savior, for if we unroll the Scripture, we come upon Jesus Christ Himself. Now, Beloved, does not Jesus Christ make your joy full? I trust we do not sing a lie when we sometimes say in our song

*Jesus, the very thought of You   
With sweetness fills my breast,   
But sweeter far Your face to see,   
And in Your Presence rest.*

JesusMan, yet God. Jesusallied to us in ties of bloodoh, here is a reason for holy mirth! Here is Christmas all the year round! There is great joy to us in His nativity, for by it man has been taken by God into union with Himself! Jesus the Savior! Here is death to the groans of painan end to the moans of despair! He comes to break the bars of brass and to cut the gates of iron in sunder

*Jesus, the name that charms our fears,   
That bids our sorrows cease,   
Tis music in the sinners ears:   
Tis life, tis health, tis peace!*

Scripture, surely, has well taken its cue, for it makes us joyful! It has done well to make Christ its head and front.   
The same is true of all that is written in this Book. Let me divide it into three partsdoctrinal, experimental and practical. All these are written that our joy may be full.   
I think I could prove, if there were time, that all the Doctrines have a tendency, when properly understood and received, to foster Christian joy. Let me mention one or two of them. There is that ancient, much-abused, but most delightful Doctrine of Electionthat before all worlds Jesus chose His people and looked with eyes of Infinite Love upon them, as He saw them in the glass of futurity. What? Christian! Can you believe yourself loved with an everlasting love and not rejoice?   
Surely it was the Doctrine of Election that made David dance before the Ark. He told Michal when she sneered at him, I danced before the Lord that chose me before your father Saul. Surely to be chosen of God, to be selected from the mass of mankind and made the favorites of the heart of Deitysurely this ought to make us, in our very worst and dullest moments, sing for joy! Then there are the other Doctrines which, like living waters, flow from this sacred and hidden fountain. Take, for instance, that of Redemptionbought with a price, a price whose efficacy is not questionablebought so that now we are Jesus property, never to be lost! Bought not with that general redemption which holds before the sinners eyes something, somewhere in the clouds, which may or may not bebut bought with an effectual Redemption which saves every bloodbought soul because He has power to save to the uttermost all who come to Him! Oh, here is an occasion for song!   
*Jesus bought me when a stranger   
Wandering from the fold of God!   
He to save my soul from danger   
Bought me with His precious blood!*   
Can you see the blood-mark on yourself, and not, rejoice, O Christian? Surely your joy ought to be full, indeed!   
Once again, think of the Doctrine of Justification, namely that through faith in Christs Redemption every Believer is accepted in the Beloved, and stands, clad in Jesus righteousness, as fair in Gods sight as if he had never sinnedwhy, surely, here is a theme again for overflowing joy!   
Take the Doctrine of Communionthat we are one with Jesus Christ   
*By eternal union one!*   
Members of His body, of His flesh and of His boneswhat? Not sing after this? How sweet the music ought to be where this is the theme! And then to mention but one where there are so many handfuls of pearlsthere is the Doctrine of Eternal Preservation and Glory. You are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation! You shall be with Him where He is, you shall behold His Glory! Whom He justified, them He also glorified. Ah, can you think of this and go up in spirit to the Throne where Christ has made you sit in His own Person and not begin the song that shall have no end? Truly, I need but remind you of these Truths of God! You can think them out for yourselvesevery Doctrine to the Christian is a source of joy!   
Again, the Scripture is given to us to produce in us experiences, every one of which is meant to promote our joy. Why, says one, all Christian experience is not joyful! I grant you that, but remember that all a Christians experience is not Christian experience. Christians experience a great deal because they are not such Christians as they ought to be. Beloved, there is a mourning which comes from the Spirit of God, but it is a joyous mourning, if I may use so strange a phrase.   
Sorrow for sin is a sweet sorrow, do not desire to escape it! I think Rowland Hill was right when he said that his only regret in going to Heaven would be that he could no more repent. True evangelical repentance is food to the saintly soul! I do not know, Beloved, when I am more perfectly happy than when I am weeping for sin at the foot of the Cross, for that is the safest place in which I can stand. I like that verse *Dissolved by Your goodness,   
I fall to the ground   
And weep to the praise of the mercy   
Ive found.*   
Remember, too, that though with regard to things of this world you may have sore trial, in every drop of bitterness your Father puts in your cup there is a whole sea of sweetness beneath. Trials wean us from the world and surely that is a most blessed thing! Oh, to come to Christ and find my all in Him! If we had no idols in children, friends, wealth, ourselves, we would not need half the trials we have! Foolish loves make rods for foolish backs! God save us from this, and when He does, though the means may seem to be severe, they are intended to intensify our joy by destroying the cause of our worst sorrows. But beyond all this, there is much of a true Christians experience that is, and must be, all joy. To have faith in Christ, to rest in Him, is not that joy? To stand here and sing from ones heart   
*I know that safe with Him remains,   
Protected by His power   
What Ive committed to His hands,   
Till the decisive hour.*   
Is not that joy? Or even that humble note   
*Nothing in my hands I bring,   
Simply to Your Cross I cling.*   
Why that has the germ of Heaven in it!   
Hope, too, is part of the Christians experience, and what a fountain of joy is there!   
*The hope when days and years are past, We all shall meet in Heaven at last.*   
This is an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, entering into that which is within the veil. But above all things, and this is what is chiefly meant in the text, the experience of Christian fellowship is greatly promotive of Christian joy. John truly says, That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you that you, also, may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This is the golden center of the target. Fellowship with Christ is the fountain of joy. Other joys may help to fill it, but this fills of itself, alone, up to the very brim, of fullness of joy. Have you not felt it? I know you havewhen you could have had no more joy, for you were full. A fullness of joy is all sorts of blessing. If I were to so fill a glass with water that the gentlest touch would make it run over, that would be a picture of the joy the Christian sometimes has and should more constantly possess. When such is known, He is   
*Rich to all intents of bliss   
Since you O God, are mine!*   
It is not every man who can go home tonight and say, Whom have I in Heaven but You? And there is none that I desire on earth compared with You! I have You and, therefore, I need no more. Go you, who crave for joy, and traverse the wide world round in the vain search for itmy soul shall sit down at the foot of the Cross and say, I have found it here! Go you, like the swallows that cross the purple seas to find another summer, now that yours is over, but my soul shall abide where it is and find no chilling winter her joys to mar! At the Cross our sun is at its solstice and stands still forever, never moving, without parallax, or shadows of a tropicalways the samebright, full and glorious!   
But I said that the Bible was also full of practicality. I can only say a brief word or two on that point. Every precept and command of the Word of God is meant to help our happiness. Do yourself no harm, is the very essence and law of all the Ten Commandments. It is love speaking in the imperative mood, saying You shall notbut all for our good. It is Gods way of saying, Dont touch the fire or you will be burned. Dont do that which will injure, hurt or destroy your joy of soul! God never denies His children anything that is really for their good. His commands are freedoms rules, never fetters to the loving Christian. Let us think of one or two. Love one another, that is the first. Well now, when are you happiest? When you feel bitter, spiteful and resentful towards others, or when you feel charity towards the sinful and unworthy, and deep love towards your fellow servants? I know, at any rate, when I feel happiest. There are some persons who seem to have been reared on vinegarwho wherever they go, see some defeatand where this cannot be discovered will insinuate, Ah, well, but we do not know what they do in secret. Or, we do not know their motives. But those who love one another can see much to rejoice in everywhere.   
Again, we are told in the Scripture to serve the Lord with diligence, and is it not the diligent soul that is made fat? It is the do-nothing people, generally, who say   
*Lord, what a wretched land is this!   
That yields us no supplies.*   
Indeed it ought to be a wretched land to lazy people! They who will not work, neither should they eat. And this refers even more to spiritual sustenance than to material food! If in the winter you complain of the cold, get to the plow and you will soon glow with warmth! But sit down to moan and complain and blow on your blue fingers, you shall feel the cold more and more! Holy activity is the mother of holy joy!   
Growth in Grace, too, is a fountain of true delight. Never is a Believer happier than when he grows in Grace. To stand still, to contract ones selfit is like forcing a Chinese foot into a Chinese shoeit is torture to the understanding! But to have a mind capable of always learning. To sometimes be able to admit, I was wrong. To know you know more today than yesterday because the Spirit has been teaching you, why this is joy! This is pure delight and such as God would have us know! So I venture to repeat that all the writings of Scripturedoctrinal, experimental, or practicalall have for their objective that which John declares in these words, that your joy may be full.

Upon the next point we must be very brief, but strive to be very practical. We have shown that the Christians joy needs looking after, and that it is chiefly fed and maintained upon the things revealed in the Scriptures. If this is so, then   
III. LET US CONSTANTLY READ THE SCRIPTURES! Let us read them, I would say, in preference to other books. There is a great deal of reading, nowadays, and a great deal of that is a kind of chaff-cutting and nothing more. Why, even in religious newspapers and magazines they cannot command readers and make them pay, so they say, unless they include a religious novel! Peoples minds must be in a strange state when they can relish nothing but these whipped creams and juvenile syllabubs. If they were robust and healthy, with a good appetite for Divine things, they would demand something far more solid and satisfying. You will never grow sturdy men and women on such poor stuff as thatyou may rear lackadaisical imitations, but the thinking soul with something in it, the Christian woman who serves God and is a true helper to the Christian ministry, the young man who is fired with the longing to proclaim Christ and win souls to Himmust have stronger nutriments than that which modern religious journalism ladles out so plentifully! Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, read the Bible! Read the Bible and these things that enfeeble will lose all their attraction for you!   
If the worldling must have these things, let him. But if you have a soul that is above rubbish and has been accustomed to live on great, solid and substantial Truths of God, you scarcely need that I should say, Search the Scriptures diligently and your joy shall spread and deepen! Be this your happy confession   
*Lord, I have made Your Word my choice, My lasting heritage.   
There shall my noblest powers rejoice   
My warmest thoughts engage.*   
We say further, prefer the Scriptures even to all religious books. We say this of the best book and sermons. We do our best to teach you Gods Truth, but we are like gold-beaterswe get a little bit of the Truth of God and we hammer it out so thin. Some of us are mighty hands at this and can make a tiny fragment of the golden Truth of God cover an acre of talk! But the best of usthose who really do seek to bring out the Doctrines of Grace and love, are but poor workers at it. Read the Bible more and do not care so much about us. If my sermons kept people from reading the Bible for themselves, I would like to see the whole stock in a blaze and burned to ashes! But if they serve as finger-posts, pointing to the Scriptures and saying, Read this, and this, and this, then I am thankful to have printed them. But if they keep you from your Bibles, burn them, burn them, burn them! Do not let them overlay the Scriptures, but lie beneath them, for that is their proper place. Keep you first to Gods revealed Word.   
Let me here say that when you read the Bible, remember there are several ways of doing it. There is the superficial readingbeing satisfied with the mere letter of it. There is, however, a diving into it, a going deep down into the soul of it! Read it in natural sections. What would Miltons Paradise Lost be if you only read one line a day and began at the middle and went back to the first line? You would never understand His meaning! Read the Bible through. Read Johns Gospelnot a bit of John and then a snippet of Markbut read John through and find out what John is at. Remember that Matthewthough he speaks of the same Savior as Markyet he does it not in the same style, nor for the same purpose as he. There is a very distinct purpose in each Gospel. Matthew tells of Jesus, the Kingthe parables he records all hold references to the King. Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened. Mark shows us Christ as the Servant devoted and tireless in His activity of loving toil. Luke as the Man Christ Jesus, full of human tenderness and sympathy, and his parables begin, A certain Man. John reveals to us Christ in His true Deity and Godheadand gloriously does he preface it, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Get hold of what the Books mean and may the Holy Spirit show you the aim of each writerthe one Book, and that studied, not scampered through and you shall stand firm where others fall. And now, lastly, if the Scriptures are intended to bring joy to Believers, the question comes up   
IV. ARE WE ALL BELIEVERS? IS THE BOOK A SOURCE OF JOY TO US? There are significant pronounsweyouyour. Who is that? Is that you? Does it come to you and make your joy full? If you do not know or much care about it, then it does not speak to you. If you find plenty of joy elsewhere and it does not speak to you, it will not force itself and intrude upon you. It gives you no joy because you have enough elsewhere. They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But others of you long for this joy! You are uneasy, unsatisfied, cannot find a tree in which to build your nest. Oh, dear Friend! I am so glad! May you grow weary and heavy-laden of spirit, for then I have a whisper for youJesus Christ came to call such to Him! Yes, the world may have spurned and scorned you, but Jesus will receive you! Your companions say you are mopish and miserablecome to Him and He will warmly welcome you! He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax   
*Weary souls that wander wide   
From the central source of bliss,   
Turn to Jesus Crucified   
Look to His dear wounds and live!*   
Oh, if you are sick of the world, come to my Master! May God the Holy Spirit sanctify this sickness and bring you to Jesus because you have nowhere else to go. Jesus will not spurn even the devils castaways! The sweepings of humanity who have gone so far that their friends reject them, Jesus Christ will accept and bless!   
May He accept me! May He accept you! And then in Him our joy shall be full!   
The Lord bless you evermore! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **JOHN 14:15-31.**

Verse 15. If you love Me, keep My commandments. We cannot expect the Holy Spirit to dwell with us unless we are obedient to the commands of Christ. Our Savior here tells us much about the Spirit of Truth, but He begins with this test of our love to Him, If you love Me, keep My commandments.

16. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever. Not a different Comforter, but the Comforter who is now with us, is of the same Nature and works after the same manner as the Lord Jesus, Himself, who was our first Advocate, Helper, Paraclete, Comforter! I give you these four words instead of one because they are all wrapped up in the original word, Paracletethat He may abide with you forever and ever. The Lord Jesus could not abide with us foreverit was expedient for Him that He should go to Heaven to prepare a place for us. But the Holy Spirit will not go. He will remain in this dispensation even to the end of itThat He may abide with you forever.

17. Even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees Him not, neither knows Him; but you know Him; for He dwells with you, and shall be in you. The world knows nothing about the Holy Spiritit can hear the Gospel, it can hear the outward Word of Godbut the living, mystic, inward Spirit, the world knows nothing of.

18, 19. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world sees Me no more; but you see Me: because I live, you shall live also. While I am away, the Holy Spirit shall be your Comforter. You shall not be like orphans without father or friend. Jesus will come a second time. This is our joyful hope, but meanwhile, while He is away, we are not without a Comforter. Yet a little while, and the world sees Me no more. What a wonderful thing! The children of God always see Jesus spiritually. But you see Me: because I live, you shall live also. There is life in a look and our continued sight of Christ brings us continued life through Christ! Because He lives, there is a loving, living, lasting union between us and Christ.

20. At that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. Three wonderful unions! Christ in the Father, His people in Christ, Christ in His people! If you are instructed of the Lord, you will understand this text. This is such knowledge as the Universities cannot teach! It is such knowledge as the most learned doctors cannot attain to by themselves. Only the Spirit of God can teach us these things.

21. He that has My commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves Me and he that loves Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him. He must have obedience. Christ cannot come and comfortably manifest Himself to those who are living out of order and disregarding His words. Take heed, children of God, of disobedience! It is a discipline of the Divine family that if we disobey, we shall lose the comfortable Presence of our Lord. I will manifest Myself to him.

22, 23. Judas said unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man loves Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him. Christ and His Father dwell with obedient people! We will dwell with him, and make our abode with him. Oh, that we might carefully watch our thoughts, our words, our acts, lest we grieve our Lord! He will manifest Himself to us when we yield ourselves to Him. When we obey His will, it will be His will to honor us with His constant Presence!

24. He that loves Me not keeps not My sayings. There is much talk of loyalty to Christ, but the teachings of Christ are despised. The teachings of His Apostles are the teachings of Christ. They are but a prolongation and exposition of what Christ taught. In rejecting them we reject Christ. He will not have it that we can be loyal to Him and yet refuse His teaching.

24. And the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Fathers who sent Me. It is a wonderful denial of originality on the part of Christ. If anybody could have spoken his own word, it was surely the Christ of God! But He was a Messenger, and He delivered His message. Now, if it is so with Christ, how much more so with us who are very inferior messengers? We ought to be very careful that we do not deliver our own thoughts, or suggestions, excogitations and philosophies. The word which you hear is not Mine, (that I can most emphatically say), but the Fathers who sent Me. You see, when we deliver a message which is not ours, but the Fathers, we feel safe about it. We feel sure of its success, whereas, if we were the makers of it, we would often question whether we had not told you falselybut if we can fall back upon the Word of God, and prove it from what the Father has said, then do we feel we are no longer responsible.

25, 26. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you. That is the teaching. The Holy Spirit does not reveal anything fresh to us. He brings to our remembrance what has already been said and written in the Inspired Word. Whereas the Book conveys to us the outward sense, the Holy Spirit conveys to us the inner meaning. Not the embodiment of the Truth of God you have in this Book, but the Truth, itself, dealing with the conscience, and heart, and spirit must be laid home by the Author of the Book, by the Holy Spirit, Himself!

27. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you. Have you got it, Brothers and Sisters? Are you at peace at this moment? I am very much troubled, says one. Well, you are to have tribulation here, but you are to have peace with it. In the world you shall have tribulation, but in Christ you shall have peace. If you have got the bitter herbs, do not be satisfied with bitter herbsask for the Paschal Lamb.

27. Not as the world gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Come, tell your trouble to your Lord. Ask the Holy Spirit to exercise the office of Comforter upon you now at this very moment.

28. You have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, I go unto the Father: for My Father is greater than I. The Lord Jesus had taken a subordinate place. He had become the Servant of the Father, the Messenger for the Father, but He was going back to reassume His Glory. That ought to be a subject of joy to us! Let us bless Jesus that He is not here. If He were here in His former state He would be in His humiliationbut now He has gone to His Glory. Let us rejoice in this!

29. And now I have told you before it came to pass, that when it is come to pass, you might believe. Jesus warned His disciples of all that was to happen in His death and in His departure. I believe that the Spirit of God often gives inward warnings to Gods people of troubles that are to comemonitions so that they may be prepared for the trouble when it comes and may feel as if He had told them before it came to pass.

30. Hereafter I will not talk much with you, for the Prince of this world comes, and has nothing in Me. He would have very few words for He was going to the bloody sweat and scourging and deathHis words might well be few, for His actions would speak more loudly than words!

31. But that the world may know that I love the Father and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, Let us go from here. And they left the supper table to go to the garden, the garden of His agony! Let us be willing to go wherever God calls us.

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FULLNESS OF JOY OUR PRIVILEGE   
NO. 3406

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 14, 1914.   
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.   
And these things we write unto you, that your joy may be full. 1 John 1:4.

VERY closely does the Apostle John resemble his Lord in the motive that prompted him to write this Epistle! You remember how Christ said in His last discourse to His disciples on the eve of His passion, These things have I spoken unto you that your joy may be fulland how He counseled them, Ask and receive that your joy may be fulland how He prayed to the Father for them, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves. Here, then, the beloved disciple, moved by the Spirit of God, reflects and follows out the same gracious purposeThese things we write unto you, that your joy may be full. What an evidence of our Saviors deep attachment to His people that He is not content with having made their ultimate salvation sure, but He is anxious concerning their present state of mind! He delights that His people should not only be safe, but happy! Not merely saved, but rejoicing in their salvation! It does not please your Savior for you to hang your head as the bulrush and go mourning all your days. He would have you rejoice in Him always and for this end He has made provision and to this end He has given us precepts. Therefore it appears

I. THAT THE CHRISTIANS JOY NEEDS LOOKING AFTER. We should not find the Apostle John writing to promote that which, in the natural order of things, would be sure to occur. In this object of pastoral anxiety, he seems to include the whole of the Apostolic College with himself when he says, These things we write unto you that your joy might be full, as if your joy would not be full unless Inspired Apostles should be commissioned of God to further it. Your joy then, I say, needs looking after. I do not doubt but you have very suggestive proofs of this, yourselves, in your external circumstances. You cannot always rejoice because, although your treasure is not in this world, your affliction is. Poverty will sometimes be too heavy a cross for you to sing under. Sickness sometimes casts you upon a bed on which you have not, as yet, learned to rejoice. Losses befall you in business, failures of hope, forsaking of friends and cruelty of foesand any of these may prove like winter nights which nip the green leaves of your joy and make them fade and fall off your branches. You cannot always rejoice, but sometimes there is a necessity that you should be in heaviness through manifold temptations. I suppose none of you are so perfectly happy as to be without some trial. Your joy will need to be looked after, then, lest floods should come in and quench it. You will need to cry to Him who alone can keep its flame burning, to trim it with fresh oil.   
I suppose, too, that you have moods and susceptibilities which make it no easy matter to maintain perpetual joy. If you have not, I have. Sometimes there will be deep depression of spirityou can scarcely tell why. That strong wing with which you mounted like an eagle will seem to flap the air in vain. That heart of yours, which once flew upwards like the lark rising from amidst the dew, will lie cold and heavy like a stone upon the earth, and you will find it hard to rejoice.   
Besides, sin will stop the beginning of your holy mirth, and when you would dance for joy, like David before the Ark, some internal corruption will come to hamper your delight. Ah, Beloved, it is not easy to sing while you fight. Christian soldiers ought to do itthey should march to battle with songs of triumph, that their spirits may be nerved to desperate valor against their inbred corruptions, but sometimes the garment rolled in blood and the dust, and the turmoil will stop for awhile the looked for shout of victory. With trials many and manifoldtrials from the thorns and briars of this fallen world, trials from Satanic suggestions, trials from the uprisings of black fountains of corruption within your own polluted heartsyou have, indeed, need that your joy, to keep it full and flowing at high tide, should be guarded and supplied by an influence above your ownand fed from a celestial spring!   
I dare say you have learned by this time, my Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, how exceedingly necessary it is that this joy of ours should be abundant. When full of joy, we are more than a match for the adversary of souls, but when our joy is gone, fear slackens our sinews, and, like Peter, we may be vanquished by a little maid! When our joy in the Lord is at its fullest, we can bear that the fig tree should not blossom, that the herd should be cut off from the stall and the flocks from the field, but how heavy our sorrows are to bear, how impatient we become when the chains that link Heaven and earth are disarranged, or the communication in any way intercepted. If we can see the Saviors face without a cloud between, then temptation has no power over us, and all the glittering shams that sin can offer us are eclipsed in their brilliance by the true gold of spiritual joy which we have in our possession. Oh, what rapture!   
Thus the Christian, by his holy joy, outbraves temptation and is strong to endure a martyrdom of vice. Why, you can do anything when the joy of the Lord is within you! Like a roe or a young hart, you leapt over the mountains of Bether. The mountains cannot appall youyou make a stepping-stone across the brook. The heaviest tempests which lower over you cannot chill nor dampen your courage, for your song pierces it, and your soul mounts above it all into the clear blue of fellowship with your God! But when this joy is gone, then are we weak, like Samson when his hair was shorn. We become the slaves of temptation and if we do not yield to its treacherous enticements, at any rate, it harasses us, and so enervates the power with which we were known to glorify our God. The Christians joy needs looking to. If any of you have lost the joy of the Lord, I pray you do not think it a small loss. I have heard of a minister who said that a Christian lost nothing by sinand then he addedexcept his joy. And one replied, Well, and what else would you have him lose? That is quite enough! To lose the light of my Fathers Countenance. To lose my full assurance of interest in Christ. To lose my Heaven belowoh, this is a loss great enough! Let us walk carefully, let us walk prayerfully so that we may realize perpetual joy and peace even to the fullest! Let none of us be content to sit down in misery. There is such a thing as getting habituated to melancholy. My bias is toward that state of mind, but, by the Grace of God, I resist it. If we begin to give way to this foolishness, we shall soon weave forged chains for ourselves which we cannot readily snap. Take your harp from the willows, Believers. Do not let your fingers forget the well-known strings. Come, let us praise Him. If we have looked black in the face for awhile, let us brighten up with the thoughts of Christ! At any rate, let us not be easy till we have shaken off this lethargic distemper and once again come into the normal state of health in which a child of God should be foundthat of spiritual joy!

II. THE CHRISTIANS JOY LIES MAINLY IN THINGS REVEALED, otherwise it would not find its fitting sustenance in Inspired Words.  
If the Christians joy lay in the wine vat and in the barn, in the landed estate, or the hoarded purse, it would only be necessary that the vineyard should yield plenteous clusters, that the harvest should be crowned with abundance, that peace should prevail and trade should prosperand forthwith the heritor and the merchant have all that heart could wish. But the Christians joy is not touched by these vulgar things. These commonplace satisfactions do not suit the noble mind of the Believer! He thanks God for all the bounties of the basket and the barn, but he cannot feast his soul upon stocks or fruits that perish with the using. He needs something better! The Apostle John seems to tell us this when he says, And these things write I unto younothing about prosperity in this world, but all about fellowship with ChristAnd these things we write unto you, that your joy may be full. From which I infer that everything which is revealed to us in Scripture has for its intention the filling up of the Christians joy.   
What is Scripture all about, then? Is it not, first and foremost, concerning Jesus Christ? Take this Book and distil it into one word, and I will tell you what it isit is JESUS! All this is but the body of Christ. I may look upon all these pages as the swaddling-bands of the infant Savior, and if you unroll Scripture, you come to Jesus Christ, Himself. Now, Beloved, is not Jesus Christ the sum and summit of your joy? I hope we do not utter a falsehood when we sing, as it is our custom *Jesus the very thought of Thee,   
With rapture fills my breast,   
Tho sweeter far Your face to see,   
And in Your bosom rest.*   
JesusMan yet Godallied to us in ties of blood. Why, here is mirth! Here is Christmas all the year round! In the Nativity of the Savior there is joy for usthe Babe born in BethlehemGod has taken Man into communion with Himself! Jesus the Saviorhere is release from the groans of sin! Here is an end to the means of despair! He comes to break the bars of brass and to cut the gates of iron in sunder   
*Jesus, the name that charms our fears,   
That bids our sorrows cease!   
Tis music in the sinners ears,   
Tis life, tis health, tis peace!*   
Scripture, surely, has well taken its cue! Would it make us joyful, it has done well to make Christ its head and front.   
All the doctrines of the Bible have a tendency, when properly understood and received, to foster the Christians joy. Let us mention one or two of them. There is that ancient, much-abused, but most delightful Doctrine of Election, that all worlds before, Jesus elected His people and looked with eyes of Infinite Love upon them as He saw them in the glass of futurity. What? Christian, can you believe yourself loved with an everlasting love, and not rejoice? Was it not the Doctrine of Election that made David dance before the Ark? When Michel sneered at him for dancing, he said, It was before the Lord who had chosen me before your father (Saul), and all his house. Surely to be chosen of God, to be selected from the mass of mankind and made favorites of the heart of Deitythis ought to make us, in our worst moments, sing with joy of heart! Oh, that Doctrine of Election! I wish some of you would acquaint yourselves with it in the Psalmody of the Church, rather than in the wrangling of the schools! It is a tree that puts forth its luxuriance in the tropical climate of Divine Lovebut it looks dwarfed and barren in the arctic regions of human logic! Then there are the Doctrines which like living waters, drop from this sacred and hidden fountain. Take, for instance, that of Redemption. To be bought with a pricea price whose efficacy is not questionablebought so that we are now the property of Jesus, never to be lost! Bought not with that general redemption which holds to the sinners eye a precarious contingency, but bought with an effectual ransom which saves every blood-bought sinner because he was redeemedhis own proper self, of Gods own good will! Oh, here is occasion for song! *Jesus sought me when a stranger,   
Wandering from the fold of God   
He to rescue me from danger,   
Interposed His precious blood.*   
Can you see the blood-mark on yourself, and not rejoice? Oh, Christian, surely your joy ought to be full! Or turn to the Doctrine of Justification and consider how, through faith, every Believer is accepted in the Beloved, and stands, wrapped in Jesus righteousness, as fair in Gods sight as if he had never sinned. Why, here is a theme for joy! Know and acknowledge your union with Christ   
*One with Jesus,   
By eternal union one!*   
Members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, and what?not a song after this? How sweet the music ought to be where this is the theme! Then, too, to mention no more, there is one Doctrine which is like a handful of pearlsthat of Eternal Preservation unto Glory which is to be revealed at the appearing of Jesus Christ. You are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. You shall be with Him where He is. You shall behold His Glory. Whom He justified, them He also glorified. Oh, can you put on this robe of splendor and go up to the Throne where Christ has already made you sit representatively in His own Person, and can you not begin, tonight, your song which shall never end? Truly we have but to mention a Truth of God and you can think it over for yourselvesevery Doctrine of Revelation is to the Christian a source of joy!  
Well, and every part of Christian experience is to further our joy. Why, says one, all a Christians experience is not joyful. I grant you that, but remember that all a Christians experience is not Christian experience! Christians experience a great deal which they do not experience as Christiansbut experience it because they are not such Christians as they ought to be! I believe that much of that groaning which some people think such a deal of, is rather of the devil than of the Spirit of God. Certainly that unbelief which some people seem to look upon as such a precious flower, is rank herbage, never sown in us by the hand of God the Holy Spirit! Beloved, there is a mourning which comes from the Spirit of God that is a joyful mourning, if I may use such a strange expression. Sorrow for sin is sweet sorrow. I would never wish to miss it. I think Rowland Hill was right when he said that it would be his only regret in going to Heaven that he could not repent any more. Oh, repentance, true evangelical repentance, is not that half-bitter thing which comes from the Law! It is a sweet genial thing. I do not know, Beloved, when I am more perfectly happy than when I am weeping for sin at the foot of the Cross! I find that to be one of the safest and best places where I can stand. I have sometimes thought that the raptures of Communion I have known are not altogether so deepthough they may be highernot, I say, so deep as the pensive joy of weeping over pardoned sin, when   
*Dissolved by His goodness, I fall to the ground And weep to the praise of the mercy Ive found!*   
Yes, sorrow for sin is a part of the Christians experience which helps to fill his joy. And though your cares and anxieties, dear Friends, with regard to the things of this world may be very distressing, yet remember, in every drop of gall which your Father gives you to drink, there is, if you can find it, a whole sea of sweetness! God sends you trials to wean you from the worlda happy result, however grievous the process! Oh, that I might never desire to suck of the breasts of her consolation anymore! Oh, to come to Christ, and find my all in Him! Believe me, Beloved, our joy ends where the love of the world begins. If we had no idols on earthif we made neither our children, nor our friends, nor our wealth, nor ourselves our idolswe should not have half the trials that we have. Foolish loves make rods for foolish backs. God save us from these, and when He does, though the means may seem severe, they are intended to promote our joys by destroying the eggs of our sorrows. But there is much of a Christians experience that is all joy, and must be all joy. For instance, to have faith in Christ, to rest in Himis not that joy? To sing from ones heart   
*I know that safe with Him remains,   
Protected by His power,   
What Ive committed to His hands,   
Till the decisive hour.*   
Is not that joy? And even that humbler note   
*Nothing in my hands I bring,   
Simply to Your Cross I cling,*   
has the germ of Heaven in it! Truly, there can be no more delightful place for the soul to stand than close to the Cross, covered with the crimson drops of blood and clasping Christ Himself! And then hope is another part of the Christians experience. What a fountain of joy it is! We are saved by hope. Sweetly does the Psalmist express himself, My soul faints for Your salvation, but I hope in Your Word. To the followers of Christ there is a full assurance of hopewhich hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters into that within the veil. Above all things, Christian fellowship is the chief auxiliary of Christian joy. Read the verse that immediately precedes our text, That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ. Ah, now we hit the mark! This is the center of the target. Fellowship with Christ is the summum bonumit fills up the measure of joy! All other graces and gifts may help to fill our cup of blessedness but fellowship with saints in their fellowship with the Father and the Sonsurely this, of itself, must suffice to fill our vessels to the very brim! Fullness of joy! Did you ever prove it, my Beloved? I think some of you have. No, I know you have! You could not have contained more joyyou were full to overflowing! Do you know that a little joy is healthful? Be it relief from anxiety, pleasure after pain, or even a cheerful thought in breasts to sorrow prone. But to have a fullness of joy, joy that pulsates through our every nerve and paints the entire universe of Gods goodness before our eyes in a meridian glow, this is a myriad of blessings in one! If I held in my hand a glass, and poured water into it till it were full, right to the very brim, till it seemed as if the least touch would make it run overwell, that is how the Christian sometimes is. Why, he says, I could not feel more happy! If anyone should make me rich, if I could have all that the worldling craves, I could not be any happier! I am rich to all the intents of bliss since You, God, are mine. It is not every man that can go home and say, There is nothing on earth I want, and there is nothing in Heaven that I yearn after beyond the endowments my God has already bestowed on me! Whom have I in Heaven but You, and who is there upon earth I desire beside You? Go, you that pine for joy, and traverse the wide earth round in fruitless searchmy soul sits down at the foot of the Cross and says, I have found it here! Go, like the swallow. Fly across the purple seas to find another summer now that this is overmy soul would stop just where she isliving at the foot of the Cross, my sun is in its solstice, and stands still forevernever stirring, never movingwithout parallax or shadow of a tropic! Evermore the samebright and full and glorious! Oh, Christian, this is a blessed experience! May you know it all your life!

Never doubt, my dear Friends, that every precept in the Word of God is intended to further the Christians happiness. When I read the Ten Commandments, I understand them to be just and salutary directions not to do myself any harm. The spirit of the Law seems to be benevolent in its warnings. If I were commanded not to put my finger into the fire, and did not know that fire would burn, I ought to be thankful for the prohibition. If I were commanded not to plunge into the sea, not having known before that the sea would drown me, I should be thankful for the interdict. Gods precepts are designed to enlighten our eyes and preserve our feet from falling. They forbid what is dangerous, hurtful. God never denies His servants anything that is really for their good. His laws are freedmens rulesthey are never fetters to the Christian. And as for the precepts of our blessed Christianity, they, every one of them, promote our happiness! Let me take one or two of them. Love one another. That is the first. Well, now, when are you happiest? When you feel spiteful and bitter towards everybody else, or when you feel charity towards the faulty, and love towards your fellow servants? I know when I feel best. There are some people who seem to have been suckled upon vinegarwherever they go, they always see some defect. Were there to be men on earth again such as Chrysostom and others of his day, who have been portrayed in history, or like the Nazarites of Jeremiahs plaintive hymn, Purer than snow and whiter than milk, they would say, Ah, well, though their reputation is unsullied, we do not know what they do in secret!we cannot scan their motives! Some people are always in a cynical, suspicious humor, but they who love one another can see much to rejoice in everywhere. We are told in Scripture to serve the Lord with diligence, and I am sure it is the diligent soul that is made fat. The donothing people are generally those who say   
*Lord, what a wretched land is this,   
That yields us no supplies.*   
It ought to be a wretched land to lazy people! Those that will not work, neither shall they eat, neither in spiritual things or in temporal shall they be fed. If, in the winter, you complain of cold, get to the plow and you will soon be full of warmth! Sit you down, groan, and complain, and blow on your blue fingers and you shall soon find the cold will starve you yet more and more. Holy activity is the mother of holy joy! And growth in Grace, againwhy, when is a man happier than when He grows in Grace? To be at a standstill, to contract ones selfwhy, this is misery! To force ones understanding, like a Chinese foot into a Chinese shoe, is torture! But to have a mind that is capable of learning, to be able to sometimes say, There, I was wrongto be able to feel that you know a little more today than you did yesterday because God, the Holy Spirit has been teaching you, why, this is joy! This is happiness! This is such as God would have us know!   
All the writings of Scripture, whether they are doctrinal, experimental, or practical, have the drift which John indicates in these words, That your joy may be full! Having thus shown that the Christians joy needs looking after and that it is mainly fed upon things revealed in Scripture, the inference clearly must be that   
III. WE SHOULD CONSTANTLY READ THE SCRIPTURES.   
Read the Scriptures in preference to any other book. What a deal of reading there is now-a-days! But how large a proportion of what you call, popular literature, is mere chaff-cuttingnothing more! Why, I am really ashamed to state the fact that I am bound, as a Christian minister, to denounce. You cannot publish a religious newspaper, or a religious magazine, as a rule, to make it pay, without a religious novel in itand these religious novels are a disgrace to the Christianity of the 19th Century! Peoples minds must be in an odd state when they can eat nothing but these whipped-creams and syllabubsfor people who would be healthy, should sit down to something solid, and their stimulants should be consistent with sobriety. You will never attain the mental growth of men and women by feeding on such stuff as that! You may make lackadaisical people in the shape of men and women, but the thinking soul with something in it, the woman who would serve her God as a true helper to the Christian ministry, the young man who would proclaim Christ and win souls need some better nutriment than the poor stuff that modern literature deals out so plentifully. Oh, my dear Friends, read the Bible in preference to all such books! They only deprave your taste. If you want these books, have them. We would not deny pigs their proper food and I would not deny any person living that which his taste goes after, provided it does not shock decent morals. I lament the taste rather than the indulgence of it! If you have a soul that can appreciate the pleasures of wisdom, eschew the trifles of folly. And if you have been taught to love verities, and substantial truths, you scarcely need that I should say, Search the Scriptures. Search them diligently and frequently!   
Prefer the Scriptures to all religious books. In our books and our sermonswe will say it of all of themwe do our best to give you the Truth of God, but we are like the gold-beaters whose brazen arms you can see out over their doorswe get a little bit of gold and we hammer it out. Some of my Brothers are mighty hands at the craft. They can hammer out a very small piece of gold so as to cover a whole acre of talk. But the best of us, those who would seek to bring out the Doctrines of Grace in love, are poor, poor things. Read the Bible for yourselves more, and confide less in your glossaries. I would rather see the whole stock of my sermons in a blaze, all burned to ashes, than that they should keep anybody from reading the Bible. If they may act as a finger pointing to certain chaptersRead this! Read this!I am thankful to have printed them. But if they keep you away from your Biblesburn them! Burn them! Do not let them lie on the top of the Scripturesput them somewhere at the bottom, for that is their proper place. So with all sorts of religious booksthey are a sort of mixturetheir human thinking dilutes Divine Revelation. Keep to the Revelation of God, pure and simple.   
And, when you read your Bible, read it in earnest. There are several ways of reading the Bible. There is a skimming over the surface of it content with the letter. There is also diving into it and praying yourselves down deep into the soul of itthat is the way to read the Bible! Do not always read it one verse at a time. How would Miltons Paradise Lost be understood if read by little snatches selected at random? You would never scan the purpose or design of the poem. Read one book through. Read Johns Gospel. Do not read a bit of John and then a bit of Mark, but read John through, and get at Johns drift. Remember that Matthew, though he wrote of the same Savior as Luke, is not more various in his style than he is distinct in his aim and, in a certain sense, independent of the testimony he bears. The four Evangelists are four separate witnesses, each giving a special contribution to the Doctrine as well as the history of Christ. Matthew, for instance, shows you Jesus as a King. You will notice that most of his parables begin with a king. Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened. Mark shows you Christ as the Servant. Luke shows you Christ as Man, giving sketches of His childhood. And His parables begin with, A certain man, while John teaches you Christ in His Godhead, with a starting point far different from the other three, which have been styled the Synoptical Gospels. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Try, if you can, to get a hold of what the books mean, and pray God the Holy Spirit to lead you into the drift and aim of the sacred writers in so writing. I would like to see my Church members, all of them, good, hard, solid Bible students. Beloved, I would not be afraid of all the errors of Popery, Infidelity, Socinianism, Plymouth Brethrenism, or any other ism if you were to read your Bibles! You will thus keep clear of the whole lot. There is no doubt about your standing firm to the good old faith which we seek to teach you, if you do but keep to Scripturethe Book, the one Book, the Book of books, the Bible! That studied, not hurriedly, but with a determination to compare spiritual things with spiritual, and to observe the analogy of faith, you shall find a well-spring of delight and holy joy which men of letters who dabble in the proudest classics might envy, for Isaiah is better than Homer, and David is richer than Horace. But better still, you shall stand while others fall!   
IV. BUT ARE WE ALL BELIEVERS? IS THIS BOOK JOY TO ALL OF US?   
That is a significant pronoun in the text, These things we write unto you that your joy may be full. To whom writes he? Is it to you? Young woman, does the Scripture write to you that your joy may be full? Young man, does the Scripture speak to you to fill you with holy joy? You do not know whether it does or notyou do not care about it. Then, it does not speak to you. You get plenty of joy elsewhere. Well, it does not speak to you. It does not intrude upon you. It leaves you alone. It offers you no joy. You have enough. The whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick.   
But there are some of you here who need a joy, and you have not found it. You are uneasy. You cannot find a tree to build your nest. You are like the needle, when it is turned away from its poleyou cannot be quiet. You have got a horseleech in you, that is always crying, Give! Give! You are uneasy. Oh, dear Friend, I am glad to hear it! May that uneasiness go on increasing. May you become weary of heart, and heavyladen of spirit, for I have a whisper for you. Jesus Christ has come into the world to call to Himself all those who labor and are heavy-laden! And when you are sick and weary with the world, come to Him, come to Him! What? You have been turned out, have you? The world has got all it could out of you and thrust you away? Now, Jesus Christ will have you. Come to Him! Come to Him! He will receive you. So you are burnt out, are you? All the goodness that was in you is burned up and you have now become nothing but smoking flaxa stench in the estimation of your once flattering companions? You are nowhere. They do not like you. You are mopish and miserable. Oh come to Him! Come to Him, come to Him! He will not quench you. Your music is all over, is it? You were like a reed, like one of Pans pipes. You could give out some music, once, but you got bruised and you cannot make one sound or note of joy. Well, poor Soul, come to Him! Come to Him! He will not break you. He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax

*Weary souls that wander wide   
From the central source of bliss,   
Turn to Jesus wounded side   
Look to that dear blood of His.*   
Here is peace, here is joy in Christ Jesus! Oh, if you are sick of the world, come to my Master! May God the Holy Spirit bless this sickness and make you come because you have nowhere else to go! Jesus Christ will receive the devils castaways. The very sweepings of pleasure, the dregs of the intoxicating cup, those who have gone so far that now their friends reject them, Jesus Christ accepts! May He accept me, and accept you and then in Him our joy shall be full! Amen.

I would not change my blest estate For all that earth calls good or great! And while my faith can keep her hold, I envy not the sinners gold.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: PSALM 66:1-15.

Verse 1. Make a joyful noise unto God, all you lands. Let not Israel alone do it. Take up the strain, you nations. He is the God of all the nations of the earth. Make a joyful noise unto God, all you lands.

2-4. Sing forth the honor of His name: make His praise glorious. Say unto God, How terrible are You in Your works! Through the greatness of Your power shall Your enemies submit themselves unto You. All the earth shall worship You and shall sing unto You. They shall sing to Your name. Selah. I still must always cling to the belief that this whole world is to be converted to God, and to lie captive at the feet of Christ in glorious liberty! Do not fall into that lethargic, apathetic belief of some that this is never to be accomplishedthat the battle is not to be fought out on the present lines, but that there is to be a defeatand then Christ is to come. No, foot to foot with the old enemy will He stand, till He has worsted him and until the nations of the earth shall worship and bow before Him!

5, 6. Come and see the works of God: He is terrible in His doing toward the children of men. He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in Him. Where God is most terrible to His enemies, He is most gracious to His friends! As Pharaoh and his hosts went down beneath the terrible hand of God, the children of Israel lifted up their loudest hallelujahs and sang unto the Lord, who triumphed gloriously! And so shall it be to the end of the chapter. God will lay bare His terrible arm against His adversaries but His children shall, meanwhile, make music! There did we rejoice in Him.

7-9. He rules by His power forever: His eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah. O bless our God, you people, and make the voice of His praise to be heard. Who holds our soul in life and allows not our feet to be moved. Loudest among the singers should Gods people be! If others can restrain their praise, yet let the love of Christ so compel us that we must give it a tongue and tell forth the majesty of our God! It is He alone who keeps us from Hellwhich holds our soul in life! It is He alone who keeps us from falling foully. Yes, and falling finally, and allows not our feet to be moved.

10. For You, O God, have proved us. All Gods people can say this. It is the heritage of the elect of God. You have proved us.   
10-11. You have tried us, as silver is tried. You brought us into the net. Entangled, surrounded, captive, held fast. Many of Gods people are in this condition.  
11. You laid affliction upon our loins. It was no affliction of hand or foot, but it laid upon our loinsa heavy, crushing burden.  
12. You have caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water. It was the full ordeal. One was not enough. Fire destroys some, but water is the test for othersbut Gods people must be tried both ways. We went through fire and through water, but. Blessed but.   
12. But You brought us out into a wealthy place. Out of the fire and out of the water they came because God brought them! And when He brought them, it was not to a stinted, barren heritage, but into a wealthy place. Oh, Beloved, when we think of where the Covenant of Grace has placed every Believer, it is a wealthy place, indeed!  
13-15. I will go into Your house with burnt offerings: I will pay You my vows which my lips have uttered, and my mouth has spoken when I was in trouble. I will offer unto You burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams. I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah. The best, I think. The best of the best will I bring You, O my God. I will bring You my heart. I will bring You my tongue. I will bring you my entire being!

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software.   
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1986 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE CHILD OF LIGHT WALKING IN LIGHT   
NO. 1986

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 2, 1887, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:6, 7.

THE Apostle warns us against saying more than we have made our own by experience. He hints at the solemn difference between empty profession and gracious reality. To have fellowship with God is a great matterbut merely to say that we have fellowship with Him is a totally different thing. John warns us that if we say that which our characters do not support, we lie. He leaves it just so, without a word of softening or excuse. Between saying and beingbetween saying and doingthere may be all the difference in the world. There is a tendency among men, if there is a good experience, to say that they possess it; if there is a high privilege of Grace, to say that they are enjoying it. What a folly this is! It is akin to madness! To unsound minds, a precious original suggests a desire to fashion an imitation. To the untruthful mind, the genuine is an invitation to be the counterfeit. Let us be upon our guard that we do not flatter ourselves into saying more than is true. Let us not stretch our arm beyond our sleeve, nor boast beyond our line. Every profession will be tried with firelet us, therefore, see to it that we put in no claim which will not endure the severest test.

There were certain in Johns day who said, We have fellowship with God. How they had come by it they did not explain. Perhaps they claimed to have reached it by philosophical speculation, by exact reasoning, or by long-continued meditation. Whatever the road, they said that they had reached the City of God and were in communion with the Great Being. John saw that they walked in darkness, rejecting the Light of Divine Revelation from above and the pure Light of the Holy Spirit within. He also saw that they, themselves, were not true, and that their lives were not pure and, therefore, he warned them that they were speaking and acting a lie. Their life was a lie, for they were not walking in the truth. And their profession that they had fellowship with God was another lie, for God can have no fellowship with falsehood. God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all and, therefore, He cannot hold any communion with darkness.

John draws the lines very tightly and judges with unflinching fidelity he is not inclined to the boasted charity of latitudinarianism, but he curtly dismisses false claims with that plain word, lie. The disciple whom Jesus loved spoke like the Son of Thunder that he was when he had to deal with shams. It is the part of true love to be honest and to expose that which would be injurious to those it loves. He who will gloss over a falsehood loves but in word, only. Learn, then, that if men boast of fellowship with God and do not receive the Revelation of His Word, they lie, and know not the Truth of God.

Let us now speak of the real thing, the fellowship with God which comes of walking in the Light of God. The Christian life is described as walking, which implies activity. Christian life feeds upon contemplation, but it displays itself in action. Fellowship with God necessitates action, since to be with God, we must walk with God. The living God is not inactive, motionless, aimless. My Father, says Jesus, works hitherto, and I work. Chiefly in the character of active workers or in that of willing sufferers we must maintain fellowship with God. Walking implies activity, but it must be of a continuous kind. Neither this step, nor that, nor the next, can make a walk. We must be moving onward and onward and remain in that exercise, or we cease from walking. Holy walking includes perseverance in obedience and continuance in service. Not he that begins, but he that continues is the true Christian. Final perseverance enters into the very essence of the Believers lifethe true pilgrims of Zion go from strength to strength.

From strength to strength, did I say? This suggests that walking implies progress. He that takes one step and another step, but still stands where he was, has not walked! There is such a thing as the goose-step and I am afraid many Christians are wonderfully familiar with itthey are where they used to beand are half inclined to congratulate themselves upon that fact, since they might have backslidden! They have not advanced in the heavenly pilgrimageso how can they be said to walk? My Hearer, is your life a walk with God and towards God? If so, our subject has to do with you. May the Spirit of all Grace lead us into the heart of it!

The things we shall consider this morning will arise out of the text in the following orderFirst, the light of our walk. If we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light. Secondly, the communion of our walk. We have fellowship with one another. Thirdly, the glory of that communion. The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

I. Consider, first, THE LIGHT OF OUR WALK. True Believers do not walk in darkness. They have found the road and they see it before them. They know whom they have believed and why they have believedand so they go forward intelligently. How unhappy are those who are sure of nothing but a groping for the wayand wander in endless circles of hope and fear! True Believers walk onward because the Light of God shows them their path and makes them sure of safety and progress. What is meant by walking in the Light? It is somewhat singular that last Sunday morning our subject was, The Child of Light Walking in

Darkness. [Sermon #1985.] That darkness is very different from the darkness with which we deal this morning. Children of Light may, for a time, walk in the darkness of sorrow, but from the darkness of untruthfulness, ignorance, sin and unbelief they have been delivered! In these respects the darkness is past and the true Light of God now shines. Moral darkness is contrary to their new-born naturethey cannot endure it. We must distinguish between things that differ, between the darkness of sorrow and the darkness of sin. A metaphor may be used for many purposesand that of darkness has a wide range of meaning.

What is this light, then, in which the Christian walks? I answer, first, it is the Light of Grace. In our natural state we are in darkness and under the dominion of the Prince of Darkness. The Apostle says of us Gentiles, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart. When the Grace of God comes, the Day-Spring from on high visits us. The Holy Spirit brings us out from under the dominion of the old nature by creating within us a new life. And He brings us out from under the tyranny of the Prince of Darkness by opening our eyes to see and our minds to understand celestial Truths of God. The opening of our blind eyes and the pouring in of the Light of Truth are from the Lord. This is a work in which He is as fully seen in the glory of His Godhead as when in the natural creation He said, Let there be light, and there was light.

The entrance of Gods Word into the mind by the power of the Holy Spirit gives us light as to ourselves, our sin and our danger. With this comes light as to the way of salvation through Jesus Christ and light as to the mind of God concerning our sanctification. True knowledge takes the place of ignorance and a desire for purity becomes supreme over the love of sin. Paul says, You were sometime darkness, but now are you light in the Lord. We accept the Revelation of God in the Inspired Bookby the attending witness of the Holy Spirit it becomes a Revelation of God to our own hearts and thus all our positionour past, present and futureis set in a new light. With the driving out of our natural darkness old things pass away and, with the coming in of the Divine Light, all things become new. Blessed is that man to whom the Eternal Light has come by the effectual working of the Spirit of God who brings to us the Light of God wherein we see God, Christ and life everlasting! This is the secret beginning of all our lightGod, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The result of this Light of God is seen in various ways. It causes deep sorrow in the beginning, for its first discoveries are grievous to the conscience. Light is painful to eyes long accustomed to darkness. But soon the Light brings great joy, for the soul perceives deliverance from the evils which it mourned. Thus the Light of God and gladness in the end go together, as it is written, Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Always, in each condition, you observe conspicuously that the Light of Grace is seen as the light of sincerity. Until Grace comes into our souls we have no heart for the things of God. We may be fussily religious so far as to be attentive to every outward form of worship, but there is no heart-work, no light of the Truth of God in all our devotion. But when once the Divine Light comes in, then we become intensely real in our dealings with God. Hypocrisy and pretence fly before sincere belief and feeling. Lord, have mercy upon us miserable sinners, no longer passes our lips flippantly and thoughtlessly, but we are, indeed, miserable on account of sin!

When we seek for mercy we mean it, and do not play at confession and repentance. Our eyes look to God and our whole body is full of the Light of Godwe see what we are doing and awake ourselves to do it in earnest. We know what we are praying about and there is no question as to the deep sincerity of our cries and tears. We desire with the whole force of our nature to find pardon and acceptance through the precious blood of Christ. We do not merely say that we desire salvation and eternal life, but we feel that we must have them and cannot be denied! We cease from playing fast and loose with God. We no longer hesitate between two opinions, but one thing we seek after, desiring it of the Lordwe would be right with God in all respects. The man that is walking in the Light of God is thoroughly sincere. The shadows of pretence have been chased away he is downright earnest in all that he does.

O my Hearers, many of you have never come so far as this, though this, alone, is not far! By being in a place of worship you show an outward respect to Divine things, but are you worshipping God? Did you worship Him just now in the prayer and in the praise? You are listening to me while I talk of the highest things that ever occupied the human mind, but do you long to be a partaker of these things? Do you hunger and thirst after righteousness? Those who are walking in the Light of God are free from pretence and are living in real earnestis it so with you? Contentment with unreality is a sign of dwelling in darkness! Careful keeping up of shams, diligent puffing out of wind-bags and constant creation of make-believesall this is of the night and its dreams! But to be what you seem to be, to be true in all the phases of your lifethis is surely seen in those who walk in the Light of God! What can God have to do with shams? What cares He for empty professions? Everything must be true which is to come under His eyes.

Next to sincerity I regard a willingness to know and to be known as an early result of walking in the Light of God. The ungodly come not to the Light, lest their deeds should be reproved. There are matters about which they desire no Light, but rather say, Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of Your ways. Where ignorance affords them a present peace, they count it folly to be wise. Alas, it is too commonly the case that men have no inclination to obtain a knowledge which might involve humiliation, repentance and a retracing of steps. Let well enough alone, they cry. How many will say, Well, we have been Christians after our own way for a good many yearswhy need we question ourselves? They look upon a faithful preacher with suspicionhe comes a deal too close to home. When he begins to deal with the heart and conscience, they look at him as if he were a dog hunting about for a rat! Truly the emblem is not so very unlike, for wherever there is a self-satisfaction which is afraid of the Light of God, we suspect that the rat of hypocrisy is not far off!

Beloved, we must not rest content with anything which will not bear the light of day. A religion which we will not submit to the test of selfexamination cannot be worth much. No one is afraid to have a genuine sovereign submitted to any testit is the coiner who is afraid. Look! says a man, I hold a certain creed. My grandmother held it. It has come down to me as an heirloom. You invite me to examine that creed by the Word of God, but I would rather not. I am not disposed to learn anything which might cause me to change. If you speak too strongly, I shall go and hear somebody else, for I cannot bear to be disturbed. This is a foolish prejudice, is it not? Yes, and it may prove the mans ruin! This is the kind of thing that makes a man go out angrily from a sermon and say, I will not listen to that man again! He is too personal and too severe.

No, Friend, can anyone who loves your soul be too severe? Do you wish to be flattered? Do you not know that plain-dealing is more precious than rubies? Would you not say to your physician, Put me under the severest examination and let me know the truth? Would you pay him a fee that he might deceive you? As to your soul, do you not desire to know the very worst of your case? If you would rather be comfortable than be safe, then you and I are not of one mind, for I want to walk in the Light of God, free from deception, knowing truly and thoroughly my own place before the heart-searching God. I would rather not cry, Peace, peace, where there is no peace. The comfort which grows out of delusion I do not desire. Brothers and Sisters, we must build on the Truth of God and nothing else but the Truth of God!

When men walk in the Light of God, they cease to take things for granted, and look below the surface. Certain things have been labeled with the mark of truth and have passed current. But men who are in the Light of God disregard the labels and look at the goods, themselves. We cannot afford to risk our souls on hearsayswe need personal knowledge. For one, I desire a salvation which will bear the test of the closest examination. I would be saved in such a way that I am neither afraid of conscience, nor of death, nor of the Judgment Seat of God! I would be saved in the Light of God. I would be known and read of all men and I would know, even as I am known. We wish to conceal nothing. We can conceal nothing, for all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. We would lay bare our bosoms and sincerely cry, Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

A still surer evidence of Grace is the minds perception of revealed Truth and its obedience to it. Then has true light shone on a mans walk when he perceives the Truth revealed by the Holy Spirit in sacred Scriptureand receives it into his heart with a child-like spirit. He that receives Christ, also receives Christs Words and the doctrine which we believe is by no means a matter of indifference. Whatever may be said, Brothers and Sisters, we have received a Revelation from God which we know to be the faith once for all delivered to the saints. The Lord God has broken through the veil of silence and has manifested Himself to the sons of men! Through the darkness of their minds, the carnal cannot see what God has revealed, neither will they believe His Truth. The Truth of God is

spiritual and the natural man is carnal and, therefore, the natural wan will not receive the teaching which comes from God. By this test shall you know whether the true Light of God is shining upon youDo you believe what God has revealed in His Word? Or are you your own teachermaker of your own faith? He cannot be a disciple who does not learn, but invents. Do you hear the teaching of the Lord Jesus and believe it? I repeat ityou must not only say that you believe itbut you must, indeed, and without a doubt, believe the things which God has revealed. By this shall you know whether you are a child of Light, or a child of darkness. Are the Doctrines of Grace essential Truths of God with you? Whatever God has said about sin, righteousness, judgment to comeare you ready to accept it at once? Whatever He has revealed concerning Himself, His Son, His Holy Spirit, the Cross, life, death, Hell and the eternal futuredo you believe it unfeignedly? This is to walk in the Light of God! All other teaching is darkness.

How many correct and amendand so betray the Gospel! They take the garment of the Truth of God and dip it in the blood of their own thought till it is so stained that they might almost say unto God, Himself, Do You know whether this is Your Sons coat or not? If you are one of those who would twist the Scriptures and force your own meaning on them, you are not in the Light! If you would make them mean other than what God intended them to mean, you are in the darkness, however learned a philosopher you may be! He only is in the Light of God who distrusts his own wisdom and bows before the Wisdom which comes from above! If you will sit at Jesus feet like a childand hear His Words and learn of Himthen has the true Light of God shone upon you, for He is the Light that lights every man that comes into the world. The Holy Spirit comes not to help us to think out a system of belief of our own, but to lead us into all the Truths of God by taking of the things of Christ and showing them to us.

Brothers and Sisters, there is a Truth and there is a lie, and no lie is of the Truth! Can light commune with darkness, or truth with falsehood? I make no claim of implicit faith for what I say. God forbid that I should ever become so presumptuous, for that were a sort of blasphemy! But I claim implicit faith for what God says. Believing the Gospel to be the Revelation of God, I claim for it implicit faith! Believing the Lord Jesus to be an Infallible Teacher, I claim immediate faith in all that He has said! If this implicit faith is refused, it is because there is no Light of God in you! To walk in the Light of God is to know, to love and to live the Truth of God! To walk in the Light of God is to receive our instruction from God! To me, the end of all controversy is, Thus says the Lord. Only let me know that the Lord has said this or that, and though the Revelation should seem impossible to believe, and though it should come into conflict with all my previous notions, I will bow before it without a question! The Lord has said it, stands to us instead of all reason, argument and evidence! Yes, we believe God in the teeth of supposed evidence and reason, saying, Let God be true, but every man a liar. God will not have fellowship with us if we reject His Lightbut on the ground of absolute Truth He can and will meet us. If we come unto the Light and believe His witness to the Truth, then are we where God can walk with us and where the precious blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.

This, beloved Brothers and Sisters, leads to a transparency and simplicity of character. Walking in the Light of God produces Israelites, indeed, in whom is no guile! Those who are full of deceit and craftiness upon any subject are not walking in the Light of God. God will not have fellowship with any whose minds are crooked and deceitful. Some persons are so warped that nothing is straight to themtheir minds seem to see things crookedlylong practice in untruthfulness has given them an evil bias. This is not the case with the man in whom the Light of Grace is shining. The man who does in reality what he seems to do. The man who says what he means and means what he says. The man who is truthful, artless and sincere in all his general dealings both before God and manhe it is whose conduct leads us to hope that the Light of Grace shines within!

This is very evident in the mans cessation from all guile towards himself. Remember how David pronounces him blessed in whose spirit there is no guile. He knew painfully what it was to be full of guile. Look at him! He has gone astray most grievously. His mind is in the dark. What does David do? There is a foul sin committedhe tries to make himself believe that it is not so very horriblehe labors to hoodwink his conscience! His sin is likely to be seen and he tries to cover it. He brings back Bathshebas husband. When Uriah declines to go to his house, he must be made drunk. The design has failed. David is afraid, but he is not penitent. On the contrary, he hastens to still greater crime! Uriah is in the wars and there he is wantonly exposed to death and is slain in battle! His death is ascribed to the fortune of war. David did not see that it was murder, for he was not walking in the Light of God. He was still in darkness and, therefore, he kept all this while acting a deceitful part with his God and his own conscience. His conduct could not bear the Light and so his one idea was to keep it out.

How changed was all this after Nathan had said to him, You are the man! When the light of heavenly conviction had penetrated the night of his soul, he made no more excuses, He practiced no more subterfuges. He stood in the Light, ashamed and confounded. Amazed at the sight of his sin, he abandoned all idea of covering it and fled at once to the mercy of God crying, Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness. In the sobbing and sighing of the 51st Psalm he lays bare his heart and in the most plain terms, he cries, Deliver me from the guilt of blood shed, O God, God of my salvation. He is in the Light of God now, for deceit has gone and now God can speak comfortably to himand wash him and make him whiter than snow!

The man who is walking in the Light, as God is in the Light, is full of abhorrence of sin. Sin is practical falsehood. It is moral darkness. The man that abhors evil and injustice. The man that would do good if it cost him his earthly all. The man that would not do wrong though the world should be his reward for doing itthis is the man that walks in the Light of Godand he is the man that shall have fellowship with God and a sense of cleansing from sin. We cannot attach too great importance to the condition of our minds in reference to sin, for if we wink at it, or take pleasure in it, or persistently practice it, we are abiding in the darkness and we are under the wrath of God. John says, Little children, let no man deceive you: he that does righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. Forget not this practical Truth of God!

I fear I have scarcely brought out the fullness of the meaning. They that are in the Light will know what I mean. Those who are in darkness cannot imagine what life in the Light of God must be.

II. I come, secondly, to THE COMMUNION OF OUR WALK. Those who are in the Light shall not be alone. God Himself will be with them and be their God. The words, we have fellowship with one another, constitute a wonderfully condescending expression. John would not have dared to coin such an expressionit must have been minted for him by the Spirit from above. Think of God and His people having mutual communion! What honor! What joy is this! Thus is the mischief of the Fall removed and Paradise is restored!

God in the Light and man in the Light have much in common. Now are they abiding in one element, for they are dwelling in one Light. Now are they both concerned about the same thing and their aims are undivided God loves Truth and so do those who are renewed in heart. It has come to pass that the great Lord and His enlightened ones see things in the same Light. God, with His great vision, beholds more than we can, yet He does not see more than the Truth. And we, with our narrow perceptions, see the Truth and we cannot tolerate falsehood. Now we can speak with God, seeing we speak Truth, and He can converse with us, seeing we are ready to hear the Truth. In prayer and praise we are no longer false and, therefore, the Lord can hear us! His Word also falls upon an honest mind and so its meaning is perceived. Now we can also act togetherthe great God and His poor feeble children are striving together for truth and righteousness! Our poor little work He might overlook if He were not so good, but being infinitely condescending, He works through us whenever He sees that our work is done in truth. If our works were works of darkness, He could not co-operate with us. But now that we walk and work in His Light, He is able to make us laborers together with Himself.

Now we partake with God in sympathy, having a fellow-feeling with Him. Does the great Father mourn His prodigal child? So do we mourn over sinners! Do we see Jesus weeping over Jerusalem? So do we mourn for the perishing who will not be saved! Again, as God rejoices over sinners that repent, so do we rejoice in sympathy with Him. By coming into the Light of love as well as into the Light of knowledge we have received power to enter into sympathy with God. Is not this a very wonderful thing? But it is as clear and true as it is wonderful! We would gladly bring the whole world into the Light of God! We daily pray, Your kingdom come, Your will be done. Our will has grown to be like Gods will, according to its measure, seeing we have come into the same Light as that in which God dwells.

Do you know, dear Brothers and Sisters, by experience, what it is to be honestly dealing with eternal things, to be no longer playing, toying and counterfeiting, but to be in real and blessed earnest with God and spiritual facts? Then you have come into fellowship with the great God, for He is in earnest and in Him there is no trifling nor make-believe! He is acting with intense reality, acting with His whole heart in His contention against sin, His desire for the glory of His Son, His purpose for the salvation of His people.

III. But now I come, in the third place, to that which strikes me most in the text, and it is thisTHE GLORY OF THIS COMMUNIONWe have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. Here am I a poor creature reading this text. I find that it is possible for men to walk in fellowship with the great and ever-blessed God! I rejoice to learn this and my heart responds, If there is any fellowship with God to be known, I will know it. If I can be reconciled to God and be at friendship with Him, I desire it beyond everything. But how can these things be? I see that a great stone lies at the door. I cannot get out of my prison to begin this walk because this great stone of sin shuts me in.

Then the Lord comes in and He says, I saw that this hindrance was in your road and so, in this very verse, I have shown you how I have taken it away. Precious words! The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. I gather from the way in which this sentence grows out of the text that this very thing which looks as if it were the death of all communion with God, is made, by Infinite Grace, to be a wide and open channel of communion with Him! This stone is rolled away from the door of the sepulcher and the angel of communion sits down upon it as on a throne. God justifies His people in broad daylightin a way which defies inspection and then, by the very method of clearing away their sin, He enters into the nearest and dearest fellowship with them!

To begin with, here is sin! What an evil thing it is! How our soul hates it! It is uncleanness to usa loathsome and abominable evil. You that are in the Light know how every beam of light makes you see more of the heinousness, blackness and accursed nature of sin. Even to feel a tendency towards it in your members makes you groan out, O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me? Listen! You are having fellowship with God in this. In Him is no sin, but in Him is great abhorrence of sin! If you hate sin, God hates it, also, and herein you are agreed. The very thought of iniquity, uncleanness, or falsehood is abhorred of God. His holy Nature detests it and in proportion as you feel the same loathing and detestation, you have fellowship with God. This comes to you by walking in the Light, as God is in the Light. Horror has taken hold upon me, says David, because of the wicked that forsake Your Law. David was as much in fellowship with God in that horror of sin as he was another day when he could speak of God as his exceeding joy and rejoice in the mercy which endures forever! Yes, Beloved, our horror for sin drives us into fellowship with the great Father in that loathing of sin which made Him hide His face from His Only-Begotten because the sin of man had been made to meet upon Him!

Let us go a step further. Sin, being once perceived, the next step is that it should be gotten rid of. Ah, you say, I wish I could be cleansed from it; cleansed from all of it, but how can this be? It is not possible for me to purge away my sin. I thought I heard you singing just now

*Could my tears forever flow.   
Could my zeal no respite show.   
All for sin could not atone   
You must save, and You alone.*

This, also, is Gods thought about sinHe knows how hard it is to remove its pollution. He saw that nothing of ours could remove the horrible blot. Brethren, I know for a fact that all the waters of all the seas might be used to wash my scarlet sin and yet they could not wash out the fatal stain. Not even the fires of Hell could burn out the defilement of sin! In this persuasion we have fellowship with the pure and holy God who saw that there was no means of removing sin but oneHe must deliver up His own Son to deathor the sin of man could never be purged away. The Sacrifice of the Only-Begotten is the unique hope of sinners. The laying of our iniquity upon Him who deigned to be the great Scapegoat of His people, is the only means for the taking away of the sins of the world! That inward persuasion of the impossibility of the purgation of sin by any doings or feelings of our ownand the consequent perception that only in Christ lies the help of menhas brought us through the Light of Truth to walk in fellowship with the thrice holy God!

Now go a step further. The glorious Son of God condescends to become the Atonement for sin. He is taken to the tree. Our sins are made to meet upon His blessed head and there He diesthe Just for the unjust! He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Standing by the tree of doom, we look up to that blessed Savior with allabsorbing admiration and love. We admire Him as the masterpiece of Divine Wisdom, Grace, Power and Truthand, admiring, we love Himwe pledge ourselves to Him. Herein we have entered into fellowship with the great Father, indeed, and without a doubt, for the Father infinitely loves His Son! He greatly delights in Him. No thought of Christ that the most rapturous enthusiast ever had can reach half way to Gods thoughts of Christ. See how holy Bernard seems to go into a delirium of love when he talks about his Divine Master! O Bernard, you cannot tell how the Father loves Jesus; how He delights in His Sacrifice; how He takes pleasure in His exaltation!

In the putting away of sin by the blood of Jesus, the Father has an infinite content and so have we. Beloved, we rejoice in the Divine satisfaction for sinit is a well of Divine delight to us. This satisfaction is not accomplished by anything being hushed up and concealed, but, walking in the Light, as God is in the Light, we have fellowship with God in the one glorious Sacrifice! Suppose I could persuade myself that sin is a trifle? I would not be walking in the Light and I would have no fellowship with God. Suppose I said, Pooh, pooh. Sin can easily be forgiven! I am sure it requires no atonement? I would not be walking in the Light and I would have no fellowship with God! Suppose I said, Though Jesus died, His death was only the close of His life and no special reference need be made to it as a Sacrifice for sin? I would not be walking in the Light of God and I would have no fellowship with God.

A step further. Beloved, many of us have come to Jesus Christ by faith. We have looked to Him and have accepted Him as our Savior cleansing us from all sin. Joy, joy, joy foreverthe brightest day that ever dawned on us was that day when we saw all our sins numbered on our blessed Scapegoat and carried away into the wilderness of forgetfulness! When God saw the blood of old, He passed over Israel, for His justice was satisfied. And it is so with Jesus. How glad and content we are to see how Jesus finished transgression, made an end of sin and brought in everlasting righteousness! Brothers and Sisters, the death of Jesus is a cleansing from sin which will bear the Light of Godit is no hole and corner business, no winking at evil, no suspension of lawno making out that sin is no sin! No, the debt is acknowledged, and what is far better, it is paid! The guilty are punished in their Substituteand in Him are thus justly set free!

We shall all appear before the Judgment Seat and I am glad it is so, for the stain of our sin is so effectually removed by the blood of Jesus that we are clean every whitand even the eyes of Divine Justice will see no spot in us! We rejoice in perfect whiteness, for the Lord has made us whiter than snow. Yes, we have fellowship with God in this cleansing, for God accepts us in the Beloved. God who made Him to be the Lord, our RighteousnessGod Himself justifies us in His Son! He will, in the Last Great Day, make the whole universe a witness to the righteousness of the salvation of Believers. All intelligences shall see that in Christ all who are in Him are truly justified and most justly saved! How the Lord God and His people will have fellowship in their common joy in the work and Person of Jesus, as they see the perfection of it, and the way in which all sin is removed by it! Our salvation in Christ is, in the Light of God, in the most eminent degreeit will bear the full, fierce light of Sinai to be turned upon ityet no flaw will be found in it. This is wonderful! This is glorious! Do you wonder that God is well pleased in Him! And are not we well pleased? Blessed be His name! Do you not see how we thus have fellowship with one another? Oh, that I had strength to set forth before you the thoughts which fill my soul!

Brothers and Sisters, we are now at one with God in His master purpose. Was it not in His heart to create beings with whom He might have fellowship? He made the heavens and the earth. He made the angels. He made all thingsbut He could find no companionship in all these things. Our Lord, like Adam, found no help-meet for Himself in any of the creatures He had made. He desired to produce and bring to Himself an order of beings who could be glorified without danger of pride. Who could think and feel as the First-Born would do. In fact, would become the friends of the Son of God! How were these creatures to be produced? Not by an immediate fiat of creation. Angels He could speak into being by a word. But in the constitution of these beings there would need to be an experience and a discipline to fit them for their lofty position. Their model was to be the Son of Jehovahs love. He was to be the First-Born among many brethren. It was necessary for these creatures to know sin and yet to hate it more fully than if they had never known itto know the love of God and to be forever bound by it to an unsinning obedience which would fill them with boundless happiness.

Behold the process by which this new creation, this new order of creatures should come forth! Consider the processes by which the Fall, the Incarnation, the Cross, and the new birth work out the sacred result! When you have read the past in this light, then gaze into the future. Now we see how throughout eternity we shall walk in the Light, as God is in the Light, and have fellowship with one anotherfellowship culminating in Jesus Christ the Only-Begottenand the cleansing from all sin by His blood. The blood-washed are to be the friends of God, with whom He shall speak face to face, as He speaks with no angel or seraph! With these He will dwell and He will be their God, and they shall be His people. And in them and through them He will make known the glories of His Son to wondering worlds. This great purpose has been worked out to a considerable extent by the Lords having already made us to walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, and by washing us in the precious blood. But it does not even yet appear what we shall be. This much we practically seek after therefore we live for Christ! Therefore our chief glory is the Cross! Therefore our ideal of glory for ourselves is to see Jesus glorified! The torrents have swept us away! We are no longer bound to this earth! We are borne along by the irresistible force of Eternal Love! God has achieved His purpose in our blood-washed soulswalking in the Light of God, we are now in harmony with His master purpose and we cryFather, glorify Your Son!

I am done, but oh, I wish that all your hearts were brought into the Light of God at this moment! Oh, that you would quit the dark ways of self-righteousness, carelessness, thoughtlessness and sinand come into the Light of Truth! Oh, that the Light may come to you as to Saul of Tarsus and at once transform you! May the Spirit of God bring you to know God and His Son Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON1 John 1, 2.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK425, 484, 289.  
Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #223 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

THE EVIL AND ITS REMEDY   
NO. 223

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, NOVEMBER 14, 1858, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

The Iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great. Ezekiel 9:9.   
The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleans us from all sin. 1 John 1:7.

I SHALL have two texts this morningthe evil and its remedy. The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great. And The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleans us from all sin.

We can learn nothing of the Gospel except by feeling its Truthsno one Truth of the Gospel is ever truly known and really learned until we have tested and tried and proved it and its power has been exercised upon us. I have heard of a naturalist who thought himself exceedingly wise with regard to the natural history of birds and yet he had learned all he knew in his study and had never so much as seen a bird either flying through the air or sitting upon its perch. He was but a fool although he thought himself exceeding wise. And there are some men who think themselves great theologians. They might even pretend to take a doctors degree in divinity. And yet, if we came to the root of the matter and asked them whether they ever saw or felt any of these things of which they talked, they would have to say, No. I know these things in the letter, but not in the spirit. I understand them as a matter of theory, but not as things of my own consciousness and experience.

Be assured that as the naturalist who was merely the student of other mens observations knew nothing, so the man who pretends to religion but has never entered into the depths and power of its doctrinesor felt the influence of them upon his heartknows nothing whatever and all the knowledge he pretends to is but varnished ignorance. There are some sciences that may be learned by the head, but the science of Christ crucified can only be learned by the heart.

I have made use of this remark as the preface to my sermon because I think it will be forced from each of our hearts before we have done, if the two truths which I shall consider this morning shall come at all home to us with power. The first truth is the greatness of our sin. No man can know the greatness of sin till he has felt it, for there is no measuring rod for sin except its condemnation in our own conscience when the Law of

God speaks to us with a terror that may be felt. And as for the richness of the blood of Christ and its ability to wash usof that also we can know nothing till we have ourselves been washed and have ourselves proved that the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God has cleansed us from all sin.

I. I shall begin, then, with the first doctrine as it is contained in the ninth chapter of Ezekiel, the ninth verseThe iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great. There are two great lessons which every man must learn and learn by experience, before he can be a Christian. First, he must learn that sin is an exceeding great and evil thing. And he must learn also that the blood of Christ is an exceedingly precious thing and is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto it. The former lesson we have before us. O may God, by His infinite Spirit and by His great wisdom teach it to some of us who never knew it before!

Some men imagine that the Gospel was devised, in some way or other, to soften down the harshness of God towards sin. Ah, how mistaken the idea! There is no more harsh condemnation of sin anywhere than in the Gospel. You shall go to Sinai and you shall there hear its thunders rolling. You shall behold the flashing of its terrible lightning, till, like Moses, you shall exceedingly fear and quake and come away declaring that sin must be a terrible thing otherwise the Holy One had never come upon Mount Paran with all these terrors round about Him. But after that you shall go to Calvary. There you shall see no lightning and you shall hear no thunder, but instead thereof you shall hear the groans of an expiring God and you shall behold the contortions and agonies of One who bore

*All that Incarnate God could bear,   
With strength enough and none to spare.*

And then you shall say, Now, though I never fear nor quake, I know how exceedingly great a thing sin must be since such a Sacrifice was required to make an atonement for it. Oh, Sinners! If you come to the Gospel imagining that there you shall find an apology for your sin, you have indeed mistaken your way. Moses charges you with sin and tells you that you are without excuse. But as for the Gospel, it rends away from you every shadow of a covering. It leaves you without a cloak for your sin. It tells you that you have sinned willfully against the Most High Godthat you have not an apology that you can possibly make for all the iniquities that you have committed against Him. And so far from smoothing over your sin and telling you that you are a weak creature and therefore could not help your sin, it charges upon you the very weakness of your nature and makes that itself the most damning sin of all. If you seek apologies you better look into the face of Moses, when it is clothed with all the majesty of the terrors of the Law, than into the face of the Gospelfor that is more terrible by far to him who seeks to cloak his sin.

Nor does the Gospel in any way whatever give man a hope that the claims of the Law will be in any way loosened. Some imagine that under the old dispensation God demanded great things of manthat He did bind upon man heavy burdens that were grievous to be borneand they suppose that Christ came into the world to put upon the shoulders of men a lighter Lawsomething which would be more easy for them to obeya Law which they can more readily keep, or which if they break, would not come upon them with such terrible threats. Ah, not so. The Gospel came not into the world to soften down the Law. Till Heaven and earth shall pass away, not one jot or tittle of the Law shall fail. What God has said to the sinner in the Law, He says to the sinner in the Gospel. If He declares that, the soul that sins it shall die, the testimony of the Gospel is not contrary to the testimony of the Law. If He declares that whosoever breaks the sacred Law shall most assuredly be punished, the Gospel also demands blood for blood and eye for eye and tooth for tooth and does not relax a solitary jot or tittle of its demands. It is as severe and as terribly just as even the Law itself. Do you reply to this, that Christ has certainly softened down the Law? I reply that you know not, then, the mission of Christ.

What said He Himself? The Lord has said in the Law You shall not commit adulteryhas Christ softened the Law? No. Says He, I say unto you that whosoever looks upon a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart. That is no softening of the Law. It is, as it were, the grinding of the edge of the terrible sword of Divine Justice to make it sharper far than it seemed before. Christ has not put out the furnace. He rather seems to heat it seven times hotter. Before Christ came sin seemed unto me to be but little. But when He came sin became exceeding sinful and all its dread heinousness started out before the light.

But, says one, Surely the Gospel does in some degree remove the greatness of our sin. Does it not soften the punishment of sin? Ah, no. You shall appeal to Moses. Let him ascend the pulpit and preach to you. He says, The soul that sins, it shall die. And his sermon is dread and terrible. He sits downand now comes Jesus Christ, the man of a loving countenance. What says He with regard to the punishment of sin? Ah, Sirs, there was never such a preacher of the fires of Hell as Christ was. Our Lord Jesus Christ was all love but He was all honesty, too. Never man spoke like that man, when He came to speak of the punishment of the lost. What other Prophet was the author of such dread expressions as these?He shall burn up the chaff with unquenchable fireThese shall go away into everlasting punishment? Or thisWhere their worm dies

not and their fire is not quenched?

Stand at the feet of Jesus when He tells you of the punishment of sin and the effect of iniquity and you may tremble there far more than you would have done if Moses had been the preacher and if Sinai had been in the background to conclude the sermon. No, Brethren, the Gospel of Christ in no sense whatever helps to make sin less. The proclamation of Christ today by His minister is the same as the utterance of Ezekiel of oldThe iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great.

And now let us endeavor to deal with hearts and consciences a moment. My Brethren, there are some here who have never felt this truth. There are many of you who start back frightened from it. You will go home and represent me as one who delights to dwell on certain dark and terrible things that I suppose to be trueyou say within yourselves, I cannot, I will not receive that doctrine of sin. I know I am a frail weak creature. I have made a great many mistakes in my lifethat I will admit. But still such is my nature and I therefore could not help it. I am not going to be arraigned before a pulpit and condemned as the chief of criminals. I may be a sinnerI confess I am with all the rest of mankindbut as to my sin being anything so great as that man attempts to describe, I do not believe it. I reject the doctrine.

And do you think, my Friend, that I am surprised at your doing so? I know who you are. It is because as yet the grace of God has never touched your soul that therefore you say this. And here comes the proof of the doctrine with which I started. You do not know this truth because you have never felt it. But if you had felt it, as every true-born child of God has felt it, you would say, The man cannot describe its terrors as they are. They must be felt before they can be known and when felt they are not to be expressed in all their fullness of terror.

But come, let me reason with you for a moment. Your sin is great, although you think it small. Remember, Brothers and Sisters, I am not about to make out that your sin is greater than mine. I speak to you and I speak to myself alsoyour sin is great. Follow me in these few thoughts and perhaps you will better understand it. How great a thing is one sin, when according to the Word of God one sin could suffice to damn the soul? One sin, remember, destroyed the whole human race. Adam did but take of the forbidden fruit and that one sin blasted Eden and made all of us inheritors of the curse and caused the earth to bring forth thorns and thistles, even unto this day. But it may be asked, could one sin destroy the soul? Is it possible that one solitary sin could open the gates of Hell and then close them upon the guilty soul forever and that God should refuse His mercy and shut out that soul forever from the presence of His face? Yes, if I believe my Bible, I must believe that. Oh, how great must my sins be if this is the terrible effect of one transgression. Sin cannot be the little thing that my pride has helped me to imagine it to be. It must be an awful thing if but one sin could ruin my soul forever!

Think again my Friend, for a moment, what an imprudent and impertinent thing sin is. Behold, there is one God who fills all in all and He is the Infinite Creator. He makes me and I am nothing more in His sight than an animated grain of dust. And I, that animated grain of dust, with a mere ephemeral existence, have the impertinence and imprudence to set up my will against His will! I dare to proclaim war against the Infinite Majesty of Heaven! It is a thing so audaciousso infernally full of pridethat one need not marvel that even a sin in the little eye of man, should, when it is looked upon by the conscience in the light of Heaven, appear to be great indeed.

But think again, how great does your sin and mine seem if we will but think of the ingratitude which has marked it? The Lord our God has fed us from our youth up to this day. He has put the breath into our nostrils and has held our souls in life. He has clothed the earth with mercies and He has permitted us to walk across these fair fields. And He has given us bread to eat and raiment to put on and mercies so precious that their full value can never be known until they are taken from us. And yet you and I have persevered in breaking all His laws willfully and wantonlywe have gone contrary to His will. It has been sufficient for us to know that a thing has been Gods will and we have at once run contrary to it. Oh, if we set our secret sins in the light of His mercy, if our transgressions are set side by side with His favors, we must each of us say our sins, indeed, are exceedingly great!

Mark, I am not now addressing myself solely and wholly to those whom the Word itself condemns of great sin. We of course do not hesitate for a moment to speak of the drunkard, the whoremonger, the adulterer and the thief as being great sinners. We should not spare to say that their iniquity is exceedingly great, for it exceeds even the bounds of mans morality and the laws of our civil government. But I am speaking this day to you who have been the most moral. To you whose outward carriage is everything that could be desired. To you who have kept the Sabbath. To you who have frequented Gods house and outwardly worshipped. Your sins and mine are exceeding great. They seem but little to the outward eye but if we came to dig into the heart and see their iniquity, their hideous blackness, we must say of them they are exceeding great.

And againI repeat it, this is a doctrine that no man can rightly know and receive until he has felt it. My Hearer, have you ever felt this doctrine to be true?My sin is exceeding great. Sickness is a terrible thing, more especially when it is accompanied with pain, when the poor body is

racked to an extreme so that the spirit fails within us and we are dried up like a potsherd. But I bear witness in this place this morning that sickness, however agonizing, is nothing like the discovery of the evil of sin. I had rather pass through seven years of the most wearisome pain and the most languishing sickness than I would ever again pass through the terrible discovery of the terrors of sin. There be some of you who will understand what I mean, for you have felt the same. Once you were playing with your lusts and dallying with your sin and it pleased God to open your eyes to see that sin is exceeding sinful. You remember the horror of that stateit seemed as if all hideous things were gathered into one dread and awful spectacle. You had before loved your iniquities, but now you loathed themand you loathed yourselves.

Before, you had thought that your transgressions might easily be gotten rid ofthey were matters that might be speedily washed out by repentance or purged away by amendment of your life. But now sin seemed an alarming thing and knowing that you had committed all this iniquitylife seemed to you a curse and death. If it had not been for that dreary something after death, it would have been to you the highest blessing if you could have escaped the lashings of your conscience, which seemed to be perpetually whipping you with whips of burning wire. Some of you, perhaps, passed through but a little of this. God was graciously pleased to give you deliverance in a few hours. But you must confess that those hours were hours into which it seemed as if years of misery had been compressed.

It was my sad lot for three or four years to feel the greatness of my sin without a discovery of the greatness of Gods mercy. I had to walk through this world with more than a world upon my shoulders and sustain a grief that so far exceeds all other griefs, as a mountain exceeds a mole hill. And I often wonder to this day how it was that my hand was kept from rending my own body into pieces through the terrible agony which I felt, when I discovered the greatness of my transgression. Yet I had not been a greater sinner than anyone of you here present, openly and publicly, but heart sins were laid bare, sins of lip and tongue were discovered and then I knewoh, that I may never have to learn over again in such a dreadful school this terrible lessonThe iniquity of Judah and of Israel is exceeding great. This is the first part of the discourse.

II. Well, cries one, turning on his heel, there is very little comfort in that. It is enough to drive one to despair, if not to madness itself. Ah, Friend, such is the very design of this text. If I may have the pleasure of driving you to despair, if it is a despair of your self-righteousness and a despair of saving your own soul, I shall be thrice happy.

We turn therefore from that terrible text to the second onethe first of John, the first chapter and the seventh verseThe blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleans us from all sin. There lies the blacknesshere stands the Lord Jesus Christ. What will He do with it? Will He go and speak to it and say, This is no great evil. This blackness is but a little spot? Oh, noHe looks at it and He says, This is terrible blackness, darkness that may be felt. This is an exceeding great evil. Will He cover it up then? Will He weave a mantle of excuses and then wrap it round about the iniquity?

Nowhatever covering there may have been He lifts it off and He declares that when the Spirit of Truth is come He will convict the world of sin and lay the sinners conscience bare and probe the wound to the bottom. What then will He do? He will do a far better thing than make an excuse or than to pretend in any way to speak lightly of it. He will cleanse it all away, remove it entirely by the power and meritorious virtue of His own blood which is able to save unto the uttermost! The Gospel does not consist in making a mans sin appear little. The way Christians get their peace is not by seeing their sins shriveled and shrinking until they seem small to them. On the contrarythey, first of all, see their sins expanding and thenafter thatthey obtain their peace by seeing those sins entirely swept awayfar as the east is from the west.

Now, carrying in mind the remarks I made upon the first text, I call your attention for a few moments to the greatness and beauty of the second one. Note here, The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleans us from ALL sin. Dwell on the word all for a moment. Our sins are great. Every sin is great. But there are some that in our apprehension seem to be greater than others. There are crimes that the lip of modesty could not mention. I might go far in this pulpit this morning in describing the degradation of human nature in the sins which it has invented. It is amazing how the ingenuity of man seems to have exhausted itself in inventing fresh crimes. Surely there is not the possibility of the invention of a new sin. But if there is, before long man will invent itfor man seems exceedingly cunning and full of wisdom in the discovery of means of destroying himself and the endeavor to injure His Maker.

But there are some sins that show a diabolical extent of degraded ingenuitysome sins of which it were a shame to speakof which it were disgraceful to think. But note hereThe blood of Jesus Christ cleans from all sin. There may be some sins of which a man cannot speak, but there is no sin which the blood of Christ cannot wash away. Blasphemy, however profane. Lust, however bestial. Covetousness, however far it may have gone into theft and plunder. Breach of the Commandments of God, however much of riot it may have runall this may be pardoned and washed away through the blood of Jesus Christ.

In all the long lists of human sins, though they are long as time, there stands but one sin that is unpardonable and that one no sinner has committed if he feels within himself a longing for mercy. For that sin once committed, the soul becomes hardened, dead and seared and never desires afterwards to find peace with God. I therefore declare to you, O trembling Sinner, that however great your iniquity may be, whatever sin you may have committed in all the lists of guilt, however far you may have exceeded all your fellow-creatures, though you may have distanced the Pauls and Magdalenes and every one of the most heinous culprits in the black race of sinthe blood of Christ is able to wash your sin away.

MarkI speak not lightly of your sins, they are exceedingly great. But I speak still more loftily of the blood of Christ. Great as your sins are, the blood of Christ is greater still. Your sins are like great mountainsbut the blood of Christ is like Noahs Floodtwenty cubits upwards shall this blood prevail and the top of the mountains of your sin shall be covered.

Take the word all in another sense. Not only as taking in all sorts of sin, but as comprehending the great aggregate mass of sin. Come here Sinner, you with the gray head. What are we to understand in your case by this word all? Bring here the tremendous load of the sins of your youth Those sins are still in your bones and your tottering knees sometimes testify against the iniquities of your early youth. But all these sins Christ can remove. Now bring here the sins of your riper manhood, your transgressions in the family, your failures in businessall the mistakes and all the errors you have committed in the thoughts of your heart. Bring them all here. And then add the iniquities of your frail and trembling age. What a mass is there! What a mass of sin! Stir up that putrid massbut put your finger to your nostrils firstfor you can not bear the stench if you are a man with a living and quickened conscience. Could you bear to read your own diary if you had written there all your acts? No. Though you are the purest of mankind, your thoughtsif they could have been recordedwould now if you could read them, make you startle and wonder that you are demon enough to have had such imaginations within your soul. But put them all here and all these sins the blood of Christ can wash away.

No, more than that. Come here you thousands who are gathered together this morning to listen to the Word of God. What is the aggregate of your guilt? Here you have come, men of every grade and class and women of every age and orderwhat is the mass of all your united guilt? Could you put it so that mortal observation could comprehend the whole? Even if it were as a mountain with a base, broad as eternity and a summit lofty almost as the throne of the great archangel? But, remember, the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleans from all sin. Let but the blood be applied to our consciences and all our guilt is removed and cast away foreverall not one left, not one solitary stain remainingall gone, like Israels enemiesall drowned in the Red Sea so that there was not one of them left. All swept away, not so much as the remembrance of them remaining. The blood of Jesus Christ cleans from all sin.

Yet, once morein the praise of this blood we must notice one further feature. There are some of you here who are saying, Ah, that shall be my hope when I come to die, that in the last hour of my extremity the blood of Christ will take my sins away. It is now my comfort to think that the blood of Christ shall wash and purge and purify the transgressions of life. But, markmy text doesnt say that! It does not say the blood of Christ shall cleansethat is truebut it says something greater than thatit says, The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanscleans now. And is it possible that now a man may be forgiven? Can a harlot now have all her sins blotted out of the Book of God? And can she know it? Can the thief this day have all his transgressions cast into the sea. And can he know it?

Can I, the chief of sinners, this day be cleansed from all my sins and know it? Can I know that I stand accepted before the Throne of God, a holy creature because washed from every sin? Yes! Tell the wide world over that the blood of Christ can not only wash you in the last dying article, but can wash you NOW. And let it be known, moreover, that to this there are a thousand witnesses, who, rising in this very place from their seats, could sing

*Oh, how sweet to view the flowing   
Of my Saviors precious blood,   
With Divine assurance knowing,   
He has made my peace with God.*

What would you not give to have all your sins blotted out now? Would you not give yourself away to become the servant of God forever, if now your sins should be washed away? Ah, then, say not in your hearts, What shall I do to obtain this mercy? Imagine not there is any difficulty in your way. Suppose not there is some hard thing to be done before you can come to Christ to be washed. O Beloved! To the man that knows himself to be guilty, there is not one barrier between himself and Christ. Come, Soul, this moment come to Him that hung upon the Cross of Calvary! Come now and be washed!

But what do I mean by coming? I mean thiscome and put your trust in Christ and you shall be saved. What is meant by believing in Christ? Some say, that to believe in Christ is to believe that Christ died for me. That is not a satisfactory definition of faith. An Arminian believes that Christ died for everybody. He must, therefore, necessarily believe that

Christ died for him. His believing that will not save him, for he will still remain an unconverted man and yet believe that.

To believe in Christ is to trust Him. The way I believe in Christ and I know not how to speak of it except as I feel it myself, is simply thisI know it is written that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. I do firmly believe that those He came to save He will save. The only question I ask myself is, Can I put myself among that number whom He has declared He came to save? Am I a sinner? Not one that utters the word in a complimentary sense, but do I feel the deep compunction in my inmost soul? Do I stand and feel convicted, guilty and condemned? I do. I know I do. Whatever I may not be, one thing I know I ama sinnerguilty, consciously guilty and often miserable on account of that guilt.

Well, then, the Scripture says, This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners *And when your eye of faith is dim,   
Still trust in Jesus, sink or swim.;   
Thus, at His footstool, bow the knee   
And Israels God your peace shall be.*

Let me put my entire trust in the bloody sacrifice which He offered upon my behalf. No dependence will I have in my prayers, my works, my feelings, my weeping, my preaching, my thinking, my Bible readings, nor all that. I would desire to have good works and yet in my good works I will not put a shadow of trust.

*Nothing in my hands I bring,   
Simply to your Cross I cling.*

And if there is any power in Christ to save I am saved. If there is an everlasting arm extended by Christ and if that Savior who hung there was God over all, blessed forever, and if His blood is still exhibited before the Throne of God as the sacrifice for sin, then I cannot perish till the Throne of God shall break and till the pillars of Gods justice shall crumble.

Now, Sinner, what have you to do this morning? If you feel your guilt to be great, cast yourself entirely upon this sacrifice by blood. But no, says one, I have not felt enough. Your feelings are not Christ. No, but I have not prayed enough. Your prayers are not Christ and your prayers cannot save you. No, but I have not repented enough. Your repentance may destroy you, if you put that in the place of Christ. All that you have, I repeat this morning, is thisdo you feel yourself to be a lost, ruined, guilty sinner? Then simply cast yourself on the fact that Christ is able to save sinners and rest there. What? Do you say you cannot do it? Oh may God enable you, may He give you faith, sink or swim, to cast yourself on that. Well, but, you say, I may notbeing such a sinner. You mayand God never yet rejected a sinner that sought salvation by Jesus. Such a thing never happened, though the sinner sometimes thought it had.

Come, the crumb is under the table. Though you are but a dog, come and pick it up. It is a privilege even for the dog to take it. And mercy that is great to you is but a crumb to Him that gives it freelycome and take it. Christ will not reject you. And if you are the worst sinner that ever lived, only simply trust yourself upon Him and perish you cannot, if God is God and if this Bible is the book of His Truth. The Lord now help each one of us to come afresh to Christ and to His name be glory. Amen.

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WALKING IN THE LIGHT AND WASHED IN THE BLOOD

NO. 663

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 3, 1865, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of   
Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.   
1 John 1:7.

THERE are two great powers in conflict in this world. One is the power of good, of which God is the King and the other is the power of evil, which is represented by the Prince of the power of the air, Satan. The first principle is set forth by John under the figure of light. God himself is essential Light and everything which is good in the world is an emanation from Himself. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

The light is the evident emblem of the Truth of God. Darkness is the symbol of error. Light represents holiness. Darkness is the appropriate figure for sin. Light represents knowledge, especially of spiritual things, since light reveals. Darkness is the fit token of the ignorance under which the natural mind labors perpetually. By nature we are all born under the dominion of darknesswe grope our way like blind men and when we knew God by the light of His works, we glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in our imaginations and our foolish heart was darkened.

Naturally, spiritual things are not discernible by manthey are spiritual and spiritually discerned and the carnal mind cannot perceive themfor it walks in darkness. The guilt of sin is a thing too high for the carnal mind to understand. The glory of the eternal sacrifice it cannot perceive. The excellence of God, the faithfulness of His promise and the validity of His Covenantall such things as these are swathed in mist the carnal mind sees them not. As soon as ever the Grace of God comes into the heart, it makes as great a difference as did the eternal fiat of Jehovah, when He said, Let there be light, and there was light.

As soon as God the Holy Spirit begins to work upon the soul of man to illuminate him, he perceives at once his own sinfulness. He abhors that sinfulness, he labors to escape from it, he cries out for a remedyhe finds it in Christtherefore he no longer loves sin, he is not guided any longer by the darkness of policy and selfishness and error, but he walks after the light of the Truth of God, of righteousness, of holiness, of true knowledge. God has brought him into lighthe sees now what he never saw before! He knows, feels, believes, recognizes what he never had known anything of beforehe is in the light.

Therefore you constantly find the Christian called a child of light and he is warned that he is of the light and of the day. He is told, You are not of the night nor of darkness. You were sometime darkness, but now are you light in the Lord: walk as children of light. You perceive in the text, then, that the Christian is spoken of as a man who is in the light. But there is something more said of him than this. He is practically in the light, if we walk in the light. It is of no use to pretend to have light in the brainso as to comprehend all knowledge, so as to be sound and orthodox in ones doctrinal opinionsthis will be of no vital service so far as the great point of salvation is concerned.

A man may think he has much light, but if it is only notional and doctrinal and is not the light which enlightens his nature and develops itself in his practical walk, he lies when he talks of being in the light, for he is in darkness altogether. Nor is it truthful to pretend or profess that we have light within in the form of experience if we do not walk in it, for where the light is true, it is quite certain to show itself abroad.

If there is a candle within the lantern, its light will stream forth into the surrounding darkness and those who have eyes will be able to see it. I have no right to say I have light unless I walk in it. The Apostle is very peremptory with those who so speak. He says, He that says I know Him and keeps not His Commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him. The Christian, then, is in the light and he is practically in ithis walk and conversation are regulated by the Truth of God, by holinessand by that Divine knowledge which God has been pleased to bestow upon him. He walks in the light of faith, in another path than that which is trod by men who have nothing but the light of sense. He sees Him who is invisible and the sight of the invisible God operates upon his soul.

He looks into eternity, he marks the dread reward of sin and the blessed gift of God to those who trust in Jesus and eternal realities have an effect upon his whole manner and conversationfrom now on he is a man in the light, walking in that light. There is a very strong description given hereIf we walk in the light as He is in the light. Beloved, the thought of that dazzles me! I have tried to look it in the face, but I cannot endure it. If we walk in the light as God is in the light! Can we ever attain to this? Shall poor flesh and blood ever be able to walk as clearly in the light as He is whom we call Our Father, of whom it is written, God is light and in Him is no darkness at all?

Let us say this much and then commend this wonderful expression to your meditations. Certainly this is the model which is set before us, for the Savior Himself said, Be you perfect, even as your Father who is in Heaven is perfect. And if we take anything short of absolute perfection as our model of life we shall certainly, even if we should attain to our ideal, fall short of the Glory of God! Beloved, when a schoolmaster writes the copy at the head of the page, he does not expect that the boy will come up to the copybut then, if the copy is not a perfect one, it is not fit to be imitated by a child.

And so our God gives us Himself as the pattern and copy, Be you imitators of God as dear children, for nothing short of Himself would be a worthy model. Though we, as life sculptors, may feel that we can never rival the perfection of God, yet we are to seek after it and never to be satisfied until we attain it. The youthful artist, as he grasps his early pencil, can hardly hope to equal Raphael or Michelangelo! But still, if he did not have a noble ideal before his mind, he would only attain to something very mean and ordinary. Heavenly fingers point us to the Lord Jesus as the great Exemplar of His people and the Holy Spirit works in us a likeness to Him.

But what does it mean that the Christian is to walk in light as God is in the light? We conceive it to import likeness, but not degree. We are as truly in the light. We are as heartily in the light. We are as sincerely in the light, as honestly in the light, though we cannot be there in the same degree. I cannot dwell in the sunit is too bright a place for my residenceunless I shall be transformed, like Uriel, Miltons angel who could dwell in the midst of the blaze of its excessive glory. But I can walk in the light of the sun though I cannot dwell in it. And so God is the Light, He is Himself the Sun and I can walk in the light as He is in the light, though I cannot attain to the same degree of perfection and excellence and purity and truth in which the Lord, Himself, resides.

Trapp is always giving us the Truth of God in a way in which we can remember itso he says we are to be in the light as God is in the light for quality, but not for equality. We are to have the same light and as truly to have it and walk in it as God does, though as for equality with God in His holiness and perfectionthat must be left until we cross the Jordan and enter into the perfection of the Most High.

Having thus briefly sketched the character of the genuine Christian, observe, Beloved, that he is the possessor of two privileges. The first is fellowship with God. We have fellowship one with another. And the second is complete cleansing from sinand the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. The first privilege we will have but a word uponit is fellowship with God. As you read this verse in our translation, it looks very much as if all that was meant was fellowship with your brother Christians. But this, according to able critics, would not convey the sense of the original.

The Arabic version renders it, God with us and we with Him, and several copies read, we have fellowship with Him. Our version almost compels you to think of fellowship with other Believers, but such is not the intention of the Spirit. We have mutual fellowshipbetween God and our souls there is communion. This is the sense of the passage. God is Lightwe walk in lightwe agree. Can two walk together unless they are agreed? It is clear we are agreed as to the principles which we shall advanceGod is the champion of Truth, so are we. God is the promoter of holiness, so are we. God seeks that love may reign instead of selfishness, so does the Christian. God hates error and spares no arrows to destroy it. The Christian also contends earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

God is pure, and the pure in heart shall see God. God is holiness and those who are holy are attracted to God from an affinity of nature, even as the needle is attracted to its pole. If the Lord has visited you and made you to walk in light, you shall surely have fellowship with God your Father. He that is in darkness cannot have fellowship with God. Veiled in ignorance, guided by passion, controlled by error, led astray by falsehoodhow can you aspire to talk with your God? Your prayer is but a chattering sound! Your song is the clang of a sounding brass, the noise of a tinkling cymbal! Your devotion bears you no further than the letter which kills!

But oh, poor Soul, if God should take you out of your darkness and make you to see yourself, to see Him and follow after Truth and righteousness and holiness, why then your prayer would be heard in Heaven, your song would mingle with the sweet notes of celestial harps and even your groans and tears would reach your Fathers heart, for you would enjoy fellowship with Him! If we walk with God as God is in the light, the secret of God is with us and our secret is with God. He opens His heart to us and we open our heart to Himwe become friends! We are bound and knit together so that being made partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust, we live like Enoch, having our conversation above the skies.

Upon the second privilege we intend to dwell. I have been driven to this text and yet I have been afraid of it. This text has been handled, the latter part of it, I mean, very often out of its context. Yet it has had such a comforting influence on many souls that I have been half afraid to discourse upon it in its true context. And yet I have felt, Well, if anything I should say should take away any comfort from any seeking soul, I shall be very sorry, but I cannot help it. I do feel that it is essential to the Christian ministry not to pick passages out of Gods Word and rend them away from the context, but to take them as they stand.

As this text stands, it does not seem to me to gleam with the particular ray of comfort which others see in it, but it has another beam of joy even more radiant! Gods Word must be taken as God speaks itwe have no right to divide the living child of Divine Truth, or wrest it to make it mean other than it does. According to the text, special pardon of sin is the peculiar privilege of those who walk in the light as God is in the light and it is not the privilege of anyone else. Only those who have been brought by Divine Grace from a state of nature into a state of Grace and walk in the light may claim the possession of perfect cleansing through the blood of Jesus Christ.

In dwelling upon this latter part of the verse, there seemed to me to be seven things in it which any thoughtful reader would be struck with. Considered as the privilege of every man who, however limpingly, is walking in the light, this word, which tells of pardon bought with blood, is very preciousa crown set with jewels! To seven choice pearls I invite your loving gaze.

1. The first thing that struck me was THE GREATNESS of everything in the text. In some places everything is little. You talk with some mentheir thoughts, their ideas are all little. Almost everything is drawn to a scale and aspiring minds generally draw their matters to as great a scale as they can find, but that is necessarily a little one. See to what a magnificent scale everything is drawn in our text! Think, Beloved, how great the sin of Gods people is! Will you try and get that thought into your minds? How great is your own sinyour sin before conversionthink that over! Your sin while seeking the Lord in putting confidence in your own works and looking after refuges of lies. Your sins since conversionturn them over.

Beloved, one sin towers up like an Alp! But we have many sins heaped upon each other, as in the old fable of the giants who piled Pelion upon Ossa, mountain upon mountain! O God, what an aggregate of sin is there in the life of one of Your most pure and most sanctified children! Multiply this. All the sin of one child of Godmultiply it by the number of those contained in that word us. Cleanses us from all sin! How many are Gods children? Gods Word shall answer. A multitude that no man can number, out of all kindreds and peoples and tongues, stood before the Throne. Can you imaginedeep as Hells bottomless pit! High as Heavens own Gloryfor sin sought to pluck even God out of His Throne! Wide as the east is from the west! Long as eternity is this great mass of the guilt of the people for whom Christ shed His blood! And yet all this is taken away! The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.

Then observe the greatness of the Atonement offered. Will you inwardly digest those words, the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son? Blood is at all times precious, but this is no blood of a mere manit is the blood of an innocent Man! Better still, it is the blood of Man in union with DeityHis Son! Gods Son! Why, angels cast their crowns before Him! All the choral symphonies of Heaven surround His glorious Throne. God over all, blessed forever. Amen. And yet He yields His blood! He takes upon Himself the form of a servant and then is scourged and pierced, bruised and torn and at last slainfor nothing but the blood of Deity could make atonement for human sin!

The Atonement must be no man, merelyHe must be the God-Man Mediator, the Fellow of Jehovah, co-equal and co-eternal with HimHe must bear the pangs and bitterness of Divine wrath which was due to sin. Think of thisa sacrifice which no human mind can ever properly estimate in the infinity of its value! Here, indeed, we have greatnessgreat sin, but a great Atonement! Think againwe have here great love which provided such a Sacrifice. Oh, how He must have loved, to have descended from Heaven to earth and from earth to the grave! How He must have loved, to have chosen us, when we were hating Himwhen we were enemies! He has reconciled us unto God by His own death!

Dead in trespasses and sins, corruptwrapped up in the cerements of evil habits, hateful and hating one another, full of sin and every abominationyet He loved us so as to yield up His soul unto death for us. We are dealing with great things here, indeed, and we must not forget the greatness of the influence which such an Atonement, the result of such love, must have upon the Christians heart. Oh, the greatness of the peace which passes all understanding, which flows from this great Atonement! Oh, the greatness of the gratitude which must blaze forth from such a sacred fire as this! Oh, the greatness of the hatred of sin, of the revenge against iniquity which must spring from a sense of such love, when it is shed abroad in the heart!

You are citizens enjoying no mean privilege, oh, you blood-bought citizens of a blood-bought city! God has loved you. You cannot, though I should allot you a whole lifetimeyou cannot get to the depth of that love God has loved you and to prove His love He has died in the Person of man for you. He loves you and has overcome the dread result of all your fearful sin! And now, by the love which God has manifested, we do pray you let your holiness, your truthfulness and your zeal prove that you understand the greatness of those things. If your heart can really conceive the greatness of the things here revealedthe great sin, the great Savior offering Himself out of great love that He might make you to be greatly privilegedI am sure your hearts will rejoice!

2. The next thing which sparkles in the text is its SIMPLE SOLITARINESSWe have fellowship one with another. And then it is added as a simple, gloriously simple statement, the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. Observe there is nothing said about rites and ceremonies. It does not begin by saying, and the waters of Baptism, together with the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us. Not a word, whether it shall be the sprinkling in infancy, or immersion of Believersnothing is said about itit is the blood, the blood only, without a drop of baptismal water!

Nothing is here said about sacramentswhat some call the blessed Eucharist, is not dragged in herenothing about eating bread and drinking wine! It is the blood, nothing but the bloodthe blood of Jesus Christ, His Son. And if nothing is said of rites that God has given, rites that man has invented are equally excluded. Not a syllable is uttered concerning celibacy or monasticism! Not a breath about vows of perpetual chastity and poverty! Not a hint about confession to a priest and human absolution! Not an allusion to penance or extreme unction! The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.

It was well done by a poor woman who, as she lay sick, heard for the first time the precious Gospel of her salvation. She was told that the blood alone cleansed from sin. She believed, and then, putting her hand into her bosom, she took out a little crucifix which she had always worn, hanging from a chain about her neck, and said to the preacher, Then I dont want this, Sir. Ah, truly so! And so may we say of everything that man has devised as a consolation to a poor wounded spirit. I have found Jesus and I do not want that, Sir. You who want it, keep itbut as for us, if we walk in the light as He is in the lightthe blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, so completely purges us from all sin that we dare not look to anything else lest we come into the bondage of the beggarly elements of this world!

You will perceive, too, that nothing is said about Christian experience as a means of cleansing. What? says one. Does not the first sentences of the verse imply that? Assuredly not, for you perceive that the first sentence of the verse does not interfere, though it is linked, with the other. If I walk in the light as God is in the light, what then? Does my walking in the light take away my sins? Not at all! I am as much a sinner in the light as in the darkness if it were possible for me to be in the light without being washed in the blood.

Well, but we have fellowship with God, and does not having fellowship with God take away sin? Beloved, do not misunderstand me! No man can have fellowship with God unless sin is taken awaybut his fellowship with God and his walking in light, does not take away his sinnot at all. The whole process of the removal of sin is here, And the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. I beg to repeat itthe text does not say that our walking in the light cleanses us from sin! It does not say that our having fellowship with God cleanses us from sinthese are the result of cleansing, but they have no connection as causeit is the blood and the blood alone which purges us from sin!

The dying thief looked to Christ and sin was taken away by the blood. And there is a Brother in Christ here who has had such an experience of Christs love for sixty years that his heart is now like a shock of corn, ripe for Heaven. He lives in his Masters Presence, he spends the most of his time in his Masters service! But, Beloved, there is not a single atom of difference between him and the dying thief so far as the cleansing away of sin is concerned! The blood cleansed the thief and the same blood washes this advanced and full-grown Christian, or otherwise he is still unclean.

Observe, yet again, that in the verse there is no hint given of any emotions, feelings, or attainments as co-operating with the blood to take away sin. Christ took the sins of His people and was punished for those sins as if He had been Himself a sinner, and so sin is taken away from us. But in no sense, degree, shape or form is sin removed by attainments, emotions, feelings or experiences! The blood is the only Atonementthe blood, without any mixture of anything else, completes and finishes the work! For you are complete in Him.

Now I could enlarge for a very long time on this point, but I do not think I shall. I will rather throw in a sentence or two and observe that whereas there are some who urge you to look to your doctrinal intelligence as a ground of comfort. I beseech you Beloved, look only to the blood! Whereas there are others who would set up a standard of Christian experience and urge that this is to be the channel of your consolation. I pray you, while you prize both doctrine and experience, rest not your souls weight but in the precious blood! Some would lead you to high degrees of fellowshipfollow them, but not when they would lead you away from the simple position of a sinner resting upon the blood! There are those who could teach you mysticism and would have you rejoice in the light within. Follow them as far as they have the warrant of Gods Word, but never take your foot from that Rock of Ages where the only safe standing can be found!

Certain of my Brethren are very fond of preaching Christ in His Second ComingI rejoice that they preach the truth concerning Christ Glorified, but, my Beloved, I do beseech you do not place your hope on Christ Glorified, nor on Christ to come, but on Christ Crucified. Remember that in the matter of taking away sin, the first thing is not the Throne, but the Crossnot the reigning Saviorbut the bleeding Savior! Not the King in His Glory, but the Redeemer in His shame. Care not to be studying dates of prophecies if burdened with sin, but seek your chief, your best comfort in the blood of Jesus Christ which cleanses us from all sinhere is the pole star of your salvationsail by it and you shall reach the port of peace.

3. A third brilliant flash in the light, viz., THE COMPLETENESS of the cleansing. The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin not from some sin, but from all sin. Beloved, I cannot tell you the exceeding sweetness of this Word, but I pray God the Holy Spirit to give you a taste of it. There is original sin, by which we fell in Adam before we were born, and there is inherited sin through which we were born in sin and shaped in iniquity. There is actual sinthe sin of my youth and my former transgressions, the sins of my riper years, the sins which defile the hoary head and make that which should be a crown of Glory to be a crown of griefand all these sins, original and actual, are all gone! All gone!

Sins against the Law, though it is exceedingly broad so that it makes me a sinner in thought, in word, in deed, in heartthey are all gone! Sins against the Gospel when I kicked against the pricks, when I stifled conscience, when I resisted the Holy Spirit as did also my fatherswhen I hated the Truth of God and would not have it because my deeds were evil and I would not come to the light lest my deeds might be reproved. Sins when I would regard none of the sweet invitations of the Gospelall cleansed away! Sins against Christ Jesus since my conversion when I have backslidden and my heart has been cold towards Him! Sins against the Holy Spirit when I have followed my own impulses instead of the indwelling Deityall gone!

The Roman Catholic divides sin into venial sins and mortal sins. Be it sothe blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin, mortal or venial, deadly or pardonable. Sins of commissionhere is a long catalogue think it over! Sins of omissionthat is still a larger list! The things which we have left undone which we ought to have done are probably more numerous than the things which we have done which we ought not to have doneall are gone! Some sins are greater than others. There is no doubt whatever that adultery, fornication, murder, blasphemy and such like are greater than the sins of daily lifebut whether they are great sins or little sinsthey are all gone! That same God who took away the plague of flies from Egypt also took away the plague of thunder and of lightning. All are gonegone at once!

Pharaohs chariot is drowned in the Red Sea and the mean Egyptian is drowned in the same way. The depths have covered them. There is not one of them left. There are sins against Godhow many there are! Sins of breaking His Day and despising His Wordprofaning His name, forgetting Him and not loving Himbut He blots out all! Sins against my friends and my enemies, against my neighbor, against my father, my child, my wife sins in all relationshipsyet all are gone! Then, too, remember there are sins of presumption and sins of ignorancesins done willfully and unknown sinsthe blood cleanses us from ALL sin!

Shall I go on? Surely I need not! But you see the purging is complete. Whether the bill is little or the bill is great, the same receipt can discharge one as the other. The blood of Jesus Christ is as blessed and Divine a payment for the sin of blaspheming Peter as it is for the sin of loving John! Our iniquity is gone, all gone at once and all gone forever. Blessed completeness! What a sweet theme to dwell upon!

4. The next gem that studs the text is the thought of PRESENTNESS. Cleanses says the textnot, shall cleanse. There are multitudes who think that as a dying hope they may look forward to pardon, and perhaps within a few hours of their dissolution they may be able to say, My sins are pardoned. Such can never have read Gods Word, or, if they have read it, they have read it with unbelieving eyes. Beloved, I would not give the snap of my finger for the bare possibility of cleansing when I come to die!

Oh how infinitely better to have cleansing now! Some imagine that a sense of pardon is an attainment after many years of Christian experience. For a young Christian to say, My sins are forgiven, seems to them to be an untimely fig, ripe too soon. But, Beloved, it is not so. The moment a sinner trusts Jesus, that sinner is as fully forgiven as he will be when the light of the Glory of God shall shine upon his resurrection countenance. Beloved, forgiveness of sin is a present thinga privilege for this day, a joy for this very hour! And whoever walks in the light as God is in the light has fellowship with God and has at this moment the perfect pardon of sin.

You perceive that it is written in the present tense as if to indicate continuanceit will always be so with you, Christian. It was so yesterdayit was cleanses yesterday, it is cleanses todayit will be cleanses tomorrow. It will be cleanses until you cross the riverevery day you may come to this fountain for it cleanses! Every hour you may stand by its brim, for it cleanses. I think there is sanctification here as well as justification. I am inclined to believe that this text has been too much limited in its interpretation and that it signifies that the blood of Jesus is constantly operating upon the man who walks in the light so as to cleanse him from the indwelling power of sin.

And the Spirit of God applies the doctrine of the Atonement to the production of purity till the soul becomes completely pure from sin at the last. I desire to feel every day the constantly purifying effect of the sacrifice of my Lord and Master. Look at the foot of the Cross and I am sure you will feel that the precious drops cleanse from all sin.

5. Now in the fifth place, the text presents to us very blessedly the thought of CERTAINTY. It is not, perhaps the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from sin. The text speaks of it as a fact not to be disputedit does do so. To the Believer this is matter of certainty, for the Spirit of God bears witness with our spirits that we are born of God. Our spirit in the joy and peace which it receives through believing becomes assured of its being cleansed, and then the Spirit of God comes in as a second Witness and bears witness with our spirit that we are born of God!

My being cleansed from all sin today is to me as much a matter of consciousness as my being better in health. I was conscious of pain when I lay on my sick bed and so, when I was living in sin, as soon as God gave me spiritual life I was conscious that guilt lay heavily upon me. I am conscious now of pain removed and so I am equally conscious of sin removedI do not hesitate to say it here, that my consciousness of pardoned sin is at this moment as clear and as distinct as my consciousness of removed pain while I look at Jesus Christ, my Lord, by faith.

So is it often with the Christian. It is frequently with him a matter of consciousness most positive and infallible that he is truly and really cleansed from all sin by the blood of Jesus Christ! It is not merely a matter of consciousness, but if you think of it, it is a matter of reasoning. If Jesus Christ did, indeed, take the sins of all who believe, then it follows, necessarily, that I, trusting in Christ, have no longer any sinfor if Christ took my sinsin cannot be in two places at once! If Christ bears it, then I do not bear it. And if Christ was punished for it, then the punishment of my sin has been endured and I cannot be punished for the sin for which Jesus has been punishedunless God should sovereignly punish men which would be such an insult to the honesty and justice of God that it must not be tolerated for a moment in our thoughts!

If Jesus Christ has paid the debt it is paid and  *Justice can demand no more,   
Christ has paid the dreadful score.*

So the Christians being cleansed from sin becomes to him a matter of spiritual argumenthe can see it clearly and manifestly. Yet more, he is so certain of it that it begins to operate upon him in blessed effect. He is so sure that there is no sin laid to his door that he draws nearer to God than a sinner, defiled with sin, may do. He enters into that which is within the veilhe talks with God as his Fatherhe claims familiar communion with the Most High God! And though God is so great that the Heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, yet he believes that that same God lives in his heart as in a temple! Now this he could not feel if he did not know that sin is put away. Beloved, no man is capable of virtue in the highest sense of the term till it is a matter of certainty to him that his sin is cleansed.

You say, That is a strong assertion, but I do assert itall of you who are doing good works with the view to saving yourselves are missing the mark of pure virtue. You say, Why? The goodness of an action depends upon its motive. Your motive is to save yourselvesthat is selfishyour action is selfish and the virtue of it has evaporated. But the Christian, when he performs good works, does not perform them with any view whatever of merit or self-salvation. I am saved, he saysperfectly saved. I have not a sin in Gods Book against meI am clean. Great God, before Your bar I am clean through Jesus Christ

*Loved of my God, for Him again   
With love intense I burn.*

What can I do to prove to all mankind how much, how truly I love my God? You see, then, that this must be a matter of certainty or else it will never have its right effect upon you. And I pray God that you may suck the certainty out of this text and taste its sweetness to your own souls inward contentment and be able to say, Yes, without a doubt, the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.

6. I hope I shall not weary you, but a few words upon the sixth gem which adorns the text, namely, the DIVINITY of it. Where? asks one. Does not divinity gleam in this text? Does it not strike you that the verse is written in a God-like style? The God-like style is very peculiar. You can tell the style of Milton from the style of Wordsworth, or the style of Byron. Read a verse and an educated person knows the author by the ring of the sentences. The God-like style is unique in its excellence. You need never put the name at the bottom when the writing is of the Lord. You know it by the very style of it. Light be! Light was.

Who speaks like that but Deity? Now there is a Divine ring about this sentenceThe blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. Why, if man were talking of so great an Atonement he would fetch a compass! He would have to go round about! We cannot afford to say such great things as these in a few words. We must adopt some form of speech that would allow us to extol the truth and indicate its beauties. God seems to put away His pearls as if they were but common pebbles. The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sinas if it were as much a matter of every-day work as for a man to wash his hands!

Notice the simplicity of the whole process. It does not seem to take weeks or monthsit is done at once! Slowly and by degrees is mans actionwe must lay the thing to soak, to fetch the color from it, subject it to many processes and expose it to the wind and rain and frost and sun before it can be cleansed. But here God speaks and it is done! The blood comes into contact with the guilty conscience and it is all over with sin. As if it were but a handful that moves a mountain of sin, He takes up the isles as a very little thing. He counts great oceans of our sin as though they were but a drop in a bucket. Believing in Christ in a moment, by the Divine and majestic process which God has ordained, we get the perfect cleansing of sin.

7. In the last place, just a hint upon the WISDOM of the text. What a wise way of cleansing from sin the text speaks of! Beloved, suppose God had devised a plan for pardoning sin which did not turn the sinners face to God? Then you would have a very singular spectacleyou would have a sinner pardoned by a process which enabled him to do without his God and it strikes me he would be worse off than he was before! But here, before ever the sinner can receive pardon he must say, I will arise and go unto my Father. And he must come closer into contact with God than he ever came before. He must see God in the flesh of Christ and must look to Him if he would be saved.

I do bless God that I have not to turn my face to Hell to get pardon, but I have to turn my face towards Heaven! That seems to me to be the wise way, for while it takes away the sin which was like a disease, it takes away the distance from God which was the true root of that disease. It turns the sinners face in the direction of holiness and bliss. Observe the benefit of this plan of salvation in the fact that it makes the sinner feel the evil of sin. If we were pardoned in a way which did not involve pain to someone, we should say, Oh, it is easy for God to forgive it. But when I see the streaming veins of Jesus and mark the sweat of His blood fall to the ground and hear Him cry, They have pierced My hands and My feet, then I understand that sin is a dreadful evil!

If a man should be pardoned without being made to feel that sin is bitter, I do not know that he would be really any the better offperhaps better unpardoned than pardonedunless he is led to hate sin. Our gracious God has also chosen this plan of salvation with the wise design of making man glorify God. I cannot see sin pardoned by the substitutionary Atonement of the Lord Jesus without dedicating myself to the praise and glory of the great God of redeeming love. It would be a pity if man could be pardoned and afterwards could live a selfish, thankless life, would it not? If God had devised a scheme by which sin could be pardoned and yet the sinner live to himself, I do not know that the world or the man would be advantaged.

But here are many birds killed with one stone, as the Proverb puts it. Now therefore, at the foot of the Cross, the bands which bound our soul to earth are loosened. We are strangers in the land and therefore, God forbid that we should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto us and we are crucified to the world.

I leave this text with the Believer, only adding, if any of you would have it, and joy in it, you must walk in the light. I pray God the Holy Spirit to bring you to see the light of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ! Then you will trust Him and then you shall have fellowship with Him! And by His blood you shall be cleansed from all sin. God bless you for Jesus sake. Amen.

*PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON. 1 John 1, 2:1-11.*   
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1241 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

HONEST DEALING WITH GOD   
NO. 1241

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, JUNE 20, 1875, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.   
If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.   
1 John 1:8, 9, 10.

GOD is light, and in Him is no darkness at all, and consequently He cannot have fellowship with darkness. God is light, that is, purity, and as the thrice Holy One He can hold no communion with iniquity. God is light, that is knowledge, for all things are known unto the Lord, and with ignorance He has no affinity. God is light, that is, truth, for He can neither err, nor break His word and, therefore, He cannot smile on anything that is false. We are constantly erring, first on this side and then on that, for there is darkness in us. God is essentially light and it is not possible for His Nature to be affected by either impurity or error.

Out of this attribute of His Nature arises the fact that the Lord always deals with things as they are. Man invents fictions, but God creates facts. We conceive of things as they appear, but God sees them as they exist. Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart. The looks of things impresses us, but all things are naked and open before Him. The Lord never misrepresents, nor has fellowship with misrepresentation. We are forever hurrying about with our paint and varnish and tinsellaboring to make the meaner thing appear equal to the more preciousand spending our skill in making the sham seem as brilliant as the reality. But all this is contrary to the way of the Lord.

Everything is true in God, and everything is seen in its reality by His all-discerning eyes. Because He is light, He deals with things in the light, treating them as they are. If God is to deal graciously with us, we must, each one, stand in the light, and present ourselves before Him as we are. If there is on our lips a false word, or in our heart a false thought, or in our mind a knowingly false judgmentwe are out of the sphere in which God can have fellowship with us.

If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. Yet, dear Friends, the natural tendency of our heart is to try and appear to be what we are not! We all have, more or less, to struggle against this tendency, for it assails the most truthful. That love of approval, which, rightly checked and kept in order, has its uses, very often pushes men on to pretend to be better than they are. Fear of censure is an equally powerful means of producing hypocrisy. We must, by all means, strive against the very beginnings of this frightful evil, for if it should ever get the mastery over us it will make us altogether untruthful and, consequently, we shall be far removed from all power to walk with

God.

The Lord cannot stand with us on the platform of seeming and appearance, but only on the ground of what we really are! Therefore in proportion as we are untrue we cut ourselves off from God. Our tendency to be false is illustrated in the chapter before us, for we find three grades of it there. There is first the man who liesIf we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth (v. 6). We say and do that which is untrue if, while abiding under the influence of sin and falsehood, we claim to have fellowship with God. If this tendency is left alone and unchecked, you will find the man growing worse and doing according to the 8th verse, in which it is written, We deceive ourselves.

Here the utterer of the falsehood has come to believe his own lie. He has blinded his understanding and befouled his conscience till he has become his own dupe! Falsehood has saturated his nature so that he puts darkness for light and light for darkness. This is, at once, his sin and his punishment! He closed his eyes so long that, at length, he has become stone blind! He will soon reach the complete development of his sin which is described in the 10th verse, when the man, who first lied and, then, secondly, deceived himself, becomes so audacious in his falseness as to blaspheme the Most Holy by making Him a liar.

It is impossible to say where sin will end! The beginning of it is as a little water in which a bird may wash and scatter half the pool in drops. But in its progress, sin, like the brook, swells into a torrent deep and broad. We must, therefore, judge ourselves very severely. If we do not, our natural tendency to falseness will lead us to false assertion as to ourselves and urge us on till we delude ourselves into the foolish belief that we are what we proudly represent ourselves to be! And then our sin escalates, in the desperation of our pride, to a point where we think God, Himself, is untrue. Our only safe courseand may the Spirit of God grant us Grace to follow itis to come to God as we actually are and ask Him to deal with us, in Christ Jesus, according to our actual condition.

If we are to walk with God at all, it must be in the light. And if we once walk in the light with Him, our condition will tally with the description of verse sevenwe shall see sin in ourselves and daily feel the blood of Jesus Christ cleansing us. Only on the footing of sin daily confessed and pardoned can there be any fellowship between us and the eternal God this side of Heaven, for that footing is the only one consistent with the facts of the case. Let us daily ask the Lord to keep us in a truthful spirit, admitting the truth, both concerning ourselves and our Lord, feeling its power, and desiring to He taught still more of it.

Let us pray Him to deal with us, not according to our suppositions, but according to the facts, and let us entreat Him never to allow us to rejoice in fancied blessings, such as might satisfy our proud, half-stupefied conscience, but to give to us the real blessings of genuine forgiveness and effectual cleansing from all unrighteousness. I intend at this time, as God may help us, first, to consider the three courses which lie open before us in the text. Then, secondly, to consider how to follow in the right course. And thirdly, it shall be my endeavor to lead you to consider why you should do so.

I. LET US CONSIDER THE THREE COURSES laid open before us in the text. I will suppose that we are all earnestly anxious to be in fellowship with God. We cannot bear to be His enemies any longer. Distance from Him has become distasteful to us. We long, like the prodigal son, to arise and go to our Father, that we may hereafter dwell in our Fathers house. Our deceitful heart suggests to us, first, that we should deny our present sinfulness, and so claim fellowship with God on the grounds that we are holy and so may draw near to the Holy God. It is suggested to our hearts that we should say that, we have no sin, and are neither guilty by act nor defiled in nature.

This is a bold assertion and he who makes it has no truth in him, but at different times and by very different persons it has been made and stoutly maintained. There are many ways in which this proud saying has been justified. Some have arrived at it by denying, altogether, the doctrine of original sin, as the Pelagians do vainly talk. They will not admit that there is a fault and natural corruption in the nature of every man whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness and, therefore, is, of his own nature, inclined to evil.

Now we, I trust, will always be clear from this doctrinal error, for we know, as David did, that we were shaped in iniquity, and are   
*Sprung from the man whose desperate fall Corrupts the blood, and taints us all.*

I do not suppose that many of you are likely to say you have no sin on the ground of a disbelief of natural depravity, for many of you know this Truth of God, not merely as a matter of creed, but as a terrible fact which has come home to you and caused you great sorrow. If, however, any of you should venture to plead that you have no sin on the ground that your nature is not evil, I do beseech you to rid your heart of that lie, for a lie it is, through and through! I dont care how honest your parents are, or how noble your ancestry wasthere is in you a bias towards evil. Your animal passions, no, moreyour mental faculties are unhinged and out of orderand unless some power beyond your own shall keep your desires in check, you will soon prove, by overt acts of transgression, the depravity of your nature!

It is not uncommon for others to arrive at the same conclusion by another road. They have the audacity to say that they have no sin by feelings and beliefs which they, as a rule, ascribe to the Holy Spirit. Now, if any man says that all tendency to sin is gone from him, that his heart is at all times perfect and his desires always pure, so that he has no sin in him, whatever, he may have traveled a very different road from the character we just now warned you about, but he has reached the same conclusion and we have but one word for both boasters, it is the word of our textIf we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Some, however, have reached this position by another route. They plead that though it may be they have sin, yet they are not bad at heart. They look upon sin as a technical term and though they admit, in words, that they have sin, yet they practically deny it by saying, I have a good heart at bottom. I always was well-intentioned from the very first. True,

what I have done does not appear to be right according to the very severe judgement of the Law of God, but I cannot help that. I only followed my nature and cannot be blamed, for I never meant to do anything wrong, either to God or man. I have always been kind to the poor and have done the right thing all round. I know I have erredof course we all havehere and there, but you cannot expect a fellow to be perfect! I cant say I see anything to find fault with in men.

Thus you, in effect, say you have no sin! Though you compliment God by saying with the Church service, We are miserable sinners, you do not mean it at all! You mean that if you have sinned it has been your misfortune and you are to be pitied rather than blamed. In so saying, or feeling, you prove that the truth is not in youyou are either deplorably ignorant as to what holiness is, or else you are willfully uttering a lie! In either case the Truth of God is not in you. A fourth sort of persons say the same thing, for albeit they confess that they have sinned, they think themselves now to be in a proper and fit condition to receive pardon. We have prayed, they say. We have repented, we have read the Scriptures, we have attended public worship and are as right as we can be. We have tenderness, contrition and every right and proper feelingour wonder is that we do not receive salvation.

It would be a very great wonder to me if you did! It does not matter how you got there, you have virtually come to the same place as the others of whom I have spoken, for you believe that there is nothing about you which can operate against your salvation. You think you are ripe for mercy, fit for pardonand what is this but declaring that you are not in a sinful state? All things are ready with you and you half insinuate that God is not readythis is casting the blame of your unbelief upon God and disowning it yourself! According to your ideas, you are a poor innocent whom God delays to bless! You are willing and earnest enough, and yet He passes you bydo you really believe this?

Then let me tell you that if any man dreams that he has a fitness or preparation for Divine Grace, he knows not what he speaks, for in the very nature of things, the only fitness for Grace is the need of it. The idea of fitness is only another form of the vain notion of merit and it cannot find an inch of foothold in the Gospel. True penitents can see nothing in themselves to commend them to mercy and, therefore, they cast themselves upon undeserved favor, feeling both unworthy and unfit, but hoping to receive forgiveness freely. Whatever shape our denial of our sinful nature and state may take, please remember that that denial is a mere talk, and nothing moreIf we say we have no sin.

You know how little value we attach to evidence of the nature of, I say, and, they say. There may be no truth whatever in such evidence, and in the present case there is nothing whatever to warrant the proud sayingWe have no sin. There will come a day when the righteous will have no sin, as a matter of fact, but now, whether saint or sinner, if you say, I have no sin, you say it and that is all! The words sound very pretty, but there is no fact to correspond with them. Moreover, the idea of having no sin is a delusionyou are altogether deceived if you say sothe truth is not in you and you have not seen things in the true light. You must have shut your eyes to the high requirements of the Law! You must be a stranger to your own heart! You must be blind to your own conduct and you must have forgotten to search your thoughts and to weigh your motives, or you would have detected the presence of sin!

He who cannot find water in the sea is no more foolish than the man who cannot perceive sin in his members! As the salt flavors every drop of the Atlantic, so does sin affect every atom of our nature. It is so sadly there, so abundantly there, that if you cannot detect it you are deceived. This self-deceit has arrived by a good deal of persuading and ingenious trickery. To deceive another requires a measure of cunning, but to deceive yourself needs far more! Our deceitful heart reveals an almost Satanic shrewdness in self-deceptionit readily enough makes the worse reason to appear to be the best reasonand it states a lie so that it wears the fashion of truth.

If you say you have no sin you have achieved a fearful successyou have put out your own eyes and perverted your own reason! You have fed upon falsehood till it has entered into your very being and rendered you incapable of truth. I know you claim to be very sincere in your belief of your own rightness. And I know it would be very hard to persuade you differentlyand this makes it all the worsefor so much the more completely have you deceived yourself! Now that you call darkness, light, and boast that your blindness is true sight, we mourn over you as all but hopeless! And we fear lest the Lord should leave you to perish because you cling so fast to your lie.

In how many ways men manage to deceive themselves! They can do it by irreligion and by religion, too! They do it by outrageous sin and by boastful sanctity. They can mislead themselves by precious hymns which rightly understood speak the Truth of God, but wrongly turned, speak desperate falsehoods by dwelling upon the work of the Spirit of Godwhich rightly taken is greatly for our consolation, but taken after the Pharisaic manner may, itself, be misconstrued and made to furnish wind for the bubble of vainglory. O Friends, it is not without effort that men pervert the best things into excuses for pride, yes, turn even their meat into poison!

It is not an easy thing to get up to sinlessness, nor is it an easy matter to keep the cheat from collapsing. The baseless fabric must be deftly put together and it will need much propping up and buttressingit is almost as hard to seem to be as to beperhaps I might say it is harder. Pity that men should be at such pains to make fools of themselves! Let it be remembered, however, that while the man who has deceived himself says, I have no sin, he has not deceived the Lord! God sees sin in us, if we do not. The ostrich is reported to bury her head in the sand and then to suppose herself safe, but she is the more speedily taken. And we may shut our eyes and say, I have no sin, but in so doing, instead of securing eternal salvation, we shall as practically give ourselves up to the destroyer as the bird of the desert is fabled to do.

Let a man say, I have no sin, and he has condemned himself out of his own mouth, for the text says of such a man the truth is not in him and he who has not truth in him is not saved! The absence of confession

of present sin means the absence of the light of truth and sincerity. God saves all sorts of people, however black their sins, but the man of a false spirit, the Pharisaic washer of the outside of the cup, while the inside is foul, is the last person who is likely to be saved. A main point in conversion consists in a mans being honestfor it is the honest and good ground which receives the seed.

If you preach the Gospel among the roughest and most profane of men, there is more hope of success among them than among hypocritical professors. Open enmity and opposition are better than that pretended friendship which begins and ends with the shallow compliments of empty formalism. Outward religiousness, unattended by heart piety, does a man serious injury by rendering him superficial and unreal in all that he does in reference to Godand as God desires truth in the inward parts, He will not parley with dishonest men. Pretend and profess and boast how you will, but understand thisthe living God abhors everything which is not according to the strictest truth.

Now, all this may serve for our guidance when seeking the Lord. Awakened sinners often say, If I could feel my heart was right towards God, then I could believe that He would look upon me in mercy. How wrong is this! If you felt that all was right, it would be an untruthful feeling, for by nature all is wrong! Oh, Sir, you say, if I could but feel that now, at last, I am as I ought to be before God, as tender and as penitent as He would have me to be, then I could have hope. No, my dear Friend, such a feeling would not be according to truth, for no man is as tender and as penitent as he ought to be. And if you felt you were, you would be feeling a lie, and so the truth would not be in you.

I do not want you to feel that you are what you ought to be! I pray that you may admit that you are not what you ought to be! I would have you feel unrest and absence of anything like satisfaction, for such feelings will be according to the truth. I beseech you never claim to experience feelings which you do not feel, nor make hypocritical confessions of sin which you have never committed, nor pretend to a repentance which is not in you, for the Lord hates all shams and will only deal with you according to truth. If you are conscious of impenitence, go to the Lord and tell Him you have a hard heart which will not feel either the terrors of His Law or the warmth of His love. In other words, go to Him just as you are and confess what you are, and ask Him to deal with you in Christ Jesus as He sees you to be. That is the only waythe plan of pretending that we are now free from sin will not work and bring us blessing, for, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

The second course which is open to us is the one which I trust the Divine Spirit may lead us to follow, to lay bare our case before God exactly as it stands. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity. Please observe that John does not say, If we confess our sin. He had been speaking of that in the 8th verse, but here he uses the plural, to include both sin in its essence and in its actual development in our life. We are to confess both the inward sin and the outward fruit of it. We must say, Lord, I admit with shame that as my nature is corrupt, such has my life been. I am a sinner both by nature and by practice.

Make the confession of the two things, of the cause and the effect, of the original depravitythe foul sourceand then of the actual sin which is the polluted stream. And if you say, How am I to confess it? I would say thisTo confess sin does not mean merely on some, one occasion, to repeat a catalog of sins before God in private, nor at certain set seasons to rehearse a list of our faultsit means a life-long acknowledgment of our sin. We must take our places as they who have sinned and never attempt to occupy the position of innocent beings. We are to look towards God as a man ought to look who has transgressed.

Do you understand me? The Pharisee took up the posture and spirit of a man who had no sin in him and said, God, I thank You. He was not confessing sin, but claiming righteousnessand he was not accepted because he was out of the lightthat is to say, he was not speaking and feeling according to truth. But the publican, though he said little and made no confession of sin in detail, yet by his postureby his striking his breast, by his not daring to look up, by the sigh which he heavedwas virtually confessing sin. When a man prayerfully begs that he may feel the power of the blood of Jesus, he is confessing sin, for is not the blood of Jesus necessary because of our sin?

The daily exercise of faith in Jesus Christ is a confession of sin, for nobody would need to believe in a Savior unless he had sin. Baptism is a confession of sinwho needs to be buried with Christ if he is alive by a righteousness of his own? To come to the Communion Table and remember, there, the atoning Sacrifice, is a confession of sinwe would need no remembrance of our blessed Substitute if we were not sinners! Confession of sin is best carried out when we deal with God as those who have offended Him, not as those who feel that they are innocent. We are to act before the Lord as those who know that sin is in them.

And how ought such to behave? They will walk with God very humbly and watchfully. They will be jealous lest inbred corruption should get the mastery of them. Such persons will daily cry to the Strong for strength, and what is prayer for strength but a confession of weakness caused by sin? What is watchfulness but a confession that our nature still needs holding in check? So ought we to watch as those who feel that the battle is not fought and, therefore, we cannot lay down our armor or our sword. We should so live as those who know that the race is not run and, therefore, they press forward. We ought to be prayerfully dependent upon God, as those who know that if they were left by Divine Grace they would go back unto perdition.

When a sinner feels he has no natural fitness for receiving the Grace of God, a broken spirit is confessing that sin is in him when he cries, Oh, what a wretch I am! Not only my past sin but my present feelings disqualify me for the love of God! I seem to be made of Hell-hardened steel. I think I hear him sighing

*The rocks can rend; the earth can quake; The seas can roar; the mountains shake Of feeling, all things show some sign,   
But this unfeeling heart of mine!   
To hear the sorrow You have felt,*

*Dear Lord, an adamant would melt.   
But I can read each moving line   
And nothing moves this heart of mine!   
Your judgments, too, unmoved I hear,   
Amazing thought! which devils fear:   
Goodness and wrath in vain combine   
To stir this stupid heart of mine.*

Now, this piteous outcry because all is wrong within is virtually a confession of sin and a truthful one, too, for all is wrong. If you feel you are desperately bad, remember you are worse than you think you are! Your case is, in itself, desperate, hopeless, damnable! If you feel that you are lost, you do not feel too strongly, you are in the true light where God will meet with you.

The Lord will not consent to meet with you on the ground that you are not much of a sinner and, that, after all, your sin is not a great evil. No, He will meet you where the truth is and nowhere else. When you confess that you are unworthy of His pity, you are acknowledging the truth. And when you feel guilty, you feel what is really a fact. On this footing of truth, sad truth though it is, the Lord will meet with you through the atoning blood of my Master, Jesus Christ. It is in your vileness that Sovereign Grace over sin abounding will come to you and cleanse you. Therefore, the sooner you come to the honest truth, the better for you, for the sooner you will obtain joy and peace through believing in Christ.

The text means just thisTreat God truthfully and He will treat you truthfully. Make no pretensions before God, but lay bare your soul. Let Him see it as it is and then He will be faithful and just to forgive you your sins and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. Mark the beauty of that expressionGod will deal with you in faithfulness. His Nature is mercy and you, naturally, expect that if you confess your sin to a merciful God, He will deal mercifully with you and be faithful to His Nature. And He will be so.

But He has also given a promise that if the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and turn unto the Lord, He will have mercy upon themdepend upon itHe will be faithful to His promise. The blood of Jesus Christ has made a full atonement and God will be faithful to that Atonement. He will deal with you on the grounds of the Covenant of Grace, of which the Sacrifice of Jesus is the seal and, therein, also, He will be true to you. What a blessing it is that the Lord will be faithful and just in the cleansing of you from all the sinfulness of your nature. I pray you deal honestly with God and say to Him, Cleanse me, O God, from secret faults. You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden parts You will make me know wisdom. Purge me, therefore, O Lord, and I shall be clean.

Suppose you go to a surgeon because you have some deadly polyp or cancer growing in you? You need to have it removed and you know there are a great many physicians who will profess to cure such things, but in reality only give temporary ease. From all these you keep clear. You are well aware that if only a little root of the growth should be left it will grow again. So you say outright to the surgeon, Sir, here is my disease. I will tell you all the symptoms of itI only ask to have a thorough cure, cost me what it may in money or pain. I make no reserve, do just whatever you think is best in the case, but make clean work of it. If you have the knife in your hand, do not spare it out of pity for my pain, but be just with me, cut out the disease, roots and all, so that it may be a complete cure.

Even in the same manner, go to the Lord, and say, Lord, here is my sin, I confess it all. Do not suffer me to have any peace unless it is true peace. Do not let me have any comfort unless I get it from Christ. And if there must be more conviction of sin and more alarm of conscienceif there must be deeper gashes and sterner cuts into my soul, Lord, do not spare mebe pleased to purge me from the secret depravity of my nature and make me pure. Your holiness is what I crave after and I cannot be satisfied till You make me holy, even as You are holy. This is the way to plead with God and the only way! Confess the sin and then He will be faithful and just to give you the double cure, namely, first, the forgiveness, and next, the cleansing from all unrighteousness.

Now, there are still some who say, Well, yes, I think I could go to God in that way, Sir, but oh, my past sins prevent me. I could tell Him I am sinful, I could ask Him to renew my nature, I could lay myself bare before Him, but oh, my past sins! All might yet be well if I had not so sinned. Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, that brings out a third course which lies before you, which I hope you will not follow, namely, to deny actual sin. The very thing which I bless God you cannot do would seal your doom, for it would lead you to make God a liar, and so His Word could not abide in you.

If you felt able to say, I have not sinned, in proportion as you said, that would put yourself out of the light in which God, alone, can walk with you. Some get to that point by saying that what they did was not really sin to any extent, or, at any rate, if it would have been sin in other people, it was not sin in them. Considering their strong passions, they wonder they were not worse! And considering the circumstances of their case, they do not see how they could have done otherwise. In a word, they have not sinned at all.

There is another class who say, All these commandments have I kept from my youth up, What do I lack? This self-justification clearly makes God a liar. For what does the Cross of Calvary mean? What do those streams of blood mean? What do those agonies to the death mean? God has acted out a gigantic lie if we have no sin, for He has provided a propitiation for a thing which does not exist! O hideous profanity! O vile blasphemy, thus to insinuate that the great Sacrifice of Divine Love was an acted falsehood! Brethren, we have sinned, sinned far beyond anything we knowand the only wise and true way is to confess it before God. I find the first part of my subject has occupied much more time than I thought and, therefore, I will be exceedingly brief upon the second head.

II. LET US NOW CONSIDER HOW WE CAN FOLLOW THIS COURSE, which is the only right and acceptable one, namely, to confess our sin. I suppose I am speaking to those who are in earnest about their salvation. O my Friends, lay bare your consciences before the Law of God. Go and open the 20th chapter of Exodus and read the Ten Commandments. Think of their spiritualityremember how he that looks on a woman to lust after her commits adultery with her in his heartand let the Law, with all its

blaze of light, flash flame into your soul. Do not shirk the facts or shrink from knowing their full force, but feel the power of the condemning Law.

Then recollect your individual sins. Recall them one by onethose greater sins, those huge blots upon your characterdo not try to forget them. If you have forgotten them, raise them from the grave and think them over and feel them as your own sins. Do not lay them at the door of anyone else. Do not look at circumstances in order to find an alleviation for your guilt, but set them in the light of Gods Countenance. Remember, the sins of your holy things, your Sabbath sins, your sanctuary sins, your sins against the Bible, your sins against prayer, your sins against the love of the Father, the blood of Christ and the strivings of the Spirit. Oh, how many are these? Think of your sins of omission, your failures in duty, your shortcomings in spirit.

Repent of what you have done and what you have not done. How both these forms of iniquity may stagger and humble you! Think of your sins of heart. How cold has that heart been towards your Savior! Your sins of thought, how wrongly your mind has often judged! Your sins of imagination, what filthy creatures your imagination has portrayed in lively colors on the wall! Think of all the sins of your desires and delights, and hopes and fears! What faculty is there that has not been defined? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. We are bound to confess the aggravations of our sin, how we sinned against light and against knowledge, against conscience, and against Divine Love, against the monitions of the Holy Spirit, against tender warnings which came from His gentle voice. Oh, when some of us err, every ounce of our sin has as much evil in it as a ton of other mens sins. Let us take care that we confess all.

And then let us try to see the heinousness of all sin as an offense against a kind, good, loving Godas sin against a perfect Law intended for our good. Let us remember our wanton sins, our mischievous sins, sins which hurt ourselves, foolish sins, despicable sins into which our spirits have descended even though we have known the nobility of holiness, and had some fellowship with God. I beseech you, dear Hearer, try to fix your eyes on Jesus Christ and His atoning Sacrifice and live as a believer in Him, and this will make you live as a constant confessor of sin! For when the wounds of Jesus speak peace they also preach penitence.

And when the Atonement gives us rest it also makes us meek and lowly in heart under a sense of abiding faultiness. As you see what Jesus suffered, you will see how you sinned. And as you observe the glory of His merit, you will see the horror of your own demerit. Thus may you daily, as long as you live, confess sin and find cleansing from all unrighteousness.

III. LET US CONSIDER WHY WE SHOULD CONFESS SIN. I shall say, first, do so because it is right. Religious lie-telling is a dreadful thing and there is plenty of it. If I could be saved by masking my condition before God, I would not like to be saved in that way. The man whose heart is in the light loves to do right. It would he a great dishonor to God to suppose it possible that He will save us in any manner which would not accord with truth. It is right that we should come before God, as we are, and plead for mercy through Jesus Christ. Therefore let us do it.

Moreover, upon some of us it is imperative, because we cannot do anything else. There may, possibly, be a person here who could say, I have no sin. But I could not. Why, if I were to claim innocence either of nature or practice the words would choke me. Say I have no sin?! I should expect to turn black in the face and fall down dead, it would be so gross a lie! To say I have no sin, why there is not one part of my whole nature but what would protest against such an assertion! I have to come to God as a sinner, I cannot help it. And I would to God that everyone in this place felt they had to, too, for it is the intent and design of the Law to convict the sinner in order that he may be compelled to accept salvation on Free Grace terms through Jesus Christ.

You can never catch a fish in a net while there is one mesh through which he can escape, but when all the meshes are so small that the fish cannot get out, then we have taken him. When you are such a sinner that you cannot plead that you have no sin, nor yet that you have not sinned, but are quite convicted to be saved by Grace, then you are in Christs net and He will lift you outand the Fisher of Men shall have cause to rejoice. Besides, beloved Friends, suppose we have tried to appear before God what we are not, God has not been deceived, for He is not mocked. We may set up a very respectable character to please ourselves and give it a few touches every now and then, just to set it off and improve it.

And we may even find a number of people to join with us to form a mutual admiration society and our friends may cheerfully hear us talk about what wonderful beings we are, provided we will sit and hear them glorify themselves in returnbut neither with one witness nor a thousand witnesses will our boasts be one jot more true, or likely to be believed in Heaven. God is not misled! He looks at all boasters of their own purity, and says, When you say you have no sin you make Me a liar, and My word is not in you, for if the truth were in you, you would know that sin is in you. And if My word were in you, you would also confess that you have sinned and humble yourselves before Me.

I exhort you, Sinner, to give up all your attempts to feel right and to be right before coming to God in Christ Jesus. Have you not made a great failure of it, already? You thought you were getting right for Christ, but just then you fell in the worst possible way. You have been trying to repair your old clothes and make yourself respectable before coming to Christ, but every time you have touched the garment the tear has grown worse. Give up all attempts to prepare for Grace, and come to Jesus Christ just as you are! When you have been trying to make yourself feel that you are right and proper for Christ, you have been sinning against God, for you have been flying in the teeth of His witness, which is that Jesus Christ came, not to save the righteous, but sinners.

In proportion as you try to make yourself out to be righteous, you have denied the testimony of God. May the Spirit of God help you to come to your heavenly Father on the ground of truth, confessing that you have sinnedthat is the truth for you! And on the ground that Christ died for sinnersthat is the truth on Gods side which enables Him to smile on sinners. Now, what is your state this morning? Cold as an iceberg as to Divine things? Come and tell the Lord you are an iceberg and let Him thaw you! What is your statehard as a rock, or like a nether millstone?

Is there no feeling? Come and tell the Lord that you do not feel.

Oh, is there no trace of any good feeling in you? Come to my Lord without a trace of feeling, and tell Him just what you are! And oh, if you can dare to say, over the head of all your sin and sinfulness, Nevertheless, I rest myself on the blood that cleanses from all sin and I beseech You, O Lord, seeing I confess my sin, to cleanse me from all unrighteousness, you will find Him faithful and just to do it! Come as the citizens of Calais did to King Edward III when the city was capturedcome with ropes about your neck, admitting that if sentence were executed upon you, you deserve it! Come at once in all your filthiness and nakednesscome with no jewels in your ears, with no ornaments upon your necks and with no recommendation whatevercome as sinners by nature and as sinners by practice!

Plead nothing that looks like goodness, but come in your sin. Do not try to put one touch of paint on those cheeks of yours, nor imitate the flush of health upon that consumptive countenance. Come as you are, and say, Lord, look at me as I am, a worse sinner than even I think myself to be, and then show the Infinity of Your Free Grace, and the power of Jesus dying love in saving me, even me.

Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, you will not be long without peace if you draw near to God in that fashion! Fling away any preparations, fitness, commendations and hopefulness, and take my Lord Jesus! As emptyhanded sinners take Him! Meet Him just as He is and just as you are. God will deal with you truthfully. He will never cast away a sinner that comes to Him according to truth. For my own part, I mean to come to Him as a sinner always. I know I am saved, but I never hope to get one inch beyond that verseThe blood of Jesus Christ, His Son cleanses me from all sin, for only so can I walk in the light as He is in the light!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON1 JOHN 1, 2:1-11.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK176, 51, 551.  
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JUSTICE SATISFIED   
NO. 255

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MAY 29, 1859, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

Just and the justifier of him which believes in Jesus. Romans 3:26.

**Just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9.**

WHEN the soul is seriously impressed with the conviction of its guilt, when terror and alarm get hold upon it concerning the inevitable consequences of its sin, the soul is afraid of God. It dreads at that time every attribute of Divinity. But most of all the sinner is afraid of Gods justice. Ah, said he to himself, God is a just God. And if so, how can He pardon my sins? My iniquities cry aloud for punishment and my transgressions demand that His right hand should smite me low. How can I be saved? Were God unjust, He might forgivebut, alas, He is not so, He is severely just. He lays justice to the line and righteousness to the plummet. He is the judge of all the earth and He must do right. How, then, can I escape from His righteous wrath which must be stirred up against me? Let us be assured that the sinner is quite right in the conviction that there is here a great difficulty.

The justice of God is in itself a great barrier to the salvation of sinners. There is no possibility for that barrier to be surmounted, nor even for it to be removed except by one means, which shall this day be proclaimed unto you through the Gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord. It is true that God is just. Let old Sodom tell you how God rained fire and brimstone out of Heaven upon mans iniquity. Let a drowning world tell you how God lifted the sluices of the fountains of the great deep and bade the bubbling waters spring up and swallow man alive. Let the earth tell you how she opened her mouth when Korah, Dathan and Abiram rebelled against God. Let the buried cities of Nineveh and the tattered relics of Tyre and Sidon tell you that God is just and will by no means spare the guilty. And direst of all, let Hells bottomless lake declare what is the awful vengeance of God against the sins of man. Let the sighs and groans and moans and shrieks of spirits condemned of God rise in your ears and bear witness that He is a God who will not spare the guilty, who will not wink at iniquity, transgression and sinbut who will have vengeance upon every rebel and will give justice its full satisfaction for every offense.

The sinner is right in his conviction that God is just and he is moreover right in the inference which follows from it, that because God is just his sin must be punished. Ah, Sinner, if God punishes not your sins, He has ceased to be what He has always beenthe severely just, the inflexibly righteous. Never has there been a sin pardoned, absolutely and without atonement, since the world began. There has never been an offense yet remitted by the great Judge of Heaven. Until the law has received the fullest vindication, you are right, O convicted Sinner, that such shall be the case even to the end. Every transgression shall have its just recompense of reward. For every offense there shall be its stroke and for every iniquity there shall be its doom. Ah, says the Sinner, then I am shut out of Heaven. If God is just and He must punish sin, then what can I do? Justice, like some dark angel, strides across the road of mercy and with his sword drawn, thirsty for blood and winged to slay, he strides across my path and threatens to drive me backwards over the precipice of death into the ever-burning lake.

Sinner, you are right. It is even so. Except through the Gospel which I am about to preach to you, justice is your antagonist, your lawful, irresistible and insatiable enemy. It cannot suffer you to enter Heaven, for you have sinned. And punished that sin must be, avenged that transgression must be, as long as God is Godthe holy and the Just.

Is it possible, then, that the sinner can be saved? This is the great riddle of the Law and the grand discovery of the Gospel. Wonder, you heavens! Be astonished, O earth! That very justice which stood in the sinners way and prevented his being pardoned, has been by the Gospel of Christ appeased. By the rich atonement offered upon Calvary, Justice is satisfied, has sheathed its sword and has now not a word to say against the pardon of the penitent. No, morethat Justice once so angry, whose brow was lightning and whose voice was thunder, has now become the sinners advocate and itself with its mighty voice pleads with God, that whosoever confesses his sin should be pardoned and be cleansed from all unrighteousness!

The business of this morning shall be to show, in the first place, according to the first text, how justice is no longer the sinners enemyGod is just and yet the justifier of him that believes. And then, in the second place, that justice has become the sinners advocate and that, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

But here let me utter a caution. I shall speak this morning only to those who feel their guilt and who are ready to confess their sin. For to those who still love sin and will not acknowledge their guilt, there is no promise of mercy or pardon. For them there remains nothing but the fearful looking for of judgment. He that being often reproved hardens his heart shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy. The soul that neglects this great salvation cannot escape. There is no door of escape provided for it. Unless the Lord has now brought us to feel our need of mercy, has compelled us to confess that unless He gives us mercy we must righteously perish and unless, moreover, He has made us willing now to be saved on any terms, so that we may be saved at all, this Gospel which I am about to preach is not ours. But if we are convicted of sin and are now trembling before the thunders of Gods wrath, every word that I am now about to speak will be full of encouragement and consolation to you.

I. First, then, HOW HAS JUSTICE BEEN PUT ASIDE? or rather, HOW HAS IT BEEN SO SATISFIED THAT IT NO LONGER STANDS IN THE WAY OF GODS JUSTIFYING THE SINNER?

The one answer to that is Justice has been satisfied through the substitution of our blessed Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. When man sinned, the Law demanded that man must be punished. The first offense of man was committed by Adam who was the representative of the entire race. When God would punish sin, in His own infinite mind He thought of the blessed expedient, not of punishing His people, but of punishing their representative, the covenant Head, the second Adam. It was by one man, the first man, that sin entered into the world and death by sin. It was by another Man, the second Adam, who is the Lord from Heavenit was by Him that this sin was borne. By Him its punishment was endured.

By Him the whole wrath was suffered. And through that second representative of manhood, Jesus, the second Adam, God is now able and willing to forgive the vilest of the vile and justify even the ungodlyand He is able to do so without the slightest violation of His justice. For, mark, when Jesus Christ, the Son of God, suffered on the tree, He did not suffer for HimselfHe had no sin, either natural or actual. He had done nothing whatever that could bring Him under the ban of Heaven, or subject His holy soul and His perfect body to grief and pain. When He suffered it was as a Substitute. He diedthe Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. Had His sorrows been personally deserved they would have had no efficacy in them. But inasmuch as for sins not His own He died to atoneinasmuch as He was punished, not for any guilt that

He had done or could dobut for the guilt incurred by others, there was a merit and an efficacy in all that He suffered, by which the Law was satisfied and God is able to forgive.

Let us show very briefly how fully the law is satisfied. 1. Note first the dignity of the victim who offered Himself up to Divine justice. Man had sinned. The Law required the punishment of manhood. But Jesus, the eternal Son of God, very God of very God, who had been hymned through eternal ages by joyous angelswho had been the favorite of His Fathers court, exalted high above principalities and powers and every name that is namedHe Himself condescended to become man. He was

born of the Virgin Mary. He was cradled in a manger. He lived a life of suffering and at last died a death of agony. If you will but think of the wondrous Person whom Jesus wasas very God of very God, king of angels, creator, preserver, Lord of allI think you will see that in His sufferings, the Law received a greater vindication than it could have done even in the sufferings of all the men that have ever lived or ever could live.

If God had consumed the whole human race, if all the worlds that float in ether had been sacrificed as one mighty holocaust to the vengeance of the Law, it would not have been so well vindicated as when Jesus died. For the deaths of all men and all angels would have been but the deaths and sufferings of creatures. But when Jesus died, the Creator Himself underwent the pangit was the Divine preserver of the world hanging on the Cross. There is such dignity in the Godhead, that all it does is marvelous and infinite in its merit. And when He stooped to suffer, when H bowed His awful head, cast aside His diadem of stars to have His brow girt about with thorns. When His hands that once swayed the scepter of all worlds were nailed to the treewhen His feet that before had pressed the cloudswhen these were fastened to the woodthen did the Law receive an honor such as it never could have received if a whole universe in one devouring conflagration had blazed and burned forever.

2. In the next place, just pause and think of the relationship which Jesus Christ had towards the great Judge of all the earth and then you will see again that the Law must have been fully satisfied. We hear of Brutus that he was the most inflexible of lawgivers. That when he sat upon the bench he knew no distinction of persons. Imagine dragged before Brutus many of the noblest Roman senators, convicted of crimehe condemns themand without mercy they are rent away by the lectors to their doom. You would admire certainly all this justice of Brutus. But suppose Brutus own son was brought before himand such was the caseimagine the father sitting on the judgment bench and declaring that he knew no distinction whatever, even of his own children. Conceive that son tried and condemned out of his fathers own mouth. See him tied up before his fathers own eyes, while, as the inflexible judge, that father bids the lector lay on the rod and afterwards cries, Take him away and use the axe! See you not here how he loves his country better then his son and he loves justice better then either. Now, says the world, Brutus is just, indeed.

Now, if God had condemned each of us one by one, or the whole race at once, there would certainly have been a vindication of His justice. But lo, His own Son takes upon Him the sins of the world and He comes before His Fathers presence. He is not guilty in Himself, but the sins of man are laid upon His shoulders. The Father condemns His Son. He gives Him up to the Roman rod. He gives Him up to Jewish mockery, to military scorn and to priestly arrogance. He delivers up His Son to the executioner and bids him nail Him to the tree. And as if that were not enough, since the creature had not power of itself to give forth all the vengeance of God upon its own Substitute, God Himself smites His Son.

Are you staggered at such an expression? It is Scriptural. Read in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah and   
there you have the proofIt pleased the Lord to bruise HimHe has put Him to grief. When the whip had gone round to every hand when the betrayer had smitten him, when Pilate and Herod and Jew and Gentile had each laid on the stroke, it was seen that human arm was not powerful enough to execute the full vengeancethen did the Father take His sword and cry, Awake! O sword, against My Shepherd, against the Man that is My Fellow, and He smote Him sternly, as if He had been His enemy, as if He were a common culprit, as if He were the worst of criminalsHe smote Him again and again, till that awful shriek was forced from the lips of the dying Substitute, Eloi, Eloi, lama SabacthaniMy God, My God, why have you forsaken Me? Surely when God smites His Son and such a Son, when God smites His only begotten and well beloved Son, then Justice has more than its due, more than itself could ask. Christ Himself did freely give!

3. Furthermore, if you will please, for a moment, consider how terrible were the agonies of Christ, which, mark you, He endured in the place, the stead of all poor penitent sinners, of all those who confess their sins and believe in Him. I say, when you mark these agonies, you will readily see why Justice does not stand in the sinners way. Does Justice come to you this morning and say, Sinner, you have sinned, I will punish you? Answer thusJustice, you have punished all my sins. All I ought to have suffered has been suffered by my Substitute, Jesus. It is true that in myself I owe you a debt greater than I can pay, but it is also true that in Christ I owe you nothing, for all I did owe is paid, every farthing of it. The utmost drachma has been counted down, not a dolt remains that is due from me to you, O you avenging Justice of God. But if Justice still accuses and conscience clamors, go and take Justice with you to Gethsemane and stand there with it. See that Man so oppressed with grief, that all His head, His hair, His garments are bloody? Sin was a pressa vice which forced His blood from every vein and wrapped Him in a sheet of His own blood. Do you see that Man there? Can you hear His groans, His cries, His earnest intercessions, His strong crying and tears? Can you mark that clotted sweat as it crimsons the frozen soil, strong enough to unloose the curse? Do you see Him in the desperate agony of His spirit, crushed, broken, bruised beneath the feet of Justice in the olive press of God? Justice, is not that enough? Will not that content you?

In a whole Hell there is not so much dignity of vengeance as there is in the garden of Gethsemane. Are you not yet satisfied? Come, Justice, to the hall of Pilate. Do you see that Man arraigned, accused, charged with sedition and with blasphemy? See Him taken to the guard room, spat

upon, buffeted with hands, crowned with thorns, robed in mockery and insulted with a reed for a scepter? I say, Justice, see that Man and do you know that He is God over all blessed forever and yet He endures all this to satisfy your demands? Are you not content with that? Do you still frown? Let me show you this Man on the pavement. He is stripped. Stand, Justice and listen to those stripes, those bloody scourges, and as they fall upon His devoted back and plow deep furrows there, do you see thong-full after thong-full of His quivering flesh torn from His poor bare back? Are you not content yet, Justice? Then what will satisfy you? Nothing, says Justice, but His death.

Come with me, then, so you can see that feeble Man hurried through the streets! Do you see Him driven to the top of Calvary, hurled on His back, nailed to the transverse wood? Oh, Justice, can you see His dislocated bones, now that His Cross is lifted up? Stand with me, O Justice, see Him as He weeps and sighs and criessee His soul-agonies! Can you read that tale of terror which is veiled in that flesh and blood? Come, listen, Justice, while you hear Him cry, I thirst, and while you see the burning fever devouring Him, till He is dried up like a potsherd and His tongue cleaves to the roof of His mouth for thirst! And lastly, O Justice, do you see Him bow His head and die? Yes, said Justice, and I am satisfied. I have nothing more that I can ask. I am fully content. My uttermost demands are more than satisfied.

And am I not content, too? Guilty though I am, and vile, can I not plead that this bloody Sacrifice is enough to satisfy Gods demands against me? Oh, yes, I trust I can

*My faith does lay its hand,   
On that dear head of Yours   
While like a penitent I stand   
And here confess my sin.*

Jesus, I believe that Your sufferings were for me. And I believe that they are more than enough to satisfy all my sins. By faith I cast myself at the foot of Your Cross and cling to it. This is my only hope, my shelter and my shield. It cannot be that God can smite me now. Justice itself prevents, for when Justice once is satisfied it were injustice if it should ask for more. Now, is it not clear enough to the eye of everyone, whose soul has been aroused, that Justice stands no longer in the way of the sinners pardon?

God can be just and yet the Justifier. He has punished Christ, why should He punish twice for one offense? Christ has died for all His peoples sins and if you are in the Covenant, you are one of Christs people. Damned you cannot be. Suffer for your sins you cannot. Until God can be unjust and demand two payments for one debt, He cannot destroy the soul for whom Jesus died. Away goes universal redemption, says one. Yes, away it goes, indeed. I am sure there is nothing about that in the Word of God. A redemption that does not redeem is not worth my preaching, or your hearing. Christ redeemed every soul that is savedno more and no less. Every spirit that shall be seen in Heaven Christ bought. If he had redeemed those in Hell, they never would have gone there. He has bought His people with His blood and they alone shall He bring with Him.

But who are they? says one. You are one, if you believe. You are one, if you repent of your sin. If you will now take Christ to be your All in All, then you are one of His. For the covenant must prove a lie and God must be unjust and justice must become unrighteousness and love must become cruelty and the Cross must become a fiction, before you can be condemned if you trust in Jesus. This is the way in which Justice ceases to be the enemy of souls.

II. The second text says that not only can God be just, but it says something moreit says, If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Now, if I understand this text, it means thisthat IT IS AN ACT OF JUSTICE ON GODS PART TO FORGIVE THE SINNER WHO ADMITS CONFESSION OF HIS SIN TO GOD. Marknot that the sinner deserves forgivenessthat can never be. Sin can never merit anything but punishment, and repentance is no atonement for sin. Not that God is bound from any necessity of His nature to forgive everyone that repents, because repentance has not in itself sufficient efficacy and power to merit forgiveness at the hand of God. Yet, nevertheless, it is a Truth of God that because God is just, He must forgive every sinner who confesses his sin. And if He did notand mark, it is a bold thing to say, but it is warranted by the textif a sinner should be led truly and solemnly to make confession of his sins and cast himself on Christ, if God did not forgive him, then He were not the God that He is represented to be in the Word of God. He were a God unjust and that, God forbid, must not, cannot be.

But how, then, is it that Justice itself actually demands that every soul that repents should be pardoned? It is so. The same Justice that just now stood with a fiery sword in his hand, like the cherubim of old keeping the way of the tree of life, now goes hand in hand with the sinner. Sinner, he says, I will go with you. When you go to plead for pardon I will go and plead for you. Once I spoke against you. But now I am so satisfied with what Christ has done that I will go with you and plead for you. I will change my language. I will not say a word to oppose your pardon, but I will go with you and demand it. It is but an act of justice that God should now forgive. And the sinner goes up with Justice and what has Justice got to say? Why, it says thisGod must forgive the repenting sinner, if He is just, according to His promise. A God who could break His promise were unjust. We do not believe in men who tell us lies. I have known some of so gentle a disposition that they could never say, No. If they were asked to do a thing they have said, Yes. But they have never earned a

character for it, when they have said Yes, and afterwards did not fulfill.

It is not so with God. He is no tender-hearted Being who promises more than He can perform and no forgetful one who promises what afterwards shall slip from His memory. Every word which God utters shall be fulfilled, whether it is decree, threat, or promise. Sinner! Go to God with a promise in your handLord You have said, He that confesses his sin and forsakes it, shall find mercy. I confess my sin and I forsake itLord, give me mercy! Dont doubt but that God will give it you. You have His own pledge in your hand, you have His own bond in your keeping. Take that pledge and that bond before His Throne of Mercy and that bond never shall be cancelled till it has been honored. You shall see that promise fulfilled to the uttermost, though your sin is ever so black.

Suppose the promise you take should be this. He that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out. But, says the Law, you are one of the greatest sinners that ever lived. Yes, but the promise says, He that comes, and I come and I claim the fulfillment of it. No, but you have been a blasphemer. I know it, but the promise says, He that comes, and I come and blasphemer though I am, I claim the promise. But you have been a thief, you have deceived your neighbor and you have robbed men. I have, but the promise says, He that comes to Me I will in no wise case out. I come and I claim the promise. It does not say anything at all about character in the promiseit says, He that comes, and I come and if I am black as the devil, nevertheless God is true and I claim the promise. I confess all that can be said against me. Will God be untrue and send a seeking soul away with a promise unfulfilled? Never!

But, says one, you have lived many years in this way. Your conscience has often checked you and you have resisted conscience oftenit is too late now. But I have the promise, He that comesthere is no time stipulated in itHe that comes. I come and O God, You cannot break the promise! Challenge God by faith and you will see that He will be as good as His Word to you. Though you are worse than words can tell, God, I repeat it, as long as He is just, must honor His own promise. Go and confess your sin, trust in Christ and you shall find pardon. But, again, not only did God make the promise, but according to the text, man has been induced to act upon it. And, therefore, this becomes a double bond upon the justice of God.

Suppose you made a promise to any man, that if such a thing were done, you would do something else and suppose that man were to do something quite contrary to his own nature, quite abhorrent to himself. But he did it nevertheless, because he expected to get great blessings therebydo you mean to say you would tempt a man to do that and put him to vast expense and care and trouble and then turn round and say, There, I shall have nothing to do with that promiseI only promised to make you do so-and-so. Now, I will not fulfill my engagement? Why the man would turn about and call you base to make a promise to lead him to do something and then not fulfill your promise. Now, God has said, If we confess our sins and trust in Christ, we shall have mercy. You have done it. You have made the most abject and sincere confession and you do declare that you have no trust but the blood and righteousness of Christ. On the faith of the promise you have been led into this state. Do you imagine when God has brought you through much pain and agony of mind to repent of sin, to give up self-righteousness and rely on Christ, He will afterwards turn round and tell you He did not mean what He said?

It cannot beit cannot be. Suppose, now, you were about to engage a man to be your servant and you say to him, Renounce such a situation give that upcome and take a house in the neighborhood where I live and I will take you to be my servant. Suppose he does it and you then say, I am glad for your own sake that you have left your master, still I will not take you. What would he say to you? He would say, I gave up my situation on the faith of your promise and now you break it. Ah, but it never can be said of Almighty God that if a sinner acted on the faith of His promise then that promise was not kept. God ceases to be God when he ceases to have mercy upon the soul who seeks pardon through the blood of Christ. No, He is a just God, Faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

One more aspect of this case. Gods justice demands that the sinner should be forgiven if he seeks mercy for this reasonChrist died on purpose to secure pardon for every seeking soul. Now, I hold it to be an axiom, a self-evident Truth of God, that whatever Christ died for He will have. I cannot believe that when He paid to His Father the price of blood and groans and tears, He bought something which the Father will not give Him. Now, Christ died to purchase the pardon of sin for all those who believe on Him and do you suppose that the Father will rob Him of that which He has bought so dearly? No, God were untrue to His own SonHe would break His oath to His well-beloved and only begotten Sonif He were not to give pardon, peace, and purity to every soul that comes to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Oh, I would that I could preach it as with a tongue of thunder everywhereGod is just and yet the Justifier of him that believes. God is just to forgive us our sins, if we confess them. Just to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

III. Now, to close. I must just enter into some little EXPLANATION OF THE TWO GREAT DUTIES THAT ARE TAUGHT IN THE TWO TEXTS. The first duty is faithbelieve in Christ, the second text is confessionif we confess our sins.

I will begin with confession first. Expect not that God will forgive you until you confess. Not in the general confession of a Prayer Book, but in the particular confession of your own inmost heart. You are not to confess to a priest or a man unless you have offended him. In that respect, if you

have been an offender against any man, be at peace with him and ask his pardon for anything you have done against him. It is a proof of a noble mind when you can ask pardon of another for having done amiss. Whenever grace comes into the heart it will lead you to make amends for any injury which you have done either by word or deed to any of your fellow men. And you cannot expect that you shall be forgiven of God until you have forgiven men and have been ready to make peace with those who are now your enemies.

That is a beautiful trait in the character of a true Christian. I have heard of Mr. John Wesley, that he was attended in most of his journeying by one who loved him very much and was willing, I believe, to have died for him. Still he was a man of a very stubborn and obstinate disposition and Mr. Wesley was not perhaps the very kindest man at all times. Upon one occasion he said to this man, Joseph, take these letters to the post. I will take them after preaching, Sir. Take them now, Joseph, said Mr. Wesley. I wish to hear you preach, Sir. And there will be sufficient time for the post after service. I insist upon your going now, Joseph. I will not go at present. You wont! No, Sir. Then you and I must part, said Mr. Wesley. Very good, Sir. The good men slept over it. Both were early risers. At four oclock the next morning, the refractory helper was accosted with, Joseph, have you considered what I saidthat we must part? Yes, Sir. And must we part? Please yourself, Sir. Will you ask my pardon, Joseph? No, Sir. You wont? No Sir. Then I will ask yours, Joseph! Poor Joseph was instantly melted and they were at once reconciled.

When once the Grace of God has entered the heart, a man ought to be ready to seek forgiveness for an injury done to another. There is nothing wrong in a man confessing an offense against a fellow man and asking pardon for the wrong he has done him. If you have done anything, then, against any man, leave your gift before the altar and go and make peace with him and then come and make peace with God. You are to make confession of your sin to God. Let that be humble and sincere. You cannot mention every offense, but do not hide one. If you hide one it will be a millstone round your neck to sink you into the lowest Hell. Confess that you are vile in your nature, evil in your practice, that in you there is no good thing. Lay as low as ever you can at the footstool of Divine Grace and confess that you are a wretch undone unless God has mercy upon you.

Then, the next duty is faith. While you are laying there in the dust turn your eyes to Christ and say, Black as I am and Hell-deserving as I confess myself to be, I believe that Jesus Christ died for the penitent. And inasmuch as He died, He died that the penitent might not die. I believe Your merits to be great. I believe Your blood to be efficacious. And more than that, I risk my eternal salvationand yet it is no riskI venture my eternal salvation upon the merit of Your blood, Jesus. I cannot save myself. Cast the garments of Your blood-red atonement over me. Come, take me in Your arms. Come, wrap me in Your crimson vest and tell me I am Yours. I will trust in nothing else but You. Nothing I can do or ever did shall be my dependence. I rely simply and entirely upon Your mighty Cross, upon which you did die for sinners.

My dear Hearers, as to any probability of your being lost after such a confession and such a faith, I assure you there is neither possibility nor probability thereof. You are saved. You are saved in time, you are saved in eternity. Your sins are forgiven. Your iniquities are all put away. In this life you shall be fed and blessed and kept. Remaining sin within you shall be overcome and conquered. And you shall see His face at the last in glory everlasting, when He shall come in the glory of His Father and all His holy angels with Him. Whosoever believes on the Son of God has eternal life and shall never come into condemnation. He that believes on the Lord Jesus and is baptized, shall be saved. And he that believes not shall be damned.

And now in conclusion, I have tried to tell out simply and plainly the story of how Gods justice is satisfied and has become the sinners friend and I look for fruitfor where the Gospel is simply preached it is never preached in vain. Only let us go home and pray now that we may know the Savior. Let us pray that others may know Him, too. If you are convicted of sin, my dear Friends, do not lose a moment. Go to your chamber as soon as you get home, shut your door, go alone to Jesus and there repeat your confession and once more affirm your faith in Christ. And you shall have that peace with God which the world cannot give and which the world cannot take away. Your troubled conscience shall find restyour feet shall be on a Rock. And a new song shall be in your mouth, even praise for evermore

*From where this fear and unbelief?   
Have Yon, O Father, put to grief   
Your spotless Son for me?   
And will the righteous Judge of men   
Condemn me for that debt of sin,  
Which, Lord, was charged on You?   
Complete atonement You have made,   
And to the utmost farthing paid  
Whatever Your people owed.   
How then can wrath on me take place  
If sheltered in Your righteousness,   
And sprinkled with Your blood?   
If You have my discharge procured,   
And freely, in my place, endured   
The whole of wrath Divine,   
Payment God cannot twice demand   
First, at my bleeding Suretys hand,   
And then again at mine.*

*Turn, then, my Soul unto your Rest! The merits of your great High Priest Speak peace and liberty Trust in His efficacious blood, Nor fear your banishment from God, Since Jesus died for thee.*

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THE SINNERS ADVOCATE   
NO. 515

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 21,1863, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not. And if any man sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.   
1 John 2:1.

THE Apostle John presents us with a very clear and emphatic testimony to the doctrine of full and free forgiveness of sin. He declares that the blood of Jesus Christ, Gods dear Son, cleans us from all sin, and that if any man sins, we have an Advocate. It is most evident that he is not afraid of doing mischief by stating this Truth of God too broadly. On the contrary, he makes this statement with the view of promoting the sanctity of his little children. The object of this bold declaration of the love of the Father to His sinning children is, that you sin not. This is a triumphant answer to that grossly untruthful objection which is so often urged by the adversaries of the Gospel against the doctrines of Free Gracethat they lead men to licentiousness.

It does not appear that the Apostle John thought so, for in order that these little children should not sin, he actually declares unto them the very doctrine which our opponents call licentious. Those men who think that Gods Grace, when fully, fairly, and plainly preached, will lead men into sin, know not what they say, nor what they affirm. It is neither according to nature nor to Grace for men to find an argument for sin in the goodness of God. Human nature is bad enoughand far be it from me to flatter that leprous criminal, that reeking mass of corruptioneven a natural conscience revolts at the baseness of sinning because Divine Grace abounds!

Shall I hate God because He is kind to me? Shall I curse Him because He blesses me? I venture to affirm that very few men reason thus. Man has found out many inventions, but such arguments are so transparently abominable that few consciences are so dead as to tolerate them. Bad as human nature is, it seldom turns the goodness of God into an argument for rebelling against Him. As for souls renewed by Divine Grace, they never can be guilty of such infamy. The Believer in Jesus reasons in quite another fashion. Is God so good?then I will not grieve Him. Is He so ready to forgive my transgressions?then I will love Him, by His Grace, and offend no more. Gratitude has bands which are stronger than iron, although softer than silk.

Think not, Sirs, that the Christian needs to be flogged to virtue by the whip of the Law! Dream not that we hate sin merely because of the Hell which follows it! If there were no Heaven for the righteous, the sons of God would follow after goodness because their regenerated spirit pants for it.

And if there were no Hell for the wicked, from the necessity of his new-born nature, the true Christian would strive to escape from all iniquity. Loved of God, we feel we must love Him in return. Richly, yes, Divinely forgiven, we feel that we cannot live any longer in sin. Since Jesus died to rid us from all uncleanness, we feel that we cannot crucify our Lord afresh, and put Him to an open shame.

We need no nobler or more cogent arguments to lead a man to thorough consecration to Gods cause and detestation of all evil than those fetched from the Free Grace of God. And what if some men do pervert the doctrine? Do not wicked minds corrupt everything? What Truth is there in Scripture with which a man may not ruin himself if he wills? Did not the prophetic eye of our Lord anticipate this when it was written that to some the Word of God is, a savor of death unto death? Have there not been in all ages men who hold the Truth of God in licentiousness? When were there not evil men to wrest Scripture to their own destruction? Shall we keep back the childrens bread least the dogs should steal the crumbs?

Shall we destroy health-restoring drugs because fools may poison themselves with them? Shall all the trees be cut down for fear the owls should build their nests in them? Shall the sea be dried up because sharks swim in it? Shall the pure virgin Truth be condemned because gross villains have forged her name and abused her character? God forbid! Let us never blush to preach the whole Gospel and to preach its full forgiveness of sin in the boldest and baldest manner, believing that the naked breasts of Truth are her best armor, and that she is least protected when she is encumbered with a coat of mail of human reasoning and prudence.

As God shall help me, then, believing that the doctrine of Free Grace and of Gods infinite love to His people is a doctrine which will lead the little children of God to avoid all sin, I intend this morning to preach that doctrine. May God grant that the result may be according to His mind and will.

I. We commence our exposition of the text with the remark that THE SAINT IS STILL A SINNER. Our Apostle saysIf any man sins. The if may be written in as small letters as you will, for the supposition is a matter of certainty. If any man sins? Although the gentle hand of the beloved disciple uses such mild and tender terms, putting it as a suppositionas though it were an astonishing thing after so much love and mercy and kindness, that we should sinyet John very well knew that all the saints do sin, for he has himself declared that if any man says that he does not sin he is a liar, and the Truth is not in him.

Saints are, without exception, still sinners. Far be it from us to deny that Divine Grace has worked a wondrous changeit were not Grace at all if it had not. It will be well to note this change. The Christian no longer loves sin. It is the object of his sternest horror. He no longer regards it as a mere trifle, plays with it, or talks of it with unconcern. He looks upon it as a deadly serpent whose very shadow is to be avoided. He would no more venture voluntarily to put its cup to his lip than a man would drink poison who had once almost lost his life through it. Sin is dejected in the Christians heart, though it is not ejected. Sin may enter the heart and fight for dominion, but it cannot sit upon the throne. It haunts the town of Mansoul and lurks in dens and corners to do mischief, but it is no longer honored in the streets, nor pampered in the palace. The head and the hands of Dagon are broken, although the stump remains.

The Christian never sins with that enormity of boasting of which the unregenerate are guilty. Others wallow in transgressions and make their shame their glory, but if the Believer falls he is very quiet, mournful and vexed. Sinners go to their sins as children to their own fathers orchard, but Believers slink away like thieves when they have been stealing forbidden fruit. Shame and sin are always in close company in a Christian. If he is drunken with evil he will be ashamed of himself and go to his bed like a whipped cur. He cannot proclaim his transgressions as some do in the midst of a ribald crowd, boasting of their exploits of evil. His heart is broken within him, and when he has sinned he goes with sore bones for many and many a day.

Nor does he sin with the fullness of deliberation that belongs to other men. The sinner can sit down by the months together and think over the iniquity that he means to perpetrate, till he gets his plans well organized and has matured his project. But the Christian cannot do this. He may put the sin into his mouth and swallow it in a moment, but he cannot continue to roll it under his tongue. He who can carefully arrange and plot a transgression is still a true child of the old serpent.

And again, the Believer never chews the cud of his sin. For after he has sinned, however sweet it may have been in his mouth, it becomes bitterness in his heartand glad enough is he to be rid of it altogether. The retrospect of sin to a converted man is nothing but blackness and darkness in his heart. The Christian, unlike other men, never finds enjoyment in his sin. He is out of his element in it. Conscience pricks him. He cannot, even if he would, sin like others. There is a refined taste within him which all the while revolts at the apparently dainty morsel of sin. The finger of Divine Grace, with its secret and mysterious touch, turns all the honey into gall, and all the sweetness into wormwood.

If the Christian shall sin, and sin, I grant he will, yet it shall always be with half-heartednessstill he clings to the right. The evil that he would not, he does, while the good that he would do, he fails to perform. You will notice, too, how different the Christian is as to the habit of sin. The ungodly man is frequent in overt deeds of rebellion, but the Christian, at least in open acts of crime and folly, rather falls into them rather than abides in them. The swallow dips with his wing the brook and then he is up again into the skies, soaring toward the sun. But the duck can swim in the pool or dive under the waterit is in its element. So the Christian just touches sometimes with his wingalas, for himthe streams of earth, but then he is up again where he should be.

It is only the sinner that can swim in sin and delight therein. You may drive the swine and the sheep together side by side. They come to some mire and they both fall into it, and both stain themselves. But you soon detect the difference in nature between themfor while the swine lies and wallows with intense gustothe sheep is up again, escaping as soon as

possible from the filth. So with the Christian. He falls, God knows how many times, but by His Grace, he rises up againit is not his nature to lie in sin. He abhors himself that ever he should fall to the ground at all while the ungodly goes on in his wicked way till sin becomes a habit and habit like an iron net has entangled him in its meshes.

There are all these degrees of difference between the Christian and the ungodly man and far more, for the Believer is a new creaturehe belongs to a holy generation and a peculiar people. The Spirit of God is in him and in all respects he is far removed from the natural man. But for all that we must come back to that with which we startedthat the Christian is still a sinner. He is so from the imperfection of his nature. His nature is such that he cannot but sin until the old Adam shall die in himand that will not be till the funeral knell is tolled for himself.

Sin, by reason of his imperfection, pollutes the best thing the Believer does. Sin mars his repentance. There is filth in our tears and unbelief in our faith. The best thing we ever did apart from the merit of Jesus only swelled the number of our sins, for when we have been most pure in our own sight, yet, like the heavens, we are not pure in Gods sight. And as He charged His angels with folly, much more must He charge us with it, even in our most angelic frame of mind. The song that thrills to Heaven and seeks to emulate seraphic strains has still mortal infirmity in it. The prayer which moves the arm of God is still a sinful prayer, and only moves that arm because the Sinless One, the great Mediator, has stepped in to take away the sin of our supplication.

I dare to say itthe best faith or the highest degree of sanctification to which a Christian ever attained on earth, has still so much of the creatures infirmity in it as to be worthy of Gods eternal wrath. In itself considered, there is so much sin about the highest and loftiest thing to which the creature can attain, that we mournfully confessWe are altogether as an unclean thing and all our righteousnesses are but as filthy rags.

As the Christian thus sins in his devout performances, so he constantly errs in the everyday tenor of his life. Sins of omission to withow many of these may be compressed into a single hour? Oh, what multitudes of things we have left undone! Remember that these make up a very great part of the sins which brings the curse. I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink, sick and in prison and you visited Me not. Have we no sins of commission? Our thoughts, our imaginations, our words, and must I not say our deedshave these been what they should be? If any man dare to tell me that he lives for a single day without a sinful deed, I will dare to tell him that he never knew himself.

Do but look at your own chamber. If you disturb it I see but little dust floating about in it, but if a stray sunbeam shall enter through the window I see millions upon millions of little motes dancing up and down! And I discover that the whole of what I supposed to be clear, pure air, is filled with innumerable atoms of all sorts of things, and that I am breathing these even in the purest atmosphere. So is it with our heart and life. When the Spirit shines into us, we see that the atmosphere of life is as full of sin as it can hold. A man may sooner count the hairs of his head, or the sands upon the seashore, or the drops of the dew of the morning upon the grass, than count the sins of a single day.

O Lord, You know us, but we know not ourselves. Yet this much we know, that we are a people full of sin and laden with iniquity. You will tell me these are little sins, but I remind you that a multitude of grains of sand may overload a vessel quite as surely as bars of ironand therefore these daily iniquities should be confessed with care and repented of with sincerity. The Christian, then, from the imperfection of his nature, sins. The old unchanged fountain of Harah must send forth bitter water. The old Adam can do nothing else but sin.

Fire can do nothing but burn. Water can do nothing but quench fire. Everything acts according to its nature. The new nature that is in us cannot sin, because it is born of God. It is so heavenly and Divine that it never stoops to anything like sin. There is a spark of the celestial and of the perfect within every Believer which never can be quenched. But the old Adam, that which made Paul cry outO wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?must sin and as certainly as sparks fly upward, so certainly the old nature will commit iniquity.

Moreover, many Christian people sin from certain peculiar infirmities. You know, each of you, what your own infirmity may be, at least I hope you have been watchful enough to discover it. Some sin through shortness of temper. They are not long-winded in patience with their fellow creatures. They are vexed. They grow hotperhaps they imagine some cause for anger where there is noneand they wax warm and speak unadvisedly with their tongue. This gives much trouble to many of the most gracious of men. A hasty temper is a perpetual temptation.

There are others who have a high and proud spirit and if they fancy they are a little snubbed or put into the back ground, at once they feel inclined to resent it. Therelisten to himI am not to be thus trod upon! Who dares to treat me thus? Many who have done good service for Christ have had to carry that thorn in their flesh even down to their graves. Sensitiveness, a high spirit, a suspicious temperamentthese are like blisters to the feet of a pilgrimhe will always walk painfully, if not slowly. Some of us have to contend with sloth. Perhaps we are afflicted with a torpid liver, and the physician has never been able to touch the complaint.

God help the man thus afflicted, for he will need to whip himself every day to his duty. And often he will feel so dull and sleepy, that he will wish for Cowpers lodge in a vast wilderness, some boundless contiguity of shade, that he might hide himself in quiet from the toil of the spiritual harvest. How many we know, dear Friends, who have to contend with constant unbelief brought on through depression of spirits. Their nerves, perhaps, have experienced a great shock at some period in life and, constitutionally, they look always at the black side of affairs. If they see a grassy knoll they suspect it to be an extinct volcano. And if they happen to be in a green valley where the mountains frown like the battlements of Heaven, they are dreadfully afraid that an avalanche must certainly come down

and destroy them.

They cannot help it. It is a peculiarity of their constitution, but it leads them into much sin, and should cause them much repentance before the face of the living God. So I might go on to mention the peculiarity of some who are suffering from bashfulness. They will often be tempted to hold back where they ought to go forwardand if not to disavow their Master yet not to proclaim their love for Him as boldly as they should do. The Christian, when he reads this verse, If any man sins, may well sayAh, indeed I do. Through these infirmities I constantly commit iniquity.

And then, dear Friends, we all sin from the assaults of evil. There are times when we are not watchful, and as Satan is always on his watchtower he is sure to attack us just then. We wear our visor up, and then in flies the stone from the infernal sling. We have forgotten a piece of our armor and the enemy spies our nakedness and cuts us deep, leaving a scar for years. The temptations of the world, when we are thrust into ungodly company, and

the trials of business, and even of the householdall these in unguarded moments may take the Christian off his feet.

Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, Paul, who was not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles, yet called himself the chief of sinners. And we with far inferior graces must take the lowest place, acknowledging that in us, that is in our flesh, there dwells no good thing. Sinner is my name, sinner my nature, but thanks be to Him who came to save sinners, I am a sinner saved by Free Grace.

II. I now leave that point for a second one full of comfort. OUR SINS DO NOT DEPRIVE US OF OUR INTEREST IN CHRIST. Note the text. If any man sins we have an Advocate. Yes, we have Him though we sin. We have Him still. It does not say, If any man sins he has forfeited his Advocate, but, we have an Advocate. Sinners though we are, all the sin that a Believer ever did or can be allowed to commit, cannot destroy his interest in the Lord Jesus Christ. Into whatever he may be suffered to fall, yet none of these things can by any possibility touch his title deeds. Indeed, in some characters Jesus is only mine when I can claim the name of sinner.

I cannot have an Advocate unless I do sin, otherwise I do not need one. Who wants an advocate to plead his cause in a court of law if there is no suit against him? Sin is a charge against me. I am a sinner. I have an Advocate. I have today a Brother in Christ. Go, tell my Brothers and Sisters, said He. And yet they had all forsaken Him, and therefore were all sinnersbut He was their Brother still. I have a Husband in Christ too, though I sin. Israel has forsaken Me, says God, and played the harlot. She has gone whoring from Me, but return, return, for I am married unto you. She is His wife still, you see, though she had gone into adultery.

The Christian, even when he has stained and fouled himself, is the spouse of Christ still for all that. We are members of His Body, and if so, the members cannot be removed or taken off and onlimbs are not so easily removed. Did not Christ wash Peter? Peter was a member of Christs own Body, and yet Peter wanted washing. O blessed picture, the Head washing the feet. So at this day, stained though we are, we are claimants of Christ as Head of our body. And, Beloved, we know that notwithstanding all our sin we are perfectly justified in Christ, for He justifies the ungodly. We know, too, that we are perfectly accepted, for we are accepted in the Beloved, and not in ourselves.

Notwithstanding all our iniquities we are pardoned, for the fountain is opened for sin and for all uncleannessnot for righteousness and puritybut for sin and for uncleanness. Therefore we conclude that all our sins do not deprive us of that which Christ is to us, namely, the Fountain of Life and light and purity and safety. Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, if our first title to Christ had depended on our good works, then it would fall when our works grew bad, but He loved us when we were as bad as we could be

*He saw us ruined in the Fall,*

*Yet loved us notwithstanding all.*   
He chose us when we were sinners. He bought us when we were sinners. He loved us when we were dead in trespasses and sins. And if we are as bad as that today, He loves us still.

If our right to Heaven rested on the Covenant of Works, that unstable tenure, it would soon fail us. But seeing it rests on the Covenant of Grace, which has no conditions in it, but which is of pure Immutable Grace from first to last, therefore be it known unto you, O sons of God, that notwithstanding all your faults and failings, wanderings and backslidings, He is your God and you are His children. He will be your God to all eternity and you shall be His children world without end. What a bold thing to say! says one. Yes, and did I not tell you that I meant to say it to the little children, that they sin not?

I believe that the bold open statement of the fact that all the sin that a Believer can commit cannot mar his interest in Christ, though it may mar his enjoyment of that interest for the present. Believing, I say, that this doctrine, instead of driving men to sin, will draw them to love that gracious and immutable God, who notwithstanding all our sins and cares and woe, will never suffer us to perish.

III. Now let us change the note a little. Our third point is THAT THE ADVOCATE IS PROVIDED ON PURPOSE TO MEET THE FACT THAT WE ARE STILL SINNERS.

If I am a sinner, then there is a court. And there is one who sits as Judgethe Father. There is a charge against me, otherwise I should not want an Advocate to meet itand this implies that I have sinned. There is an adversary to press his suit against me, and he would hardly venture to do this if there were no sin. There must be a right of reply on my part. I must have the right to put in a disclaimer in court, and to stand up and plead before the bar of justice. He who has a right to plead in court is the man who is accusedthe man who has some offense. If I were neither accused nor had been a sinner, then I should have no right to occupy the time of the court. But being a sinner, and being brought up upon that charge and having one who presses the charge against me, I have a right to reply and that reply, through Gods good Grace, I have a right to make

through my Advocate.

Let us say, concerning our Advocate, that He is ordained with a special view to sinners. All His names and attributes prove Him to be a suitable Advocate for such. You and I, who though saved, are still sinners, may safely put our case into His hands, for look who He isJesus Christ the righteous. Jesus. Ah, then He is an Advocate such as I want, for He loves me and takes an interest in me. Jesus is the name of one who became Man for my sake. He knows what sore temptations mean, He understands what trials mean, what afflictions mean. I am glad I have One who will be interested in my welfare, and will plead for me as a Friend for a friend, and as a Brother for a brother.

I thank God, that though I sin, I still have Jesus who is my, Brother born for adversity, the Friend of sinners, and will, therefore, plead the sinners part. Is His name Jesus? Then He is sure to succeed, because, they shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins. His very name implies His success. Is His name Jesus? Then if He does not succeed in my case, His honor is compromised. He is called Jesus because He does save sinnersif He does not save meHe is not Jesus. If I, a sinner, trusting in Him, give Him my cause to plead as my Advocate, and I am tried, and the verdict is against me, He is not Jesus. He may lay down His claim to be Jesus, for He does not, and cannot save His people from their sins.

Beloved Friends, do you not see how the saint is regarded as a sinner because He who is his Advocate is the appointed Savior of sinners? He is put down as their Advocate, I say, because He is the sinners Friend. I never heard of His pleading for the righteous. I never dreamed of His being the Friend of the sinless. I find Him always on the side of publicans and sinnersoffenders, and those who have gone out of the way. And therefore I conclude, that sinner though I am, continually sinning as I am, I may leave my case with Jesus, for He is just the advocate the sinner wants.

Notice, next, it is Jesus ChristChristosthe Anointed. This shows His authority to plead. There are only certain gentlemen who can plead in the Court of Chancery. And only certain others that can enter the Common Pleas, or the Kings Bench. Jesus Christ has a right to plead, for He is the Fathers own Appointed, the Fathers own Anointed. My Soul, you have a good Pleader, One whom God Himself has chosen to plead the sinners cause. If he were of your choosing, he might fail. But if God has laid help upon One that is mighty, feel safe to put your trouble where God has laid His help. He is Christ, and therefore authorized.

But I add, He is Christ and therefore qualified, for the anointing has also qualified Him for His work. He can plead better than Jacob pleaded when he spoke for Benjamin. He can plead so as to move the heart of God and prevail. What words of tenderness, what sentences of persuasion will He use when He stands up to plead for me! But more, He is Christthat is, He is Gods Messiah. Therefore God would not send Him unless He guaranteed Him. If God should send into this world a Savior who could not save, then God would have no mercy. Gods appointing and sending Christ is a guarantee of Christs success. Oh, my Soul, you have One well fitted to be your Advocate and One that cannot but succeed! Leave yourself entirely in His hands.

Notice next, it is Jesus Christ the righteous. This is not only His Character, but it is His plea. It is His Character, and if my Advocate is righteous, then I am sure He would not take up a bad cause. I do not know, it may be right for a lawyer to plead for a villain when he knows him to be a villain. But this I think, the greater villain the lawyer is the better qualified would he be to do it. But my Lord and Master, the great Advocate, would not plead a bad cause, for He is Jesus Christ the righteous. Therefore if I sin, if I am put down among the many men that sinif He pleads for me, my case must be goodfor He would not take up a bad one.

But how can He do this? Why, because He meets the charge of unrighteousness against me by this plea on His partthat He is righteous. He seems to say to the great Father in the day when the sinner stands arraignedYes, my Father, that sinner was unrighteous, but remember that I was accepted as His Substitute. I stood to keep the Law for him, and gave My active obedience. I went up to the Cross and bled, and so gave My passive obedience. I have covered him from head to foot with My doing and My dying. I have so arrayed him that not even the angels are adorned as he is, for though they may be clothed with the perfect righteousness of a creature, I have given him the righteousness of God Himself. I am become unto My people the Lord their righteousness.

Look, I have taken the jewels out of My crown to bedeck them. I have taken the garments from My own back to cover them, and the blood from My own veins to make the dye in which I have dipped their garments, till they are purpled with imperial glory. What can there be asked more for the sinner than this? Jesus Christ the righteous stands up to plead for me, and pleads His righteousness. And mark, He does this not if I do not sin, but if I do sin. There is the beauty of my text. It does not say, If any man does not sin we have an Advocate. But, if any man sins we have an Advocate. So that when I have sinned and come creeping up to my closet with a guilty conscience and an aching heart, and feel that I am not worthy to be called Gods son, I still have an Advocate, because I am one of the many men that sin. I sin and I have an Advocate.

Oh, I know not how to express the joy I feel in my soul to be able to put it so! It is not, If any man is righteous, we have an Advocate. It is not, If any man is prayerful, and careful, and godly, and walks rightly and in the light, and so on, but, If any man SINS we have an Advocate. Oh, my Soul, there is the music of Gods heart in those words! Music such as the prodigal heard at the festival which welcomed his return. If any man sins we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

IV. And now we turn to our fourth point which is that THIS TRUTH, SO EVANGELICAL AND SO DIVINE, SHOULD BE PRACTICALLY REMEMBERED. It should be practically remembered, dear Friends, at all times. Every day I find it most healthy to my own soul to try and walk as a saint, but in order to do so, I must continually come to Christ as a sinner. I would seek to be perfect. I would strain after every virtue, and forsake

every false way. But still, as to my standing before God, I find it happiest to sit where I sat when first I looked to Jesus, on the rock of His works, having nothing to do with my own righteousness, but only with His.

Depend on it, dear Friends, the happiest way of living is to live as a poor sinner, and as nothing at allhaving Jesus Christ as All in All. You may have all your growths in sanctification, all your progress in graces, all the development of your virtues that you will. But still I do earnestly pray you never to put any of these where Christ should be. If you have begun in Christ, then finish in Christ. If you have begun in the flesh, and then go on in the flesh, we know what the sure result will be. But if you have begun with Jesus Christ as your Alpha, let Him be your Omega. I pray you never think you are rising when you get above this, for it is not rising, but slipping downwards to your ruin. Stand still to this

*Nothing in my hands I bring,*

*Simply to Your Cross I cling.*  
Still a sinner. But still having an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteouslet this be the spirit of your everyday life.

Make this essentially the rule of your life on particular occasions. Here let me say a word that may at once comfort and enlighten some here who are in darkness. When the Spirit of God gives you a clearer view of your own depravity, mind that you hold to thisIf any man sins we have an Advocate with the Father. Perhaps when you were first converted you did not suspect the depth of wickedness that lay in your heart. Perhaps you did not believe that you could be so unutterably bad as you really were. But lately the fountains of the great deep have been broken up and you have been horrified. You are almost driven mad, or else into despondency and despair by this discovery of your innate corruption, until you fly to thisSinner as I am and never more consciously so than I am now that Gods Spirit has enlightened me, I yet know that if any man sins we have an Advocate with the Father and I, black, foul and filthymore foul and filthy than I ever thought myself to be put my case into the hands of my Advocate and leave it there forever.

When after this you have fallen into sin, and oh, I may address some member of this Church who has done this though the pastor knows it notyou have fallen into some sin that pricks your conscience. You carry about with you a something that will not let you sleep at night. There is a sin that disturbs you, and you wish you could forget that you had committed it. You have gone before God as David did. You have used the language of the fifty-first Psalm, but you cannot get rid of that sin. You believe you are a child of God sometimes, but that sin has got into your conscience and, like a cancer, is eating into your comfort.

My Brother, now is your timeIf any man sins, we have an Advocate with the Father. Jesus Christ is of no use to you if He will only save you when you have no sin. Let me repeat itnow you are a sinner. Now you are condemned by the verdict of your own conscience. Now you have sinned, sinned willfully and foullyand God forbid that I should extenuate your sin. Yet, let your sin be as gross, and black, and hellish as it may be, if you believe in Jesus Christ you have an Advocate with the Father. And through that Advocate your cause shall rest and your sin shall be put away.

Perhaps you will tell me that your sin has had some gross aggravation about it. If you are a Christian it has, for a Christian always sins worse than other men. If the sin is not in itself so bad as other mens, it is worse in you. For a kings favorite to play the traitor is villainy, indeed. For one that has been highly favored, as you have been, with visits of love from Jesusto be false to Himoh, this is shame, double shame to Him! For you who have been washed in His blood to crucify Him afresh, what shall I say to that? You deserve the hottest wrath of God and the deepest Hell. But thus says the Lord unto youI have blotted out your sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud your iniquities. Return unto Me. If any man sins, we have an Advocate with the Father.

It does not say, If some men sin we have no advocate. Or, If some men sin in an aggravated way. No, it is not put so. It says, If any man sins, we have an Advocate with the Father. So that though you have heaped aggravations one upon another, and your crime has been as foul as any that could have been committed, still you can say, we have an Advocate. Fly with a humble, contrite heart, and throw yourself at the feet of that Advocate, and by His blood, and by His wounds He will plead for you, and you shall prevail.

What if I add to all this that you have so sinned as to bring a scandal upon the name of God, upon His Church, and upon His cause? Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, you may well weep in secret. You may weep tears of blood for having done this. But still, for all that, I cannot shut the gate where God sets it wide open. I have not a thunderbolt for you. If you are a child of God, mercy is still free, and still it is preached to youIf any man sins, publicly, like David, so as to make Gods enemies to blaspheme, yet still, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. Oh, what splendid mercy is this! Archangel never dreamed of such mercy as this to sinners, to real sinners, to hugely vile sinners, to black, hellish sinners, to devilish sinners, to such as no adjective can be found to describe them! Yet, if they believe in Jesus, sin as they may, they still have, an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

I wish I could meet the case of that Brother yonder, who has long given up all hope of ever being restored. He has been excommunicated. He has been driven away from the society of the godly. He thinks, though he is in this house this morning, he has no business here. And sometimes the devil has tempted him to make away with himself, and he has said, if I must be lost I may as well be lost at once. Ah, but, my Brother, you dare not do it with such a text of Scripture as this before your eyes! The Lord loves you still, and if He ever loved you, all your sin cannot wean His heart from you. You may have gone to the utmost length of your tether, but He has so tied you that you can never go beyond it! You may have gotten to the very extremity and edge of the precipice, but over that edge you must not, and you shall not go!

This day He sends me to stop you. Return! Return! Return! A Father bids you return! You are feeding swine today, and all foul and filthy as you are, you would desire fill your belly with their husks. But you cannotyou have a hunger that husks can never satisfy. Your Father waits to receive you. Come, He will meet you. He will fall upon your neck and kiss you. He will set you at His own table and there shall be music and dancing for you. The best robe awaits you, Prodigal! The fatted calf is killed for you! Come! O believe it! Believe that God is able to do this great thing for you. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are His thoughts above your thoughts, and His ways above your ways.

*What though your numerous sins exceed The stars that fill the skies,   
And, aiming at the Eternal Throne,   
Like pointed mountains rise,*

yet still the red sea of Jesus blood shall cover the tops of the mountains of your sins, till, like Noahs ark, that floated twenty cubits upwards, the tops of the mountains shall be covered. If any man sinshere, you see, there is nothing said about goodness, nothing about virtue, or tenderness of heartit is only put, If any man sins, we have an Advocate.

O you that believe in Jesus, pray for those who believe not, that they, too, may have an Advocate. If you and I have come and put our trust in Him, and found a shelter in His wounds, let us never be satisfied till we see our children, our brothers, our sisters, our friends, our kinsfolk brought to this Advocate. Go and tell it wherever your voices can be heard, that Jesus Christ receives SINNERS, and that He eats with them. Go and say that He is the sinners Friend, and that He is willing to take them as they are and wash them and make them whiter than snow.

Since you have proved it yourself, and need to prove it every day, try and bring others to the conviction of it, that they, with you, may sing to the praise of that Divine love which has given the Advocate to every Believer, whatever his guilt and condemnation may have been. The Lord bless you now, for Jesus sake. Amen.

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SINCERITY AND DUPLICITY   
NO. 922

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, MARCH 6, 1870, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that says, I know Him, and keeps not His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him.   
1 John 2:3, 4.

THE Epistles of John possess and combine certain qualities which seem, at the first blush, to stand opposite as the poles to one another. Their style of expression is simple, chaste, and unadorned. Short words are used. For the most part words of one syllablesuch little homely words as a young child might easily spell. And the sense is so clear and obvious, that the captious critic or the astute reasoner must be puzzled to distort it. Yet there is no lack of dignity in the language, and as for the matter of these Epistles, it is grand and sublime. Where would you turn in the pages of the New Testament, save only to the book of the Revelation, given by the pen of the same writer, for more notable mystery?

The language charms our ears, while the Truth it expresses holds us in awe. There are deep meanings and veiled mysteries here. Albeit the hidden wisdom which baffles finite thought is not couched in strange terms, but declared in such plain speech as trips lightly off the tongue, and yet sinks deeply into the heart. Again, the spirit of John is love, all love. Every line he writes is perfumed with charity. And yet to what close selfexamination, to what a severe testing does he put us! How truly may it be said that these Epistles are a touchstone by which we may discern between the true gold and the counterfeit!

Generous but discriminating, glowing with affection but rigid in fidelity, the Apostle mingles caution with caress, and qualifies the most soothing consolations with such stern warnings, that in well-near every sentence he constrains us to deep searching of heart. The text is a case in point. With a wise discrimination he draws a contrast between him who knows that he knows Christ, and him who says that he knows Christ. The one he acknowledges, but the other he brands with that hard word, that ignominious title, a liar, and sends him away as unworthy of further consideration.

Not only in this case, but all through his Epistles, John continues to unravel the tangled web of hypocrisy. Ah, that deceit should steal such gentle shapes and seem like Truth! To show the diverging point between facts and sayings, between realities and professions, between those who have, and those who only say that they have, was his constant aim. It may interest you just to open your Bibles and turn to one or two of the passages that illustrate this. In his first chapter, at the sixth verse, he has been speaking of those who walk in the light and have fellowship with God, and he adds, If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.

Then in the text he speaks of those who know Christ, and he adds, He that says, I know Him, and keeps not His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him. And further on, in the ninth verse, speaking of those who have the light, he says, He that says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now. Not to multiply the instances, there is a notable one in the fourth chapter, at the twentieth verse, If a man says I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God Whom he has not seen?

So to have a thing, or to boast that you have itto be, or to pretend to be such-and-such a characterare as opposite as white and black, as light and darkness. Indeed, we scarcely need Revelation to tell us this, for it is so in things secular, and it must be certainly applicable to religion. We meet in common life with persons who say that they are rich, but this does not make them so. They apply for credit and say that they are wealthy when they are worth nothing. Companies will ask for your money with which they may speculate, and they say that they are sound, but they are oftentimes found to be rotten. Though some of them make a very fair show in the prospectus, the result appears very foul in the winding-up of the association.

Persons have been known to say that they were of distinguished rank, but when they have had to prove their title before the House of Lords, oftentimes has it been discovered that they have made a mistake. Lunatics in Bethlehem Hospital, near here, have been found by scores to say that they were kings or queens. In the old houses, where madmen were confined, it often happened that some poor creature twisted a crown of straw, put it on his head, and said that he was a monarch. But that did not make him so. No armies arose at his bidding. No fleets crossed the ocean to do his will. No tribute was brought to his feet. He remained a poor pauper madman still, though he said that he was a king.

Many a time you have found the difference, in your commercial transactions, between blank saying and positive truth. A man has said that he would meet that bill, or that he would discharge that debt. He has said that the rent should be paid when it was due. He has said a thousand thingsand you have found out that it was easy enough for him to say, but it was not quite so easy for you to obtain the doing of it. And when the engagement has been turned to writing, registered, and made as fast as black and white can make it, you have not found it thoroughly reliable, for to say by subscribing a contract or covenant does not always make it certain that a man will fulfill it. To say is not necessarily a pledge of good faith, or a warrant against treachery.

Rest assured, then, that if in these temporal matters to say is not the same thing as to be or to do, neither is it so in spiritual things. A minister may say that he is sent of God, and yet be a wolf in sheeps clothing. A man may say that he unites himself to the Church of God, but he may be no better than a hypocrite and an alien who has no part in her fellowship. We may say that we pray, and yet never a prayer may come from our hearts. We may say to our fellow men that we are Christians, and yet we may never have been born againnever have obtained the precious faith of Gods electnever have been washed in the blood of Jesus Christ.

And, Sirs, as you would not be satisfied with merely saying that you are rich. As you want the title-deeds of the broad acres. As you want to hear the coins chink in your box. As you want the real thing, and not the mere saying of itso, I pray you, be not put off with the mere profession of religion. Be not content with a bare assertion, or think that is enough. Seek to have your own profession verified by the witness of Heaven, as well as by that of your own conscience. It is not written, He that says he believes shall be saved. But he that believes and is baptized shall be saved. It is not said that he who says he has confessed shall be forgiven. But He that confesses and forsakes his sins shall find mercy. Your mere sayers, though they say, Lord, open to us, and aver that Christ did eat in their streets, shall have for an answer, I never knew you! Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity.

Let us not be gulled and deceived. Let us not be duped and taken in by any notion that saying so makes it so! Take heed, lest with a flattering tongue you do impose on your own soul. Standing in view of that Eye which penetrates the inmost heart, may we learn to distinguish between the mere profession and the full possession of real Grace and vital godliness.

The matter in hand tonight, in which this distinction is to be made, is the knowing of Christ. Let us speak first about what it is to know Him, then about knowing that we know Him. And after that, solemnly expostulate with those who merely say that they know Him.

I. The matter to be considered and judged tonight by each man for himself is THE KNOWING OF CHRIST. What, then, is it to know Christ? Of course we have never seen Him. Many years ago He left this world and ascended to His Father. Still we can know Him. It is possible. There have been thousands, and even millions, who have had a personal acquaintance with Him, Whom, though they have not seen, they loved, and in Whom they have rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

To know is a word used in Scripture in several senses. Sometimes it means to acknowledge. As when we read of a certain Pharaoh, that he knew not Joseph. That is, he did not acknowledge any obligation of the state or kingdom to Joseph. He remembered not what had been done by that great man. So, too, Christ says that His sheep know His voice. They acknowledge His voice as being the voice of their Shepherd, and cheerfully follow where their Shepherd leads. Now, it is a matter of the first necessity to acknowledge Christthat He is God, that He is the Son of the Father, that He is the Savior of His people, and the rightful Monarch of the worldto acknowledge more--that you accept Him as your Savior, as your King, as your Prophet, as your Priest.

This is, in a certain sense, to know Christ. That is, to own and confess in your heart that He is God, in the glory of God the Father. That He is your Redeemer. That His blood has washed you, and His righteousness covers you. That He is your salvation, your only hope, and your fondest desire.

The word know means, in the next place, to believe. As in that passage, By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify manywhere it is evidently meant that by the knowledge of Him, that is to say, by faith in Christ Jesus, He would justify many. To know and to believe are sometimes used in Scripture as convertible terms. Now, in this sense we must know Christ. We must believe Him, we must trust Him, we must

accept the reports of the Prophets and Apostles respecting Him. And we must subscribe to them, practically, with all our heart, and soul, and strength, and lean the whole burden of our everlasting destiny upon His finished work. To know Him, then, is to acknowledge Him, and to believe in Him.

This is not all. The word to know often means experience. It is said of our Lord that, He knew no sin. That is to say, He never experienced sin. He never became a sinner. To know Christ, then, we must feel and prove His power, His pardoning power, His power of love over the heart, His reigning power in subduing our passions, His comforting power, His enlightening power, His elevating power, and all those other blessed influences which, through the Holy Spirit, proceed from Christ. This is to experience Him. And once more, to know in Scripture often means to commune. Eliphaz says, Acquaint yourself with God, be at peace with Him. That is to say, commune with Him, get into friendship and fellowship with Him.

So it is necessary that every Believer should know Christ by having an acquaintance with Him, by speaking with Him in prayer and praiseby laying bare ones heart to His heartreceiving from Him the Divine secret, and imparting to Him the full confession of all our sins and griefs. In a word, dear Brethren, to know Christ is very much the same as to know any other person. When you know a man, if he is your intimate friend, you trust him, you love him, you esteem him, you are on speaking terms with him. You not only bow to him in the street, but you go to his house. You sit down with him at his table. At other times you hold counsel with him, or you ask his assistance. And he comes to your house, and you hold familiar association, the one with the other. There is a good understanding between you and the man of whom it may be truly said that you know him.

On such terms must the soul be with Christ. He must not be merely an historic personage of whom we read in the pages of Scripture. But He must be a real Person with Whom we can speak in spirit, commune in heart, and be united in the bonds of love. We must know Him, His very Person, so as to love and to trust Him as a real Lord to us. Judge, then, each one, yourselveswhether you really and indeed, in this sense, know Christ.

Do distinguish, however, between knowing about Christ and knowing Christ. We may know very much about many of our great men, though we do not know them. Now it will never save a soul to know about Christ. The only saving knowledge is to know Him, His very Self, and to trust Him, the living Savior, who is now at the right hand of God. To Him it is we speak. With Him in very deed we commune.

Nor does it say that if we are able to speak about Him, therefore we are saved. Lest the music of your own tongue beguile you, remember how easy some people find it to talk fluently, eloquently, properly, and persuasively of persons they never knew. They had read it. They had stored it up in their memories, and they told it out again. They may vindicate the reputation of some hero or statesman in company where it is disgraced though they never knew any more of him than the fame that has reached their ears. Ah, but this is not enough here.

You may be as fluent as Whitefield. Yes, you may be eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures as was Apollos. But if you do not know Christ by your own individual, personal acquaintance with His Person, with His righteousness, and with His blood, you will not be saved by all your fine speeches. Rather are you in imminent peril, that out of your own mouth you will be condemned. Such knowledge as we now refer to is inestimably precious. Get knowledge, classical or mathematicalapply yourself to literature, or study the sciences, enjoy the vast hoard of knowledge bequeathed to us by antiquity, or endeavor to augment that hoard, and transmit it to future agesbut after all, there is no knowledge that can ever match that of the Christ once crucified, now risen and exalted, and expected soon to return in Glory.

Such knowledge as this is incomparable. It dives deep into the mine of Gods eternal purpose. It soars high into the Heaven of Gods everlasting love. It enlarges the soul by filling it with the inexhaustible fullness of ChristChrist the wisdom of GodWhom THE LORD possessed in the beginning of His way before His works of old. O Sirs, he that gets such knowledge need not seek for degrees at the universities. He who has Christ has the highest imaginable degree. And, blessed forever be the name of my God, such knowledge can never be lost. If you know Christ, you have that written on the tablet of your heart which Satan shall never erase, which time shall never dim, which the iron hand of death shall never be able to blot out. There shall it stand forever.

You know Him, and you are known of Him, and they shall be Mine, says the Lord, in the day when I make up My jewels. The Lord knows them that are His. They that know Him He knows, and He will confess them to be His own in the day when He comes in the glory of His Father, and all His holy angels with Him. I speak but simply, though I feel intensely the importance of this subject. A great solemnity surrounds it. Life and death, Heaven and Hell, are here clearly legible. For if you know Christ, it is well with you, but if you know Him not, you are ignorant of the one thing which can save your soul.

II. Having laid down the matter that is propounded, we shall advance to speak OF THE TWO CHARACTERS THAT ARE PORTRAYED IN THE TEXT. With respect to the onethose who know that they know Him. We are told how they know that they know HimWe know that we do know Him, if we keep His commandments.

Some Christians who do know Christ are in great doubt as to whether they know Him. This ought not to be. It is too solemn a matter to be left to chance or conjecture. I believe there are saved ones who do not know of a surety that they are saved. They are raising the question often that never ought to be a question. No man ought to be content to leave that unsettled, for mark you, my Hearer or Reader, if you are not a saved man, you are a condemned man. If you are not forgiven, your sins lie on you. You are now in danger of Hell if you are not now secure of Heaven, for there is no place between these two. You are either a child of God, or not. Why do you say, I hope I am a child of God, yet I do not know. I hope, yet I do not know that I am forgiven? In such suspense you ought not to be. You are either one or the othereither a saint or a sinnereither saved or lost, either walking in the light or walking in the dark.

Oh, it is very urgent that we should know that we know Him! Though, as I have already said, to know Him is the paramount matternext to that there is nothing so important as to know that we know Him. Do you ask what service it would render you? It would give you such comfort as nothing else could. To know that you know Christ is a perennial joy, and an unfailing consolation under the heaviest trial. This is a candle that will shine in the dark night, and give you all the light that you shall want between here and Heaven. If I know that I know Christ, then all things are mine. Things present and things to come are alike in the Covenant of Grace. I am rich to all the intents of bliss, and the knowledge thereof is comfort indeed!

You who are living on perhaps and maybe, are living on dust and ashes. A piece of bread that is full of grit and dirt will break your teeth if you try to eat it. But, oh, if you can but get to know, to be persuaded, to be assured, to be confident, then shall you eat bread that is better than that which angels eat, and like Jonathan, when he touched the honey with his rod, and put it to his lips, you shall find your eyes enlightened!

Nor is it joy alone you would find from this knowledge. It would no less certainly bring you confidence. When a man knows that he knows Christ, what confidence he has in meeting temptations! Shall such a man as I flee? What confidence in prayer! He asks believingly, as children beloved ask of a generous parent. And what a confident air this assurance before God would give us with the sons of men! We should not stammer in the presence of their philosophers, or look abashed in the presence of their nobles. But knowing that we knew Him, Whom to know is life eternal, we should not mind though they called us ignorant, or frowned at us as ignoble and presumptuous. We should not blush to confess our faith with an elevated self-possession. Our courage would no more fail us in the pestilential swamps of the world, than our enthusiasm would subside in the fertile garden of the Church, knowing that we shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

And this certainty that you know Christ would kindle in you the very highest degree of love. Knowing that I am saved, knowing that I am His, and He is mine, I cannot but feel the flames of affection towards Him glowing like coals of juniper. That love leads me to obedience, and that obedience develops in me fervor and zeal. Knowing that you know Him, you will be ready to cry out with a holy passion, What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me? You will sing with ecstasy of His free Grace that made you know Him, and of His sovereign, distinguishing love, that embraced you

*Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing   
My dear Redeemers praise!*

You cannot tell, dear Christians, you who are exercised with faint misgivings or with tormenting fears, what a great and infinite blessing this assurance would be to youhow it would make life seem young and like a thing Divine! To you who are converted, it would be like a second conversion. You are now bedridden with sick thoughts. Could you once know that you know Christ, you would leave that sick bed and pant no more to return to it, but enjoy the air, walk abroad, and fulfill joyfully your allotted tasks. I pray that the Master may say to many of you who are bowed with a spirit of infirmity, Be made straight. And to others who have long lain on this bed of doubts and fears, Take up your bed, and walk.

Do you desire this sweet balm for an uneasy conscience? Observe the prescription, Hereby we know that we do know Him if we keep His commandments. It is in the keeping of His commandments that this sound state of the souls health is enjoyed. Do you ask for further explanation? It means to keep His commandments in our minds, and hold them fast in our memory with devout reverence. It should be the object of every Christian to find out what Christs command is. And, this done, never to ask another question, but receive it with meekness, meditate upon its holy sanction, and venerate it as the Law of the Lords House.

If Christ has said it, I dare not cavil, argue, or question, much less rebel. It is mine to keep His commandments in my heart as a sacred trust. As precious treasures more to be desired than gold, and with a yet increasing relish, as luxuries to the taste, sweeter than honey or the honeycomb. But to keep them in our hearts, we must earnestly desire to fulfill them. By reason of the Fall we cannot perfectly keep the commands of Christ, but the heart keeps them as the standard of purity, and it would be perfect if it could. The Christians only desire is to be exactly like Christ. It pains him that he falls short of His image. It gives him great joy if be can feel that the Holy Spirit is working in him anything like conformity to the Divine will.

His heart is right towards God, sincerely so. This is not enough unless there is a constant, persevering aim to fulfill His commandments in our lives. Depend upon it, Brethren, that the want of practical obedience to Christ is the root of nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of our doubts and fears. The roots of our fears are in our sins. Search there, and you shall find the cause of soul trouble. I believe many a child of God walks in darkness because he does not obey the Word of the Lord. Take that sentence for your motto which the mother of Jesus addressed to the servants at the marriage in Cana of GalileeWhatever He says unto you, do it.

Is it so that you often hear the precept with never a thought of heeding it? Then beware lest you suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. Or does your conscience smart with sore rebuke as often as it is mentioned? Then it is with you as with one who gets a wound in battle, and the sword that made it plunges through the wound again and pricks it deeper. Good cause is there, my Friend, for your unrest. If so be, you have an open wound left to fester. Christ commands you, for instance, to be baptized, and do you resist His will? Seek you some frivolous pretext, saying, I pray you have me excused?

He that knows his Masters will and does it not, the same shall be beaten with many stripes. Many a stripe has fallen upon a professed Believer because he has not been obedient to that injunction. The command that we should love each other is far too lightly esteemed by many. Now, if you do not love your fellow Christians fervently with a pure heart, can you wonder that you fall into doubts? It is natural that it should be so. Only in proportion as Divine Grace makes you obedient will Divine Grace make you an assured Christian. Your holiness and your confidence will keep pace together if your confidence is worth having.

Presumption outruns holiness, but confidence never does. It is little matter of surprise to me when some men doubt whether they are saved. There are grave reasons why they should, since their lives are so little saturated with the Spirit of their Master. Well may you and I bemoan ourselves before God in the silent watches of the night, because, having experienced so much mercy we do so little in His service, and having seen so much of His Character we are so little like our Lord. Depend upon it, if you want to kill your doubts and fears, you must kill your sins, by Gods Grace, by exterminating disobedience. We shall also exterminate the mass of our despondency, if not the whole of it.

Although, my dear Brethren, I never said, nor thought that you must be perfect before you could be assured that you were a Christian, I tell you that you will never be altogether beyond doubts and fears till you are altogether beyond sin. And that will not be, I think, till you reach the other shore. A dear Friend in Christ wanted to debate this question with me some time agowhether perfection was possible in this world. I told him I would rather not, but if he and I both tried to attain it, it would be the best way to settle the controversy. I only trust that my friend may reach it. I am half afraid I never shall, but I will leave no stone unturned to try. Who knows how far God may enable any single, watchful, prayerful soul to go? At any rate, take it as a rule, that as God gives you holiness, so God will give you assurance. And in proportion as you mar the fidelity of your obedience, in that proportion you will mar your evidences and weaken your knowledge that you know Him.

Let me just give you an illustration of this point before I leave it. When our Lord met the disciples at Emmaus, and talked with them, they did not know Him while He talked with them. When do you think they did know that they knew Him? Why, not until they performed an act of obedience by offering hospitality to a stranger. Then He was known to them in the breaking of bread. Yes, there is a blessed eye-clearing to many and many a child of God when he comes to give of his bread to the poor and needy, and when he comes to the Table of the Lord, in remembrance of His death. He shall then know that he knows Him.

We are told that the cherubim have wings, but they also have hands under their wings. True children of God have knowledge, but they have under their knowledge practice. And you have no good proof that you are a child of God because you have the wings of knowledge, unless you have also the hands of practice. Would one ascertain how much a sheep had eaten? It could be seen in no better way than by showing how much fat, and flesh, and wool it had gathered. So with a Christian. If you want to know how much he has lived on Christ, see how much of zeal, how much of obedience, how much of holiness he has gathered. For hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.

III. We now come to the last consideration. It hurls a momentous charge against dissemblers. There is such a thing as saying that we know Christbut if any man say that he knows Christ, and keeps not His commandments, such a man is a liarplain speech is thishe is a liar, and the Truth is not in him.

I would have you, my dear Friends, give earnest heed to these words, because, while it is an easy thing to say that you know Him, there are many temptations so to do in a Church like this. When many are impressed, and a great number of your friends and acquaintances profess that they know Christ, you may easily fall into the current. Indeed, it may be hard to resist the tide, and perhaps without really knowing Him in your souls, you may be led, for the sake of companionship, to say that you know Him. Oh, I beseech you, never do this! If you know that you know Him, confess that knowledge at once. But never, never, never be induced to say anything beyond what you know.

To let the tongue outrun the witness of the conscience is to betray guile in the heart. And the man whose sin is forgiven is one in whose spirit there is no guile. No, no! As you love your souls, keep your hands off all profession unless you have true possession. A man may tell a story so often, that though it is not true, he may at last come to believe it. I can think of one or two notable stories of good old friends that one always listens to without raising a questionthough never without suspecting that they have gradually accumulated attritions of exaggeration. We may smile at the fiction whose tangled threads were woven thus to please the ear and tickle the fancy. But we tremble at the slow, almost imperceptible growth of a dire falsehood which beguiles a mans own soul.

He may first of all say he hopes that he loves Christ. Then he may say, Others think I do, and therefore I feel assured I do. And soon he may say this and that, with an air that satisfies his friends and gratifies himself, until he makes his poor deluded heart believe a lie. Yes, and I know he may go on the dupe of his own credulity to his grave, and perhaps even at the Judgment Seat of Christ he may say that he knows Christ, only then to awaken from his treacherous dream, when he shall hear Christ sayI never knew you. Depart from Me, you worker of iniquity. O God, save us from this! Let us never say we know Him, unless in very deed and truth we know Christ and are found in Him.

Now, John says that to say we know Christ, and not to keep His commandments is a lie. It is a verbal lie. The man who utters it speaks a lie. He says, I know Christ. But it is a falsehood. He does not know Him. He knows about Himbut his heart knows nothing of Jesus. It is a doctrinal lie, for it would be an awful heresy to say that a man who lived in sin knew Christthat one who was a drunkard, or a thief, or unchastehad acquaintance with the Savior. Does Christ keep such company? Does He call these His friends? The men who set the taproom on a roar? Your merry-makers, who can sing lascivious songsare these Christs friends? I know Christ keeps better company than this. He is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. It is a lie against the doctrines of the Gospel.

And it is a practical lie. The man who says, I know Him, and then goes and breaks the commands of Christevery time he sins tells a lie. People can tell lies when they hold their tongues, as I pointed out to the little children when addressing them last Sunday afternoon. There was a little girl at school who always held her hand up when the boys and girls were asked to show in this manner that they knew the answer to any question that had been put to them. One afternoon she held her hand up when she did not know the answer, and a little school fellow said to her, Jane, you did not know that. And she said, No. But I thought teacher would think better of me if she thought I know it. Ah, said the other, but that is telling a lie with your hand.   
Yes, and you may equally act a lie. A man who professes to be a

Christian when he is not hangs out false colors on Sunday, and all through the week he plays the liars part. Were his profession true, surely his conduct would be consistent with it! It is a corrosive lie, a lie that eats into the mans soul, corrupts and cankers it, so that, as John says, The Truth is not in him. The man that begins by lying about his relation to God soon becomes hardened to lying in the community of his fellow men. Some of the greatest rogueries and robberies ever committed have been perpetrated by professing Christian men.

How often, when we have heard of a gigantic fraud, has there been some canting hypocrite or other connected with it! This is very natural, it is scarcely surprising. For when the man had come to deceive himself, to dissemble in things sacred, and to lie to God, he was such a practiced hand that the devil could not find a fitter vassal to lie to men. O take care of trifling with your convictions! You may flatter yourself with the vain conceit that you will never cheat anybody. I am not so sure. If a man would rob God, he would rob his mother. If he once gives the lie to God by making a false profession, I know not where he may stay his hand. Who, who would have sold Christ for thirty pieces of silver? Who, but Judas, he that professed to be His follower, His disciple, His private secretary, and His treasurer. Though all the while his heart was false to his Lord! It is a traitorous profession that breeds gigantic sins.

Once again, it is a damning lie. The man that says, I know Christ, and does not keep His commandments, is making his own damnation sure. He signs, seals, and stamps it every day. By his profession of being a follower of Christ he confesses that he knows what he ought to be, yet by his actions he proves that he is not what he ought to be. And so he is bearing witness against himself, judging himself, condemning his own soul, and challenging the dread sentence of everlasting perdition. God save us from such a lie as this!

Before I conclude now, it behooves me to point out some of those characters upon which the brand must be fixedthey are liars. If there are any such here, may their consciences be pricked. There have been persons who have professed their faith in Christ, but who have been in the habit of acting dishonestly. They have been negotiating fictitious bills. They have been stealing small articles out of shops. They have taken little sums of money out of tills. They have been dealing with short weights, and selling wares with wrong marksand all this time they have said that they knew Christ.

Now, one of His commandments is, You shall love your neighbor as yourself, and another one is, You shall not steal. And in not keeping these they have proved themselves to be liars, though they called themselves Christians. Some who have professed faith in Christ have been drunkards. Present here tonightI do not say they are now members of the Church, but they have beenare those who have fallen into habits of intemperance. I am afraid there are some who, though they escape the odium of detection, as they have not to go home at night from the public house, manage to drink pretty hard at home.

Depend upon it, you who secretly indulge this vicious propensity are not less guilty, and shall not be more lightly judged by God than those who sin openlywho are locked up for being drunk on the Saturday nightand have to pay five shillings and costs on the Monday morning. You may be respectable in the eyes of your fellow men, but you are disreputable and scandalous hypocrites in the sight of Heaven. Some, too, there are of good standing in societyyoung men who have made a profession of faithwho can take pleasure in haunts that are something more than dubious. It is a shameful thing for a professor of Christianity to be found in those music halls, saloons, and places of revelry in London where you cannot go without your morals being polluted. You can neither open your eyes nor your ears without knowing at once that you are in the outskirts of Satans domain.

I charge you by the living God, if you cannot keep good company and avoid the circle of dissipation, do not profess to be followers of Christ! He bids you come out from among them! Be you separate, touch not the unclean thing. If you can find pleasure in lewd society and lascivious songs, what right have you to mingle with the fellowship of saints, or to join in the singing of Psalms? You do not keep the commandments, you violate them. The Truth is not in you, you betray it.

And what shall we say of those who, while making a profession of religion, have been addicted to uncleanness? Sins that ought not to be spoken of among us lest the cheek of modesty should be made to blush, have been committed in secret by such as would be accounted Christian men. God have mercy upon unchaste professors, for whoredom is a deep ditch, and the abhorred of the Lord do fall into it. If any here have so fallen, may they lay aside their profession, for they bear the marks of Gods abhorrence. Let them not come into His holy place, let them not gather to His Table, neither let them from this day on count themselves His children. Such they cannot betheir profession is a lie.

The covetous! The greedy! The grasping! Those who see their Brethren have needs and shut up the heart of their compassion! To each of you the Masters words are very strongHow dwells the love of God in him? Covetousness is idolatry! If you are eaten up of the world. If money is your God, you are as surely condemned as if you had been dishonest or unchaste. And are there not others whose tongue is perverse and unruly, and their conversation often far from pure? Alas, when it comes to this that men should presume to the Supper of the Lord who can hurl out an oath! That men who have been known, when excited, to blaspheme and use profane language should yet with the same mouth draw near to feed upon the emblems of the Saviors passion! O Sirs, if you had a conscience, surely you would not dare to come! If your hearts had any feeling left in them, you would tremble to be found among the people of God while your speech blasphemes the Most High.

Is there one virtue of superlative excellence, peculiarly Christian, supported by the frequent precept and the unparalleled example of our Lord Jesussurely it is that of forgiving injuries. Yet I have known some of His disciples, as they would have us believe, who have been unforgiving. Christians they called themselves, yet they could not forgive a trespass, were it even of their own children! A resentful, malicious Christianwhat an anomaly! Did you not lately hear of a man, great and high in station was he not a bishop?who cut his daughter off with a shilling, or rather without a shilling, because she had married against his will? Ah, these things are not fit to be whispered about, nor is it possible for them to be

kept in secret.

I tell you, if you love not your Brethren, if you love not your own child, if you cannot forgive your childthere is nothing more certain in the book of God than thisthat you will never enter Heaven. An unforgiving spirit is an unforgiven spirit. First, go and forgive your Brother before you bring your sacrifice, or God will neither accept you nor your offering. Are we not taught to pray, Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us?

It has been hard work for me thus to mention these inconsistencies. I cannot venture farther, though I might have stated more. The labor of my lips is a burden to my heart. If any mans conscience smite himwell, let it smite him hard, let it smite him till it drives him from his sinlet it smite him till he falls at the feet of Jesus, a contrite suppliant for pardon. O be thorough, be thorough! If you wish to be washed from sin, eschew the sin, the penalties of which you dread. If you profess to know Christ, have nothing to do with a sinful world. Shake off the viper into the fire, for it will poison you and destroy you. God grant that you may renounce sin, if you profess in very deed to be the servants of Christ.

My last word is this. If any man now feels himself troubled on account of sin, let me read these words to him, and I have done. Hear them in faith. They are the words that come before the text. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. O come, you guilty ones, you guilty professors, you that have been false to your Lord and to His love! Come to Him notwithstanding all your bitter provocations. And He is the Mercy Seat: the Propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Look you, then, look and live! Whether saints or sinners, whatever your past lives may have been, look to the Propitiatory Sacrifice offered on Calvarys bloody tree! Look and live! The Lord grant it for His dear Sons sake. Amen.

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IN HIMLIKE HE IS   
NO. 1732

DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 17, 1883, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

He that says he abides in Him ought, himself,   
also to walk, even as He walked.   
1 John 2:6.

He that says he abides in Himthat is exactly what every Christian says. He cannot be a Christian unless this is true of him and he cannot fully enjoy his religion unless he knows for sure that he is in Christ and can boldly say as much. We must be in Christ and abidingly in Christ, or else we are not saved in the Lord. It is our union with the Christ that makes us Christians! By union with Him in our life we truly livelive in the favor of God. We are in Christ, dear Brothers and Sisters, as the manslayer was in the City of RefugeI hope that we can say we abide in Him as our sanctuary and shelter. We have fled for refuge to Him who is the hope set before us in the Gospel! Even as David and his men sheltered themselves in the caves of Engedi, so we hide ourselves in Christ. We each one sing and our heart goes with the words

*Rock of ages, cleft for me,   
Let me hide myself in Thee.*

We have entered into Christ as into the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, as guests into a banquet hall, as returning travelers into their homes. And now we abide in Christ in this sense, that we are joined to Himas the stone is in the wall, as the wave is in the sea, as the branch is in the vineso are we in Christ! As the branch receives all its sap from the stem, so all the sap of spiritual life flows from Christ into us. If we were separated from Him, we should be as branches cut off from the vine, only fit to be gathered up for the fire and to be burned. We abide in Christ as our shelter, our home and our life. Today we remain in Christ and hope forever to remain in Him as our Head.

Ours is no transient union. While He lives as our Head, we shall remain His members. We are nothing apart from Him. As a finger is nothing without the headas the whole body is nothing without the headso should we be nothing without our Lord Jesus Christ. We are in Him vitally and, therefore, we dare ask the question, Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord? Beloved, since we, then, are the people who say that we abide in Him, it is upon us that the obligation of the text fallswe ought, ourselves, also to walk, even as He walked.

A Bible ought to have great weight with a conscientious man, ought it not? Then it shall be so, God helping me. If we say so, we must! If we talk, we must walk, or it will be mere talk. If we make the profession of abiding in Christ, we must prove it by our practice of walking with Christ. If we say that we are in Christ and abide in Him, we must take care that our life and character are conformed to Christ or else we shall be making an empty boast. This is true of every man who says he is in Christ, for the text is put in the most general and absolute mannerbe the man old or young, rich or poor, learned or simple, pastor or hearerit is incumbent upon him to live like Christ if he professes to live in Christ!

The first thing about a Christian is initiationinitiation into Christ. The next thing is imitationimitation of Christ. We cannot be Christians unless we are in Christ and we are not truly in Christ unless in Him we live, move and have our beingand the life of Christ is lived over again by us according to our measure. Be you imitators of God, as dear children. It is the nature of children to imitate their parents. Be you imitators of Christ as good soldiers who cannot have a better model for their soldierly life than their Captain and Lord!

Ought we not to be very grateful to Christ that He deigns to be our example? If He were not perfectly able to meet all our other needs. If He were an expiation and nothing else, we should glory in Him as our atoning Sacrifice, for we always put that to the front and magnify the virtue of His precious blood beyond everything! But at the same time we need an example and it is delightful to find it where we find our pardon and justification. They that are saved from the death of sin need to be guided in the life of holinessand it is infinitely condescending on the part of Christ that He becomes an example to such poor creatures as we are!

It is said to have been the distinguishing mark of Caesar as a soldier that he never said to his followers, Go!he always said, Come! Of Alexander, also, it was noted that in weary marches he was sure to be on foot with his warriors and, in fierce attacks, he always was in the front. The most persuasive sermon is the example which leads the way! This certainly is one trait in the Good Shepherds Character, when He puts forth His own sheep, He goes before them. If Jesus bids us do anything, He first does it Himself. He would have us wash one anothers feet and this is the argumentYou call Me, Master and Lord, and you say well; for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you, also, ought to wash one anothers feet.

Shall we not do as He does whom we profess to follow? He has left His footprints that we may set our feet in them. Will we not joyfully fix our feet upon this royal road? That is our theme at this time. We do, many of us, say that we are in Christlet us hear how obliged we are, by this, to walk even as He walked. Oh, Holy Spirit, let us feel the weight of the sacred obligation! But I stop a minute. I know that there are some here who cannot say that they are in Christ. If you are not in Christ, then you are out of Christand out of Christ your position is dangerous, terrible, ruinous! If we saw a man hanging over a deep pit. If we saw a man exposed to a sea of fire and likely to perish in it, all our tender emotions would begin to flow and we should pray in an agony of spirit, Oh, God, save this man from danger!

My Brothers and Sisters, there are some among us, tonight, who are in the utmost danger! In a most emphatic sense they are already lost, for they are without God and without Christstrangers to the commonwealth of Israel! Oh, my Hearers, how shall I speak of you without tears? Poor souls abiding under the wrath of God! Poor souls! The mercy is that you are not past hope! There is an arm that can reach you! There is a voice that calls youcalls you even now! Listen to itLook unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and besides Me there is none else.

Can you not, even now, give one look to Him who died for you? Will you not turn the eyes of faith that way and trust Him who was nailed to the Cross on your behalf? God grant that you may, and then I may include you, also, in the blessed instruction of the textHe that says he abides in Him ought, himself, also to walk, even as He walked.

I. I shall first of all ask you to CONSIDER HOW THIS OBLIGATION IS PROVED. Let us spend a few minutes on the question, Why ought we to walk as Jesus did? When we read the word, ought, if we are honest men, we begin to look about us and to make enquiries as to the reason and the measure of this obligation. An, ought, is a compulsion to a true heart. There is a, needs be, to every godly man that he should do what he ought. What, then, is the ground upon which this, ought, is fixed? First, it is the design of God that those who are in Christ should walk as Christ walked. It is a part of the original Covenant purpose for, whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son. That is the drift of the plan of Grace, the aim of the Covenant.

Grace looks towards holiness, that there should be a people called forth to whom Christ should be the elder Brother, the first-born among many brethren. You certainly have not had the purpose of God fulfilled in you, dear Friend, unless you have been conformed to the image of His dear Son. He has chosen us in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. This is the aim of election; this is the objective of redemption; this is the fruit of calling; this is the reason of justification; this is the evidence of adoption; this is the earnest of Heaventhat we should be holy, even as Christ is holyand in this respect should wear the features of the Son of God. He has given His own Son to die for us, that we may die to sin! He has given Him to live that we may live like He lives. In every one of us the Father desires to see Christ, so that Christ may be glorified in every one of us. Do you not feel this to be an imperative necessity to be laid upon you? Would you have the Lord miss His purpose? You are chosen of God to this end, that you should be, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, zealous of good works, and what is this but that you should walk even as He walked?

Observe, again, another point of this necessityit is necessary to the mystical Christ that we should walk as He walked, for we are joined unto the Lord Jesus in one body. Now, Christ cannot be made a monsterthat would be a blasphemous notion! And yet if any man had eyes, ears, hands, or other members that were not conformable to the head, he would be a strange being. The mouth of a lion, the eye of an ox, the feathers of a birdthese things would have no consistency with the head of a man! We read of the image in Nebuchadnezzars dream, that it had a head of fine gold, but legs of iron and feet part of iron and part of clay. Surely, Christs spiritual body is not compounded of such discordant elements. No, no! He must be all of one piece. The mystical body must be the most beautiful and precious production of God, for the Church is Christs body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all.

And shall that mysterious fullness be something defiled, deformed, full of sin, subject to Satan? God forbid! As He which has called you is holy, so be you holy, and as your HEAD is holy, so be you, as members of His body, holy, too! Ought it not to be so? Does anybody raise a question? Does not every member of Christ, by the very fact that he is joined to Him by living union, feel at once that he must walk even as Christ walked? And this, Beloved, again, must all be the fruit of the one Spirit that is in Christ and in us! The Father anointed Christ of old with the same anointing which rests on us in our measure. The Holy Spirit descended upon Him and rested upon Himand we have an unction from the same Holy One! The Spirit of God has anointed all the chosen of God who are regeneratedHe dwells with them and in them!

Now, the Spirit of God in every case works to the same result. It cannot be supposed that the Spirit of God in any case produces unholinessthe thought were blasphemy! The fruit of the Spirit is everything that is delightful, right and good towards God, and generous towards man. The Spirit of God, wherever He works, works according to the mind of God, and God is hymned as, Holy, holy, holy, by those pure spirits who know Him best! He is altogether without spot or trace of sinand so shall we be when the Spirits work is done! If, then, the Spirit of God dwells in you, (and if it does not, you are not in Christ), it must work in you, conformity to Christ, that you should walk even as He walked!

Perhaps further argument is not needed, but I would have true Christians remember that this is one article of the agreement which we make with Christ when we become His disciples. It is taken for granted that when we enter the service of Jesus we, by that act and deed, undertake by His help to follow His example. Whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, and you shall find rest unto your souls. You know if any man loves Christ, he must follow HimIf you love Me, keep My commandments. When we took Christs Cross to be our salvation, we took it, also, to be our heavenly burden.

When we yielded ourselves up to Christ to be saved by Him, we, in spirit, renounced every sin. We felt that we had come out from under the yoke of Satan and that we made no reserve for the lusts of the flesh that we might obey them, but bowed our necks to the yoke of the Lord Jesus. We put ourselves into Christs hands unreservedly and we said, Lord, sanctify me and then use me. Take my body and all its members; take my mind and all its faculties; take my spirit and all the new powers which You have bestowed upon me and let all these be Yours. Reign in me; always rule me absolutely, sovereignly! I do not ask to be my own, for I am not my own, I am bought with a price. After we have learned the grand Truth of God that, if One died for all, then all died, we infer that, Christ died for all, that we that live might not live unto ourselves, but unto Him that died for us and rose again.

Are we not, then, to be true to this blessed compact? I remember my faults this day, says one. Yes, but remember, also, the vows that still engage you. Do not desire to escape from the sacred bond. This day remember the Lord to whom you dedicated yourself in the days of your youth, perhaps many years ago, and entreat Him, again, to take full possession of the purchased possessionand hold it against all comers forever. So it ought to be. He that says, I am in Him ought also to walk even as He walked. Obey the sacrifice of Jesus! Yield yourselves as living sacrifices by your hope of being saved by Him, put your whole being into His hands to love and serve Him all your days. For, once more, inasmuch as we are in Christ, we are now bound to live to Christs Glory and this is a great means of glorifying Christ.

What can we do to glorify Christ if we do not walk even as He walked? If I came and preached to you, and if I had the tongues of men and of angels, yet if I did not seek to do as my Master did, what use to you is any that I can say? It is but sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal! You know what men say to unholy preachersthey bid them be silent or be consistent. Unholy ministers are a derision, a scoff and a by-word. And so it is with unholy Christians, too! You may teach your children at home, or teach them in the Sunday school classbut if they see your lives to be Christless, prayerless, godlessthey will not learn any good from you. They will rather learn from what you do amiss, than from what you say that is right. Do you blame them that it is so?

Are not actions far more forcible than words? Suppose you Church members are unjust in your trade? Suppose that in your common conversation you are loose? Suppose that in your acts you are licentious or untruewhat does the world say of your Christianity? Why, it becomes to them a thing of contempt! They sniff at it. It is so much dung and sweepings of the street to them and so it ought to be! In the early ages some of the worst opponents of Christianity used to wing their shafts with the inconsistencies of Christian professorsand they were wise in their generation. One of them said, Where is that catholic holiness of which we have often heard so much? And another said, We heard of these people, that they love their Christ and love other men so that they would even die for love of their brethrenbut many of them do not love as well as the heathen whom they despise.

I dare say there was a good deal of slander and scandal in what they said, but I am also afraid that if it were said today, there would be a vast deal of sorrowful truth in it! Christian love is by no means so plentiful as it might be, nor holy living, either. Is not this the thing that weakens the preaching of the Gospelthe lack of living the Gospel? If all the professed Christians who live in London really walked as Christ walked, would not the salt have more effect upon the corrupt mass than the stuff which is now called, salt, seems to have? We preach here in the pulpit, but what can we do unless you preach at home? It is you preaching in your shops, in your kitchens, in your nurseries, in your parlors, in the streets which will inform the masses of Christ! This is the preachingthe best preaching in the worldfor it is seen as well as heard. I heard one say he liked to see men preach with their feet. And this is it, they ought also to walk even as Christ walked. No testimony excels that which is borne in ordinary life! Christ ought to be glorified by us and, therefore, we ought to be like He is, for if we are not, we cannot glorify Him, but must dishonor Him.

Now, that is my first point. Consider how this obligation is proved and when you have weighed the argument, pray the Holy Spirit to make you yield to its gentle pressure.

II. Now, secondly, CONSIDER WHEREIN THIS WALKING WITH CHRIST AS HE WALKED CONSISTS. Here is a wide subject. I have a sea before me with as much sailing room as Noah in the ark! I can only just point out the direction in which you should sail if you would make a prosperous voyage. First, Brothers and Sisters, to put it all together in one word, the first thing that every Christian has to see to is holiness. I will not try at any great length to explain what that word means because it always sounds to me as if it explains itself.

You know what wholeness isa thing without a crack, or flaw, or breakcomplete, entire, uninjured, whole. Well, that is the main meaning of holy. The Character of God is perfectly holy. In it nothing is lacking; nothing is redundant. When a thing is complete, it is whole, and this, applied to moral and spiritual things, gives you the inner meaning of, holy. When a man is healthy, perfectly healthy in spirit, soul and body, then he is perfectly holy, for sin is a moral disorder and righteousness is the right state of every faculty. The man whose spiritual health is altogether right is right towards God, right towards himself, right towards men, right towards time, right towards eternity! He is right towards the first table of the Law and right towards the second table. He is an all-around man! He is a whole man, a holy man!

The Truth of God is within him; the Truth of God is spoken by him; the Truth of God is acted by him. Righteousness is in himhe thinks the right thing and chooses that which is according to the law of uprightness. There is justice in him. He abhors that which is evil. There is goodness in him; he follows after that which will benefit his fellow men. I cannot spare the time to tell you all that the word, holy, means, but if you wish to see holiness, look at Christ! In Him you see a perfect Character, an all-around Character. He is the perfect Onebe you like He in all holiness!

We must go a little into detail, so I say, next, one main point in which we ought to walk according to the walk of our great Exemplar is obedience. Our Lord Jesus Christ took upon Himself the form of a Servant and what service it was that He rendered! He was a Son; yet learned He obedience by the things that He suffered. And what obedience that dear Son of God rendered to the Father! He did not come to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. He yielded Himself up to come under the Law to God and to do the Fathers will. Now in this respect we ought to walk even as He walked. We have not come into the world to do what we like, to possess what we choose, or to say, That is my notion and, therefore, so shall it be. Sin promised freedom and brought us bondage! Grace now binds us and ensures us liberty!

Obedience is the law of every spiritual nature. It is the Lords will that in His house His Word should be the supreme Law, for so only can our fallen natures be restored to their original glory. Set the wandering stars in their spheres and rule them by the majestic sway of the sunand then they will keep their happy estate! Understanding, heart, lifeeverything is now to enter into the service of God, even the Father, and it is to be ours to say, Lord, show me what You would have me to do. Surely, beyond any other quality, we see in the career of the Son of God the perfection of self-abnegation! No man was ever so truly free as Jesus and yet no man was so fully subservient to the heavenly will! There was never a pilot so able to steer these seas according to his own judgment and never one so carefully to follow the channel as marked down in the chart. Christs obedience was the unique originality of absolute obedience.

Dear Friends, you see how it ought to be with you, also. It is ours to walk in cheerful subservience to the mind of the Father, even as Jesus did. Does this strike you as an easy thing? It is childs work, certainly, but assuredly it is not childs play. Such a life would necessarily be one of great activity, for the life of Jesus was intensely energetic. The life of Christ was as full as it could be. After He had been developed and disciplined by 30 years of seclusion, He showed Himself among men as one moved to vehemence with loveHe was clad with zeal as with a cloak. From the day of His Baptism till His death, He went about doing good. It is amazing what was packed into about three yearseach action had a world of meaning within itselfand there were thousands of such acts!

Each sermon was a complete revelation and every day heard Him pour forth such sermons! His biography is made up of the essence of life. Someone remarks that it is amazing that He did not begin His active life when He was younger. We reply that it is beautiful that He did not, because He was not called to itand He was best obeying the Father by living in obscurity. Those 30 years at Nazareth were 30 wonderful years of obedienceobedience tested by obscurity, patience, restraint and, perhaps, dullness. Who among us would find such obedience easy? Would we not far rather rush into action and make ourselves a name? Some of us, perhaps, never learned the obedience of being quietbut it is a wonderful one. Oh, for more of it! Do we know the obedience of being hidden when our light seems needed?the obedience of going into the desert for 40 years, like Moses, with nothing to do but wait upon God till God shall put us in commission? There is a wonderful service in waiting till the order comes for us actively to be at it. Samuel said, To obey is better than sacrifice. It is, in fact, better than

anything which we can possibly present to God.

But when our Lord was, at length, loosed from His obscurity, with what force He sped along His life-way! How He spent Himself! It was a candle burning not only at both ends, but altogether. He not only had zeal burning in His heart, but, like a sheet of flame, it covered Him from head to foot! There is never an idle hour in the life of Christ. It is wonderful how He sustained the toil. Perhaps He measured out His zeal and His open industry by the fact that He was only to be here below for a short time. It might not be possible, for others, that they should do as much as He did in so short a space because they are intended to live longer and must not destroy future usefulness by present indiscretion. But still, activity was the rule of our Masters existence. He was at it, always at it, altogether at it, spending and being spent for His Fathersuch was His mode of walking among men. Oh, Friends, if we, indeed, are in Him, we ought also to walk even as He walked! Wake up, you lazy ones!

Next, we ought to walk as Christ did in the matter of self-denial. Of course, in this work of self-denial we are not called to imitate Christ in offering up ourselves as a propitiatory sacrifice. That would be a vain intrusion into things which are His peculiar domain. The self-denials which we practice should be such as He prescribes us. There is a will-worship, which is practiced in the Church of Rome, of self-denials which are absurd and must, I think, be hateful in the sight of God rather than pleasing to Him. Saint Bernard was a man whom I admire to the last degree and I count him to be one of the Lords choice ones. Yet in the early part of his life there is no doubt that he lessened his powers of usefulness to a large extent by the emaciation which he endured and the way in which he brought himself to deaths door.

At times he was incapable of activity by reason of the weakness which he had incurred through fasting and exposure to the elements. There is no need to inflict useless torture upon the body! When did the Savior thus behave Himself? Point me to a single mortification of a needless kind! Enough self-denials come naturally in every Christian mans way to make him try whether he can deny himself in very deed for the Lords sake. You are thus tested when you are put in positions where you might get gain by an unrighteous act, or win fame by withholding a Truth of God, or earn love and honor by pandering to the passions of those around you. May you have Grace enough to say, No, it cannot be. I love not myself, but my Lord. I seek not myself, but Christ. I desire to propagate nothing but His Truthsnot my own ideas. Then will you have exhibited the self-denial of Jesus!

These self-denials will sometimes be difficult to flesh and blood. And then in the Church of God to be able to give all your substance, to devote all your time, to lay out all your abilitythis is to walk as Jesus walked. When weary and worn, still to be busy. To deny yourself things which may be allowable, but which, if allowable to you, would be dangerous to othersthis, also, is like the Lord. Such self-denial as may be helpful to the weak you ought to practice. Think what Christ would do in such a case and do it! And whenever you can glorify Him by denying yourself, do it. So walk as He did who made Himself of no reputation, but took upon Himself the form of a Servant and who, though He was rich, brought Himself down to poverty for our sakes, that we might be rich unto God. Think of that!

Another point in which we ought to imitate Christ most certainly is that of lowliness. I wish that all Christians did this. I sometimes see Christian women dressed upwell, like women of the worldthough not with half a worldlings taste. And when I see men so big that they cannot speak to poor people, as if they were made of something better than ordinary flesh and bloodwhen I notice a haughty, high, hectoring disposition anywhereit grates upon my feelings and makes me wonder whether these blunderers hope to go to the Heaven of the lowly. The Lord Jesus would never have been half as big as some of His followers are! What great folk some of His disciples are, as compared with Him! He was lowly, meek, gentlea Man who so loved the souls of others that He forgot Himself! You never detect in the Lord Jesus Christ any tendency towards pride or self-exaltation. Quite the reverseHe is always compassionate and condescending to men of low estate.

And then note, again, another point, and that is His great tenderness, gentleness and readiness to forgive. His dying words ought to ring in the ears of all who find it hard to pass by affronts, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Did He not set us an example of bearing and forbearing? Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again. For every curse He gave a blessing! You cannot be Christians if this spirit of love is foreign to you. Oh, you say, we endorse the Confession of Faith. I do not care! You must love your enemies, or you will die with the Creed in your throats! Oh, you say, we are regular in our pews, hearing the Gospel. I do not care! You must forgive them that trespass against you, or you will go from your pews to Hell! Oh, but we have been baptized, and we come to Communion. I do not care even about that, for unless you are made meek and lowly in heart, you will not find rest unto your souls.

Pride goes not before salvation, but before destruction! A haughty spirit is no prophecy of elevation, but the herald of a fall! Take care, take care, you that say that you are in Christyou ought also to walk in all the lowliness and in all the tenderness of Christor else at the end you will be discovered to be none of His. Hard, cruel, unrelenting, iron-hearted professors will no more go to Heaven than the hogs they fatten! There is one little big word which tells us more than all this about how Christ walked, and that is the word, LOVE. Jesus was Incarnate Love! God is Love, but God is a spirit, therefore, if you wish to see Love embodied, look at Christ!

He loves the little children and suffers them to come to Him. He loves the widowHe is tender to her and raises her dead son. He loves the sinners and they draw near to Him. He loves all sinful and tempted and tried ones and, therefore, He comes to seek and to save. He loves the Father, first, and then, for the Fathers sake He loves the myriads of men. Do you love nobody? Do you live within yourself? Are you immured within your own ribs? Is self all your world? Then you will go to Hell! There is no help for it, for the place of unloving spirits is the bottomless Pit! Only he that loves can live in Heaven, for Heaven is loveand you cannot go to Heaven unless you have learned to love and find it your very life to do good to those around you!

Let me add to all this, that he who says that Christ is in him ought also to live as Christ lived in secret. And how was this? His life was spent in abounding devotion. Ah, me! I fear I shall condemn some here when I remind them of the hymn we just now sang

*Cold mountains and the midnight air*

*Witnessed the fervor of His prayer.*   
If the perfect Christ could not live without prayer, how can such poor imperfect ones as we are live without it? He had no sin within Him and yet He had need to pray! He was pure and holy and yet He must wait upon God all day long! He often spoke with His Father and when the night came and others went to their beds, He withdrew Himself into the wilderness and prayed. If the Lord Jesus is in you, you must walk as He walked in that matter. And, then, think of His delight in God. How wonderful was Christs delight in His God! I can never think of His life as an unhappy one. He was, it is true, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, but still there was a deep spring of wondrous happiness in the midst of His heart which made Him always blessed, for He said to His Father, I delight to do Your will, O My God! Yes, Your Law is within My heart.

He delighted in God! Many a sweet night He spent in those prayer-times of His in fellowship with the Father. Why, it was that which prepared Him for the agony of His bloody sweat and for the, Why have You forsaken Me? Those love-visits, those near and dear communing which His holy heart had with the Father were His secret meat and drink! And you and I must also delight in God. This charming duty is far too much neglected. Strange that this honey should so seldom be in mens mouths! Listen to this text, Delight yourself, also, in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Many a man says, I should like to have the desires of my heart. Brothers and Sisters, here is the royal road to itthe Kings ascent to His treasuryDelight yourself, also, in the Lord. But listen! It is very likely you would not obtain the desire that is now in your heart if you did that, for he that delights himself in God rises above the desires of the flesh and of the mind! He comes to desire that which God desires and, therefore, it is that he wins the desire of his heart!

But, oh, the pleasure, the joy, the bliss of delighting in God! How many times have I sung to myself that last dear stanza of the Psalm in which the inspired poet sings

*For yet I know I shall Him praise,   
Who graciously gave to me,   
The health is of my countenance,   
Yes, my own God is He.*

Oh, what a pleasure! Mine own God is He. Rich men glory in wealth; famous men in valor; great men in honor and I in my own God. There is nothing about God but what is delightful to a saint! The infinite God is infinitely delightful to His people! Once get really to know God and to be like Heand even His sternest attributesHis power, His justice, His indignation against sin will come to be delightful to you! Those men who are quibbling at what God doesquestioning what God has revealeddo not know Him, for to know Him is to adore Him! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, let us find our pleasure, our treasure, our Heaven, our ALL in the Lord our God, even as our Lord Jesus did! In this thing let us walk even as He walked.

I am not quite done. Dear Friends, we ought to walk in holy contentment. Jesus was perfectly content with His lot. When the foxes had holes and the birds of the air had nestsand He had nowhere to lay His head He never murmured, but found rest in pursuing His life-work. The cravings of covetousness and pining of ambition never touched our Lord. Friends, if you do, indeed, say that you abide in Him, I pray you be of the same contented spirit. I have learned, said the Apostleas if it were a thing which had to be taughtin whatever state I am, therewith to be content. In a word, Christ lived above this worldlet us walk as He walked. Christ lived for God and for God, alone. Let us live after His fashion.

And Christ persevered in such living. He never turned aside from it at all, but as He lived so He died, still serving His God, obedient to His Fathers will, even unto death. May our lives be a mosaic of perfect obedience and our deaths the completion of the fair design. From our Bethlehem to our Gethsemane may our walk run parallel with the pathway of the Well-Beloved! Oh, Holy Spirit, work us to this sacred pattern!

III. I close now by saying, in the last place, consider, dear Friends, WHAT IS NECESSARY FOR ALL THIS. First, it is necessary to have a nature like that of Christ. You cannot give out sweet waters so long as the fountains are impure. You must be born again. There is no walking with Jesus in newness of life unless we have a new heart and a right spirit. See to it, dear Friends, that your nature is renewedthat the Holy Spirit has worked in you a resurrection from among the dead, for, if not, your walk and conversation will savor of death and corruption! A new creature is essential to likeness to Christit is not possible that the carnal mind should wear the image of Jesus.

That being done, the next thing that is necessary is a constant anointing of the Holy Spirit. Can any Christian here do without the Holy Spirit? Then I am afraid that he is no Christian. But, as for us, we feel every day that we must cry for a fresh visitation of the Spirit, a renewed sense of indwelling, a fresh anointing from the Holy One of Israelor else we cannot walk as Christ walked. And then, again, there must be in us a strong resolve that we will walk as Christ walked, for our Lord, Himself, did not lead that holy life without stern resolution. He set His face like a flint that He would do the right thing and He did.

Do not, I pray you, be led astray by thoughtlessly following your fellow menit is a poor, sheepish businessrunning in crowds. Dare to be singular! Dare to stand alone! Stand to it firmly that you will follow Christ. A Christian man in a discussion attempted to defend the Truth of God, but his opponent grew angry and cried out vehemently again and again, Hear me! Hear me! At last the good man answered, No, I shall not hear you, nor shall you hear me, but let us both sit down and hear the Word of the Lord. And that is the thing to do, Brothers and Sisters, to be hearing Christ and following Him! I am not to learn of you, nor you of me, but both of Christso shall we end all controversy in a blessed agreement at His feet! God help us to get there.

And so, once again, I add that if we want to walk as Christ walked, we must have much communion with Him. We cannot possibly get to be like Christ except by being with Him. I wish that we could rise to be so much like the Savior that we should resemble a certain ancient saint who died a martyrs death, to whom the world said, What are you? He said, I am a Christian. They asked, What trade do you follow? And he said, I am a Christian. They inquired, What language do you speak? And he said, I am a Christian. But what treasures have you? they asked, and he replied, I am a Christian. They asked him what friends he had, and he said, I am a Christianfor all he was, and all he had, and all he wished to be, and all he hoped to bewere all wrapped up in Christ.

If you live with Christ you will be absorbed by Him and He will embrace the whole of your existence! And, in consequence, your walk will be like His walk. Take care that you do not in all things copy any but Christ, for if I set my watch by the watch of one of my friends and he sets his watch by that of another friend, we may all be wrong! If we shall, each one, take his time from the sun, we shall all be right! There is nothing like going to the fountainhead. Take your lessons in holiness, not from a poor erring disciple, but from the Infallible Master! God help you to do so.

A person has written to me, this morning, to say that he has painted my portrait but that he cannot finish it until he sees me. I should think not! Certainly you cannot paint a portrait of Christ in your own life unless you see Himsee Him clearly, see Him continually! You may have a general notion of what Christ is like and you may put a good deal of color into your copybut I am sure you will fail unless you see the grand original. You must commune with Jesus! You know what we did when we went to schoolour schoolmasters were not quite so wise, then, as schoolmasters are now. They wrote at the top of the page a certain line for us to follow and a poor following it was!

When I wrote my first line, I copied the writing-masters model. But when I wrote the next line I copied my copy of the top line, so that when I reached the bottom of the page I produced a copy of my copy of my copy of my copy of the top line! Thus my handwriting fed upon itself and was nothing bettered but rather grew worse. So one man copies Christ, perhaps. A friend who hears him preach, copies him. And his wife at home copies the hearer and somebody copies herand so it goes on all down the line till we all miss that glorious handwriting which Jesus has come to teach us! Keep your eyes on Christ, dear Brothers and Sisters! Never mind me! Never mind your friends! Never mind the old doctor that you have been hearing so long!

Look to Jesus and to Him alone! We have had our sects and our divisions by that coping of the lines of the boys, instead of looking to the top line that the Master wrote. He that says he abides in Him ought, himself, also to walk even as He walked May the Spirit of God cause us to do it! Amen and Amen!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON1 John 2.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK425, 262, 646.  
Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1711 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A SERMON TO THE LORDS LITTLE CHILDREN   
NO. 1711

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, MARCH 18, 1883, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name s sake.   
1 John 2:12.**

**I write to you, little children, because you know the Father. 1 John 2:13. (Revised Version).**

PROBABLY you ask, Why does John say, first, I write, and then, in verse 14, I have written? There is a beautiful touch of nature in this speedy change of tense. John was an extremely old man and, therefore, while he says, I write, he adds, I have written, as if he felt that it might be the last time that he should take his pen in hand. Very soon with him, the present tense would change into the pastand he indicates the fact by changing his mode of speech. Perhaps he even felt that, possibly, before the letter reached the Brethren to whom he addressed it, he would be no more among the sons of men. Therefore he says, I write, indicating that while he was still with them, with warm and loving heart he solemnly exhorted them. And then he adds, I have written, as if he had recorded his dying testimony and left it as his last legacy of love.

To us, today, Johns words run altogether in the past tenseI have written. But we need not, therefore, forget that they were the wellconsidered words of a venerated father in Christ and that he wrote them as one so near to his departure that he regarded himself as already on the move and, therefore, scarcely knew which tense to use. Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, how soon our, I speak, will change into, I have spoken! Let this invest every word with solemnity. Remember, also, what order of man John wasthat disciple whom Jesus loved, whose head had leaned on Jesus bosom, whose eyes had seen the King in His beauty and whose strengthened gaze had looked within the gates of pearl! This is he who, at one time, saw the pierced heart of the Well-Beloved pouring forth blood and water! And at another beheld the Lion of the tribe of Judah prevail to take the book and loose the seven seals thereof! It is the Apostle of Love who says to us, I write to you, I have written to you.

Let us carefully note what the Spirit says to us by His servant, John. Observe that our text is addressed to the little children. It is thought by many wise interpreters that under this term John includes the whole Church of God and that afterwards He divides that Church into two companiesthe fathers and the young men. Those who, under one aspect, are all little children, but are, under another, regarded as young men or fathers. There is very much to support this view. In several instances in this Epistle, John is evidently addressing all the saints when he speaks of them as, my little children, as, for instance, in the 18th verse of the third chapter, and also in the closing verse, Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

Surely, all the saints are included in these exhortations. There is a sense in which every Christian is still a little child, a sense in which he ought to be soalways dependent upon the great Father, always ready to receive the Word of the Father without question, always teachable always restful in the Fathers care and full of love to Him who is his All in All. Of necessity we must always be children before God, for our finite capacity is so limited that we are mere babes in knowledge in the Presence of Infinite Wisdom and as very sucklings in understanding, when contrasted with the great Father of Spirits. We know enough to make us know that we know very little! The most advanced intellects in the Church are but as infants compared with the Ancient of Days. We are of yesterday and know nothingwith all our experience, with all our study, with all our meditation, with all our illumination we remain, little children, when measured by the boundless knowledge of the Lord.

Yes, I mean the fathers, the men who bring sinners to Jesus, the men who teach others and are, themselves, taught of Godeven these must, each one, cry out with Jeremiah, Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. I mean the young men who have overcome the Wicked One, whose holy valor sets them in the forefront of the battle where they turn to fight the armies of the aliens. They are strong, says John, and yet, in the Presence of the mighty God of Jacob, what are our champions and our valiant men? Are they not, still, but as, little children? It may do us all good to join the infant-class this morning, or, at least to sit with the boys in the school of grace. Even those who have made the greatest advances in Divine Grace may do well to become as little children, that they may more fully enter into the Kingdom of Heaven and have closer fellowship with the Holy Child Jesus. It may even be an advance for some who have grown self-willed as they have advanced in knowledge, if they will say with David, Surely I have behaved and quieted myself. As a child that is weaned of his mother, my soul is even as a weaned child. Happy childhood when it means entire submission to the Father and sweet delight in His will!

Still, I am inclined to think that in this case John really does divide the entire Church into three classesthe babes in Grace, or the children. Or, as one of the words might properly be translated, the boysthose who have not long been born into the familythese are an interesting company. Then follow the young menthese are the second classand a valued body of Christians they are, in the fullness of their vigor. They are strong in faith, giving glory to God, mighty in prayer, vehement in action, bold in testimony! May the Lord muster among our hosts a grand army of these vigorous heroes who shall earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints! The fighting power of the Church militant must come out of them! These are they that turn the battle to the gate. Blessed is the man that has his quiver full of them!

Then there is the third classthe fathers, the mature, the experienced. These do not quite so much delight in war as the young men do, but at home they diligently care for the household of faith, watching over the feeble, strengthening and comforting them. These are able, by their experience, to answer gainsayers and to guide the ignorant to edify the untaught. Their knowledge is deep and they are, therefore, able to become teachers of others. They are men of spiritual force and have come to the full stature of men in Christ Jesus. Therefore they are the solid strength of the Church! If the young men are the Churchs arm, these are the Churchs backbone. We need to have many such, though, alas, it is to be feared that our Churches are much like the Apostolic ones of which Paul said, You have not many fathers.

This morning I am going to say nothing at all to the young men, nor to the fathers, except so far as they are willing to include themselves under the term of, little children. And, as we have already said, there is just reason why they should do so. Little children, it is to you I speak this dayI mean you that have newly been converted, whose first cries of repentance are still in our ears! You, I mean, whose Grace is feeble; who are new to everything in the House of God and, as yet, need to be fed with the milk of the simple elementary Truth of God. You are the little children, dear to the whole family. You, I mean, who are but little in Israel as yet little in knowledge, little in faith, little in strength, little in service, little in patience! You cannot, as yet, keep the watch of the House of the Lord, for you, yourselves, need to be watched over. You tremble when you try to stand and your unaccustomed feet can scarcely bear you along the road without a helping hand. You are very apt to tumble down and probably will do so many times before you learn to walk with the fathers, or run with the young men.

You little children may, by some, be thought to be a burden, but the wise among us count you a blessingthe more of you the merrier in the Church of Godfor you are the blessed of the Lord and we are glad to hear your youthful voices in the streets of the New Jerusalem! To you I shall speak this morning, as the Holy Spirit shall enable me. I would say these things to you. First, observe your privilegeI write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you. Then, note your knowledgeI have written unto you, little children, because you know, or have known, the Father. And thirdly, consider the precepts addressed to you. When we get to that point I shall ask you to refer to your Bibles that we may run through the whole of this Epistle and see what John has to say to little children. May we receive the Word of God with meekness, that we may grow thereby.

I. First, I want the babes in Grace, the weak in faith, the lambs of the flock, to notice THEIR PRIVILEGE. I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His names sake. This is a privilege extremely desired by the little children. They have but lately felt the burden of guiltthey still smart under the lashes of conscience. The Spirit of God has but newly convinced them of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. And, therefore, above everything, their prayer is, Father, forgive me. To them the remission of sins stands out as the first and most desirable of all blessingsand, truly, they are right in their estimate, for what possession is there which can be called a blessing at all until sin is forgiven?

It matters not how healthy a man may beif his conscience is worried with his sinhis inmost heart is sick. It is small comfort to him to have all the comforts of this life if his heart feels the gnawing of the undying worm of conscious guilt. God be merciful to me, a sinner, comes often from his breast as he beats upon it in the deep humiliation of his soul. There can be no joy and rest for him till he hears the words, The Lord has put away your sin; you shall not die. To the freshly saved, it is a joy worth worlds to have their sins forgiven! It is a bliss akin to the Heaven of angels and this joy belongs by right to all the saints, yes, even to the little children in the family of God!

You were only born again last Sunday, but your sins are forgiven you! Perhaps it is only this morning that you have sought your Saviors face and have come to believe in Himand, by His Grace, your sins are forgiven you! This assurance is as sweet to you as a seraphs song! I could not have told you a better piece of news. The pardon of sin is as the pearl of great price to you in your present stage of spiritual lifeyou would have sold all that you had in order to procure itand now that you have it, your heart is aglow with gratitude! The wound in your conscience, so lately raw and bleeding, makes you set a high price upon the healing balm of free and full forgiveness! Far be it from me to stay your holy joy, and yet the Lord will show you greater things than these!

At your stage of experience, pardon is the most prominent blessing of the Covenant. A newly converted man does not know much about sanctification or union to Christ. Perhaps he does not know much about election, calling, or sealing. The principal point he dwells upon is pardon. It is written in the CreedI believe in the forgiveness of sinsand the man who has newly found peace with God by Jesus Christ repeats that article of the Creed with solemn emphasis. I believe in the forgiveness of sins, he says, for he has just realized it, and to him it is a gift so great that, like the moon and the stars, it shines as a queen among the blessings of Grace! Pardon of sin seems to the little children to comprehend the whole work of Jesus and the whole work of the Holy Spirit, too!

Vast favors lie beyond, but to him who has newly crossed the Jordan, this one valley of Eschol fills all the range of vision and the soul hardly dreams of any further benediction! The newly-pardoned does not yet see the innumerable other blessings which come in the train of forgiveness. He is, for the present, absorbed in the hearing of that one sentence, Go in peace; your sins which are many are all forgiven you. Well, beloved child, many more blessings await you! Pardon is but an entrance blessing, a welcome at the doorstepthere are rarer joys within the house! You have become an heir to a boundless inheritance! All things are yours! Heaven, Christ and God are yours! Yet I marvel not, that at present all your heart is taken up with a sense of pardoned sin! I will not disturb you, but I will rejoice with you. I will even sit down and sing with youlet this be our hymn

*Now, oh joy my sins are pardoned! Now I can, and do believe!   
All I have, and am, and shall be,*

*To my precious Lord I give.*   
Even the full-grown child of God highly values this gift so dear to little children and, although he has received many other mercies, besides, yet still, it is a chief part of his joy that he has been cleansed from sin and clothed with righteousness. Ah, and our elder Brothers who are now in the Kings country, this is a chief point, even with them, that they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb! And therefore are they before the Throne of God and serve Him day and night in His Temple. Yes, dear little children, you have obtained a most precious favor in which you do well to rejoiceyour sins are forgiven you for His names sake. Here let me observe that the forgiveness of sins is assuredly the possession of the new beginner in the Divine Life. He is as certainly forgiven as he ever shall be. The forgiveness of sins is not a matter of degrees or of growth. It is done in an instant and done forever, never to be reversed!

The child of God who was born but yesterday is not as completely sanctified as he will be. He is not as completely instructed as he will be. He is not as completely conformed to the image of Christ as he will be. But he is as completely

pardoned as the full-grown saint! He that just now passed the Gate of Pearldid you not hear the shout as he entered, like a shock of corn fully ripe that comes in his season?he, I say, was not more truly pardoned than you who but an hour ago believed in Christ unto the salvation of your soul! The dying thief had not many minutes found mercy and yet the Lord Jesus said to him, Today shall you be with Me in Paradise! It is plain, therefore, that he had been perfectly cleansed in a moment!

To wash in the fountain filled with blood is not a business of weeks and months and years, nor is it to be repeated many times and often! But he that is washed is, then and there, made whiter than snow, and there is, from then on, no defilement upon him. There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven youthey are all goneDivine Grace has most effectually removed them from you as far as the east is from the west! The Egyptians at the Red Sea were not destroyed by little and by littlethey were not swallowed up in the flood, a regiment at a time! The eager depths which had, by miracle, been divided, for a time, leaped together and Pharaoh and his hostsall of themwere covered, to be seen no more forever! Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously! The depths have covered them; there is not one of them left.

The Israelites had but barely set their foot upon the other side of the Red Sea and yet all their enemies were as completely drowned as when the people entered into the Promised Landit is even so with you who have believed in Christ but newlyyour sins are cast into the depths of the sea! Your iniquities are subdued by the Lord Jesus who has come to save His people from their sins. Therefore, little children, praise your God and sing unto His name with all your mightWho forgives all our iniquities; who heals all our diseases.

Note, also, that your sins are forgiven you on the same terms as those of the Apostles and the greatest of the saintsYour sins are forgiven you for His names sakethat is, for the sake of Jesus, for the sake of His glorious Person, for the sake of His honorable offices, for the sake of His shed blood and atoning death, for the sake of His glorious Resurrection, for the sake of His perpetual intercession before the Throne of God! Your sins are not forgiven you because of anything you are or hope to be, nor because of anything that you have done or have sufferedyou are forgiven for Christs names sakeand all the saints of God can say the same. This is a sure ground of hope! Quicksand there is none, but a solid rock is under our feet.

Had the pardon been granted for our own works sake, it might have been reversed upon our disobedience. But as sin is pardoned for Christs sake, the pardon is irreversible, since there is no change in Christ! Is not this a dainty sweet for the little children? How gladly do I come and sit at the childrens table when I see such food placed thereon! Now notice that this is the reason why John wrote to you, little children. People do not generally write letters to little children, but John does because of these special little ones it can be said, their sins are forgiven them. The moment, then, that a man has his sins forgiven, he is old enough to begin to understand that which is writtenand he should become a Bible reader and a Bible searcher! The moment that his sins are forgiven him for Christs names sake, he becomes capable of exhortationand it is his business to attend to what is written to him.

If pardoned as criminals, we are enlisted as workers! Why, I think if my sins have been forgiven me, my Heaven-born instincts make me ask, Lord, what will you have me to do? Have You done so much for me? Then set me about doing something for You! Give me, as a privilege, the opportunity of serving You. Therefore, John, knowing that the little children would be eager to obey, has written to them, in this Epistle, certain commands, of which I will speak to you further on. Only, little children, be on the alert to begin, at once, your work of faith and labor of love.

II. Secondly, I have to speak of THE KNOWLEDGE of these little children. I have written unto you, little children, because you have known, or know, the Father. The tiniest babe in the family of God knows the Father. For, first, as we have seen, his sins are forgiven him. By whom is that pardon given? Why, by the Father, and, therefore, he that has had his sins forgiven him necessarily knows the Father. When the poor prodigal felt the kisses of his fathers love and saw the best robe adorning his person, then he knew the Father. All the philosophers in the world do not know so much of the Father God as a forgiven sinner knows!

I go a little furtherif there are any that have never fallen into sin, but are like the 99 just persons who need no repentance, or like the elder brother who had never, at any time, transgressed his fathers commandment, I say that these do not know and cannot know the Father as the forgiven child doesfor the Fathers heart comes out most fully and expressly when He says, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. For this, My son was dead, and is alive again! He was lost and is found. Then, as he looks up through his tears and sees the ineffable smile of the Fathers affection, the forgiven child knows the Father! The very least child of Grace, having received the forgiveness of sins, knows the Father in this most important sense.

Moreover, this is a piece of knowledge, dear Friends, which the child of God obtains very early in his spiritual life, for whatever a child does not know, he knows his father. Think of your dear little one at home. He cannot, as yet, read a letter in the book. He knows nothing of the things which his elder brother studies, but he knows his father! He may not know very much about his fatherhe certainly could not speak to others about his fathers business or his fathers wealthbut he knows him! The child cannot help his father, or understand what his father does, but he knows his father and would choose him out from among a thousand. See how his eyes twinkle, now that Father has come home! See him stretch out his little hands! See how eager he is to get into those dear arms! He knows his father and never forgets that knowledge.

Dear child of God, this is a piece of knowledge which you have, also! And in this you will yield to none of all the sacred family. Benjamin knows his father with an absolute certaintyhe is as sure of it as Reuben is the firstborn. We go to school and college, but long before that we know our fatherthe fear is lest we overlay that precious knowledge with something not worth half as much! Little children, you know God, now, in your spiritual childhood. You could not preach about Him; you could not write a treatise upon His attributes; you could not describe His mighty actsbut you know Him by the instinct of a childand in you is the promise fulfilled, Israel shall cry unto Me, My God, we know You. Little children, the result of your knowing God as your Father is that when He is away from you, you are in the habit of crying after Him. If you cannot feel your Fathers love shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit, you are miserable and you hasten to your closet and begin to pray, Come to me, my Father! Manifest Yourself to me, for I cannot live without You.

On the other hand, when you do get to your Father, you show that you love Him by the perfect restfulness of your spirit. In God you are at home. Once get into your Fathers arms and you feel quite safe, quite peaceful, quite happy. The Presence of God is the paradise of the Believer! God is the ultimatum of our desireswe speak of Him as our exceeding joy. If in my Fathers love I share a filial part, I ask no more than to know and enjoy it! We say, Our Father which are in Heavenwe might as truly say, Our Father, You are our Heaven. Hence we seek after Him. O God, You are my God; early will I seek You. Here, then, we have a token that we know the Father, when we weep because He is absent, or rejoice because He is present. We know the Father, Brothers and Sisters, even we who are but little in Israel, for we love Him! Do you not feel that you love God, this morning? You might not dare say so in public, and yet you would die for Him. Sooner than renounce your God would you not give up all that you possess? It may be you will never be tried as the martyrs have been, but if you were, can you suppose it possible that you could part with your God? No, your inmost heart loves Him! You know it does and, loving Him, you are united to Him by bonds which cannot be severed!

Moreover, we know the Father, for we trust Him. Is it not written, They that know Your name will put their trust in You? Can you not trust God with everything? A child has no cares. His father cares for him. A child knows no anxiety. His father bears all the anxiety on his behalf. Is it not so with you? Though you are babes in Grace, do you not trust?trust for time, trust for eternity, trust for your bodies and trust for your souls? I am sure you do! If you are what you should be, you know the Father, for your faith rests upon Him. It is also true that you seek to imitate Him. It is wonderful how little children imitate their father, perhaps more than grown-up children do, though the influence of example is also seen upon them. The very little ones will try to do everything exactly like Father. It must be right, it must be perfect! If father does it, they make us smile as we see in them ourselves in miniature!

Is not this the very thing which you try to do? Though you were converted but a very little while ago, yet you wish to be like Jesus! You long to be like the Father. Would you not be perfect if you could? If you could, would you not be rid of every sin? If some painful surgical operation could take away from you the black drops of indwelling sin, would you not cheerfully bare your breast to the sharpest knife? I know you would! You would die to be rid of sin, for that is the thing you hate. This proves that you know your Father in Heaven, for you are trying to be like He is. And do you not glory in Him? Little children, when they begin to talk and go to schoolhow proud they are of their father! Their father is the greatest man that ever livedthere never was the like of him! You may talk to them of great statesmen, or great warriors, or great princes, but these are all

nobodiestheir father fills the whole horizon of their being!

Well, so it certainly is with us and our Father God   
*Since no works are like Yours,   
None so glorious, so Divine.   
Since whatever gods there are,   
None, O Lord, are like You,   
Let me bow before Your Throne   
And exalt Your name alone.*

We cannot make enough of our God! We extol Him with all our might. With the blessed virgin we sing, My soul does magnify the Lord. What does, magnify, mean? Why, to make great! We feel as if we would make Gods name great and would greaten Him in the minds of men and make them think what a blessed Father we have! Now, listen! This is the reason why John has written to you, little children, because he says, They know enough to understand my letter, for they know the Father. We do not think of writing a letter to a little child. Ah, says John, but the Lords children know their Father and he that knows God is capable of any kind of knowledge! He who knows God is a fit person to be accepted as a disciple of the beloved Apostle. I cannot desire a better congregation than a congregation of men and women that know the Father.

What if they are little children? Well, they can understand anything that I, another child, can have to say, for they know the Father and, therefore, they have an unction from the Holy One and are able to know spiritual things! To know God is the center and the circumference of all knowledge! If you know the Father, do you not see the reason why John writes to you? Because now that you know Him, you are bound to love Him, to trust Him and to serve Him! Having received such knowledge as this, you are bound to impart it as far as you can! You are bound to live up to it and to show to all around you what a child of God isand how different he is from the children of darkness! Thus, out of your privilege and out of your knowledge, there arises an obligation which I trust you will not be slow to acknowledge.

Here is a prayer for you   
*If Ive the honor, Lord, to be   
One of Your happy family.   
On me the gracious gift bestow   
To call You Abba, Father, too.   
So may my conduct ever prove   
My filial piety and love!   
While all my brethren clearly trace   
Their Fathers likeness in my face.*

III. Now we come to our third division. Will you kindly follow me with your Bibles, especially you that are little children, while I commend to you THE PRECEPTS which John has written for your guidance. First, look at 1 John 2. My little children, these things I write unto you, that you sin not. That is the first preceptLittle children, sin not. Children ate very apt to get into the mud. Most mothers will tell you, I think, that if there is a pool of mud anywhere within a mile, her first-born joy and comfort will find it out and get into it if he possibly can! And no matter how often a child is washed, he seems to always need washing againif there is a method by which he can foul his hands and his faceyour pretty cherub is most ingenious to find it out!

I am afraid this is too much the case with the children of God. There is so much of carnality about us, so much of the old Adam, that the question is not into which sin we fall, but into which sin we do not fall! Alas, we are apt to be proud, though we have nothing to be proud of! We are prone to despond and doubt our Father, though He never gave us any cause to do so! We are inclined to be worldly, though there is nothing in the world worth loving! And we have a tendency to grow cold and chill towards God, though He is altogether lovely and ought to win our warmest affection. We are apt to speak unadvisedly with our lips. We are apt to be full of foolish thoughts. We are apt to be self-willed. We find an angry temper rising against some Brother of ours whom we ought to loveand we have not long got over that before we are half-afraid to utter a word of rebuke lest we should incur the laughter of the ungodly!

We glide from one sin to another, even as a waterfall descends from rock to rock. As weeds multiply in the soul, so do sins spring up in our hearts. We are a mass of faults. Like the pendulum, we swing to the right hand and then to the leftwe err, first, in one way and then in another we are always inclined to evil! And, therefore, the Apostle sweetly puts it, My little children, I write unto you, that you sin not. Avoid every sin forsake it altogether! Ask for the Grace of God to sanctify you wholly spirit, soul, and body. Though you are only newly born, yet, my little children, sin not. You will soon lose your comfort if you do. Little children, sin will hurt you, damage you, grieve you, and displease your heavenly Father! Sin will raise a cloud, behind which His Presence will be hidden from you! It will stop your heavenly growth. It will prevent your usefulness.

My little children, I earnestly entreat you that you sin not! Burnt child, dread the fire you have just been plucked out of, do not go back to it. Do not play with sparks! Keep clear of every kind of match that might create a flame. Seek after holiness with all your might. Though born but yesterday, do not sin today. God help you to fulfill this holy precept. Further on in this second chapter, the Apostle writes to them again, and tells them (v. 18) that it is the last times and that there are many antichrists abroad. You will have to run your eyes right down the chapter till you come to verse 24, for that is what he says to little children, because there are many antichrists in the world that would seduce themLet that, therefore, abide in you, which you have heard from the beginning.

Little children are very fickle. The toys which they cry for one day, they break the next. Young minds change with the wind. So, little children, there are many evil ones who will endeavor to seduce you from the Truth of God and, as you have a natural instability of mind as yet, for you are only newly converted, it is well to be on your guard against those who would mislead you. Till we are rooted and grounded in the Truth of God, new things have great charms for us, especially if they have about them a great show of holiness and zeal for God. Listen, then, dear children but newly born into the Saviors familyLet that, therefore, abide in you, which you have heard from the beginning.

Alas, even those who are older in Grace than you are have shown a sad readiness to be duped by plausible persons who have invented fresh notions and methods! I have lived long enough to have seen a considerable variety of follies and manias in the religious world. They have sprung up, grown great, declined and vanished. One day it has been one thing, another, another. I have lived to see those things justly ridiculed which, a few years before, were cried up as the wonders of the age! I thank God I have not been moved by any of these periodical fits of frenzy, but have been content to keep to the one old Truth of God which I have gathered from the Scriptures and made my own by experience and by the teaching of the Holy Spirit! I have not had to tack about, for I have been enabled to steam aheadand I hope I shall do so to the end.

I have no respect for these upstart inventions. I regard them as so many phases of human delusion. One never knows what will come next, but of this we are pretty sure, that every now and then a new doctrine is brought forth which turns out to be an old heresy with a fresh coat of varnish on it! Or else some new method of saving souls is found out and the work blazes away like a house on fire till it dies out in smoke. Let us not be carried off our feet by every wind of doctrine! We may live to see the present craze ended and another or two after itonly be it ours to be steadfast, immovable! Little children, let that, therefore, abide in you, which you have heard from the beginning. Leave to others the soon exhausted novelties and you keep to the eternal unchangeable Truth which is taught you in Gods Word and in your own souls experience.

Little children, here is a third precept for you, and I want you to put it into your bosom and carry it home (v. 28). And now, little children, abide in Him. There is a Sabbath portion for youAbide in Him. Let the Truth of God abide in you and you abide in Christ, who is the Truth of God. Little children are very apt to stray. I have known them tempted away from home and to play the truant. They have gone into the fields after pretty flowers, or down by the brook to fish for minnows, and then they have fallen into all sorts of trouble. The best place for a child is at home. And for a babe in Grace the best shelter is the Saviors bosom. Little children, abide in Him. If you forget everything else I say this morning, lay this up in your hearts, and let none tempt you away from simply trusting your Savior, sweetly resting in His love and humbly following on to know more and more of Him! And now, little children, abide in Him.

What next? Read on to chapter 3:7 Little children, let no man deceive you. Children are very credulous. They will believe any idle tale if it is told by a clever and attractive person. Little children, believe your Savior, but be not ready to believe anybody else! Believe Gods Word and stand fast to that. And if sinners entice you, do not consent to them. And if antichrist would teach you false doctrine, close your ears to it. Be as the sheep of whom Jesus saidA stranger they will not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers. Further on, (3:18), we readMy little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue but in deed and in truth. Little children are apt to let their angry passions rise till they have to be told by Dr. Watts that their

*Little hands were never made   
To tear each others eyes.*

And truly we have some Christian children who have been all too quick about this tearing of each others eyes. They have seen a Truth of God and some friend they meet with does not see it. Therefore they have tried to knock his eyes out to make him see it! That is a faithful description of many Christian controversies. It is idle to attempt to compel another to think as I think by scolding him and heaping wrath upon him. Let us never do that. Let us love! If you cannot expect anything else of a child, you do expect love, and love never seems to be more suitably enshrined than in the heart and mind of a little child. Come, you that are newly brought to Christ, love with all your might! If you cannot fight as soldiers, or work as laborers, yet love the Brotherhood! Love Christ! Love God! Love the souls of men and by love seek to win them to the Savior who has saved you! Love not in word only, but in deed and in truth.

You have the next words in chapter 4, verse 4You are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than He that is in the world. Little children are frequently timid. They are sometimes terrified when left alone. They are generally afraid of strangers. Hear, then, you little children, you are very weak and feeble, but do not be dismayed because of that, for there is a Power dwelling in you which is mightier than the power which dwells in the world! Satan dwells in the world and he is mighty, but God dwells in you and He is Almighty! Therefore be not afraid

*A feeble saint shall win the day,   
Though death and Hell obstruct the way.* Hold on to your faith in the eternal Lord who dwells in you, and you shall never perish, neither shall any pluck you out of His hand!

The last precept to little children is at the end of the Epistle. Carefully read the last verseLittle children, keep yourselves from idols. Little children are naturally fond of toys and pretty pictures. Anything like pomp and show is sure to please children. How fond they are of soldiers, banners, processions, bands of music and all that is frivolousthese are their idols. That is the also tendency of many grown-up children that I know of. They admire a fine religion, tasteful, striking, artistic. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. I would like this text printed over the altars of our Ritualistic neighbors. I need scarcely mention others who have no taste or care for the beautiful, but their toys are all for noisemaking, glitter and flasha sort of Fifth of November all the days of the year! Do not become fascinated with their playthings. Be not led away from the Church of God by armies or navies.

Alas, the children must now have their play toys in the Church and their toys in the Chapeland some must have their toys in the streets, till one would think, with their trumpets and drums, that they had just come home from the fair! Little children, keep yourselves from idols, I do not think you are likely to fall in love with the idols of the heathen and bow down to thembut there are plenty of other gods which are the idols of one period and the derision of the next. Keep to Christ! Ask not for pomp and show! Ask not for noise and bluster! Ask for nothing but that your sins may be forgiven you; that you may know the Father; that you may abide in Christ and be full of love to all the family of God!

Little children, may the Lord Jesus Christ be with you and may you grow in Grace till you come unto the fullness of the stature of men in Him. May His Grace be upon all them that love Him and wait for His appearing.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON1 John 2.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN BOOK909, 728, 248.   
Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1715 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A DESCRIPTION OF YOUNG MEN IN CHRIST   
NO. 1715

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, APRIL 8, 1883, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

I write unto you, young men, because you have overcome the Wicked One I have written unto you, young men, because you are strong, and the Word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the Wicked One.   
1 John 2:13, 14.

WHEN I preached a short time ago upon Johns message to the little children, [Sermon #1711A Sermon to the Lords Little Children] I explained why it was that he first said, I write, and then, I have written. He is writinghis whole heart is in it and he cannot help saying that he is earnestly writing to those whom he loves so well. But he has scarcely penned the line before he feels that he must alter that present tense and set it in the past, under the form of, I have written. He knows that he must soon be gone from them and be numbered with those who were, but are not, among living men. These words, then, are the language of a father in Israel still among his children; they are also the words of one who has passed from earth and entered into Glory.

If what I shall have to say at this time, fairly flowing from the text, shall come to you as Christs words from His favored disciple, John, you will attach the more importance to it and it will do your hearts the more good. Lifting his head from that dear bosom which gave him unexampled rest, he whispers, I write unto you young men. Looking down from that favored place which he now occupies so near to the Throne of the Lamb, he looks over the battlements of Heaven upon us and cries, I have written unto you, young men. In the Christian Church there is an order of Christians who have grown so much that they can no longer be called, babes in Grace, but yet they are not so far matured that they can exactly be called, fathers. These, who form the middle class of the spiritualminded, are styled young men.

Understand that the Apostle is not writing, here, to any according to their bodily agehe is using human age as a metaphor and figure for representing growth in the spiritual life. Age, according to the flesh, often differs much from the condition of the spiritmany old men are still no more than babes. Some children in years are, even now, young men in Grace, while not a few young men are fathers in the Church while young in years. God has endowed certain of His servants with great Grace and made them mature in their youthsuch were Joseph, Samuel, David, Josiah and Timothy. It is not age according to the family register that we are now to speak about, but age according to the Lambs Book of Life.

Grace is a matter of growth and, therefore, we have among us babes, young men and fathers, whose position is not reckoned according to this fleeting, dying life, but according to that eternal life which has been worked in them by the Spirit of God. It is a great mercy when young men, in the natural sense, are also young men in the spiritual senseand I am glad that it is largely so in this Church! The fathers among us need not be ashamed of their spiritual seed. In speaking to young men in Christ, I am speaking to a numerous body of Christians among ourselves who make up a very efficient part of the army of Christ in this region. I would ask them not to be either so modest or so proud as to decline to be thus classed.

You are no longer weaklingsdo not, therefore, count yourselves mere babes lest you plead exemption from hard service! You are hardly yet mature enough to rank with the fathersdo not forget the duties of your real place under cover of aspiring to another. It is honor enough to be in Christ and certainly it is no small thing to be, in spiritual things, a man in the prime of life! These young men are not babesthey have been in Christ too long for thatthey are no longer novices to whom the Lords house is strange. They have been born unto God probably, now, for years. The things which they hoped for at first they have, to a large extent, realized. They know now what once they could not understand. They are not now confined to a milk dietthey can eat meat and digest it well.

They have discernment, having had their senses exercised by reason of use, so that they are not so liable to be misled as they were in their infancy. And while they have been longer in the Way, so also have they now grown stronger in the Way. It is not a weak and timorous faith which they now possessthey believe firmly and stoutly and are able to do battle for the faith once delivered to the saintsfor they are strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. They are wiser, now, than they used to be. When they were children, they knew enough to save them, for they knew the Father and that was blessed knowledge! But now they know far more of the Word of God which abides in them through their earnest, prayerful, believing reception of it.

Now they have a clearer idea of the breadth and length, and depth and height of the work of redemption, for they have been taught of God. They even venture to enjoy the deep things of Godand the Covenant is by no means an unknown thing among them. They have been under the blessed teaching of the Spirit of God and from Him they have received an unction, so that they know all things. In knowledge they are no more children, but men in Christ Jesus. Thus they are distinguished from the first class which comprehends the babes in Christ. They are not yet fathers because they are not yet so established, confirmed and settled as the fathers are, who know what they believe, and know it with a certainty of full assurance which nothing can shake.

They have not yet had the experience of fathers and, consequently, have not all their prudence and foresightthey are richer in zeal than in judgment. They have not yet acquired the nursing faculty so precious in the Church as the product of growth, experience, maturity and affection. They are going on to that and in a short time they will have reached it, but as yet they have other work to do more suitable to their vigor. Do not suppose that when we say they are not to be called fathers, that they are not, therefore, very valuable to the community, for in some senses they are quite equal to the fathersand in one or two respects they may even be superior to them. The fathers are for contemplationthey study deep and see farand so they have known Him that is from the beginning. But a measure of their energy for action may have gone through stress of years.

These young men are born to fight! They are the militia of the Church, they have to contend for her faith and to extend the Redeemers Kingdom. They should do so, for they are strong. This is their lot and the Lord helps them to fulfill their calling. These must, for years to come, be our active spiritsthey are our strength and our hope. The fathers must soon go off the stagetheir maturity in Grace shows that they are ready for Glory and it is not Gods way to keep His shocks of corn in the field when they are fully ripe for the granary! Perfect men shall be gathered up with the perfect and shall enter into their proper sphere. The fathers, therefore, must soon be gone. And when they are gone, to whom are we to look for a succession but to these young men? We hope to have them for many years with us, valiant for the Truth of God, steadfast in the faith, ripening in spirit and growingly made meet to take their seats among the glorified saints above.

Judge for yourselves, dear Brothers and Sisters, whether you are fairly to be ranked among the young men. Have no regard to the matter of sex, for there is neither male nor female in Christ Jesus! Judge whether you are fit to be ranked among those whose full-grown and vigorous life entitles them to stand among the effectives of the Church, the vigorous manhood of the seed of Israel. To such I speak. May God the Holy spirit bless the word!

I. The first thing that John notes about these young men is THEIR POSSESSION OF STRENGTHI have written unto you young men, because you are strong. These Christians of the middle class are emphatically strong. This does not imply that any measure of spiritual strength was in them by nature, for the Apostle Paul clearly puts it otherwise concerning our natural state saying, When we were yet without strength, Christ died for the ungodly. So that by nature we are without strength to do anything that is good and right.

We are strong as a wild bull, to dash headlong into everything that is evilstrong as a lion to fight against all that is good and Godlikebut for all spiritual and holy things we are utterly infirm and incapable. Yes, we are as dead men until God the Holy Spirit deals with us! Neither does the Apostle, here, at all allude to the strength of the body in young men, for in a spiritual sense this is rather their weakness than their strength! The man who is strong in the flesh is too often, for that very reason, strongly tempted to sins of the flesh and, therefore the Apostle bids his young friend, flee youthful lusts. Whenever you read the life of Samson you may thank God you had not Samsons muscles and sinews, or else it is more than probable that you would have had Samsons passionsand they might have mastered you as they mastered him.

The time of life in which a young man is found is full of perils and so is the spiritual condition of which it is the type. The young man might almost wish that it were with him as with the older man in whom the forces of the flesh have declined, for though age brings with it many infirmities, it also has its gain in the abatement of the passions. So you see the young man cannot reckon upon vigor of the flesh as contributing towards real strengthhe has, rather, to ask for more strength from on high lest the animal vigor that is within him should drag down his spirit. He is glad to be in robust health that he may bear much toil in the Lords cause, but he is not proud of it, for he remembers that the Lord delights not in the strength of the horse, and takes not pleasure in the legs of a man.

These young men in Grace are strong, first of all, in faith, according to that exhortation, Be strong! Fear not! They have known the Lord, now, for some time, and they have enjoyed that perfect peace which comes of forgiven sin. They have marked the work of the Spirit within themselves and they know that it is no delusion, but a Divine changeand now they not only believe in Christ, but they know that they believe in Him! They know whom they have believed and they are persuaded that He is able to keep that which they have committed to Him. That faith which was once a healing touch has now become a satisfying embrace! That enjoyment which was once a sip has now become a draught, quenching all thirst! Yes, and that which was once a draught has become an immersion into the river of God which is full of Living Waterthey have plunged into the River of Life and find waters to swim in!

Oh what a mercy it is to be strong in this fashion! Let him that is strong take heed that he glory only in the Lord who is his righteousness and strengthbut in Him and His strength, he may, indeed, make his boast and defy the armies of the aliens! What says PaulI can do all things through Christ that strengthens me. My Brothers and Sisters, take good heed that you never lose this strength! Pray God that you may never sin so as to lose it; may never backslide so as to lose it; may never grieve the Spirit so as to lose itfor I reckon that to be endowed with power from on High and to be strong in faith, giving glory to God, is the truest glory and majesty of our manhoodand it were sad to lose it, or even to deface it. Oh that all Christians were so much advanced as to enter the enlisted battalion of the Lords young men!

This strength makes a man strong to endure. He is a sufferer, but mark how patient he is! He is a loser in business and he has a hard task to earn his daily bread, but he never complains! He has learned, in every state, to be content. He is persecuted, but he is not distressed. Men revile him, but he is not moved from the even tenor of his way. He grows careless, alike, of flattery and calumny. So long as he can please God, he cares not to displease men. He dwells on high and lives above the smoke of human opinion. He bears and forbears. He bows his neck to the yoke and his shoulders to the burdenand has fellowship with Christ in his sufferings! Blessed is that man who is so strong that he never complains of his trials, never whimpers and frets because he is made to share in the humiliations and griefs of his Covenant Head!

He expected to bear his cross when he became a follower of the Crucified and he is not now made weary and faint when it presses upon him. It is a fair sight to see young Isaac bearing the wood for the sacrifice! Young Joseph bearing the fetters in prison with holy joy! Young Samson carrying away the gates of Gaza, bars and all, and young David praising God with his harp though Saul is feeling for his javelin! Such are the exploits of the young men who count it all joy when they fall into manifold trials for Christs sake! O young man, be strong, strong as an iron column which bears the full stress of the building and is not moved!

This strength shows itself, next, in laboring for Christ. The young man in Christ is a great worker. He has so much strength that he cannot sit still! He would be ashamed to leave the burden and heat of the day to be borne by others. He is up and at it according to his calling and ability. He has asked his Lord, as a favor, to give him something to do. His prayer has been, Show me what You would have me to do, and having received an answer, he is found in the vineyard trenching the soil, removing the weeds, pruning the vines and attending to such labors as the seasons demand. His Master has said to him, Feed My sheep, and, Feed My lambs. And, therefore, you shall see him through the livelong day and far into the night watching over the flock which is committed to him.

In all this toil he greatly rejoices, for he is strong. He can run and not be weary. He can walk and not faint. By my God have I leaped over a wall, he says. Nothing is hard for him. Or, if it is, he remembers that the diamond cuts the diamond and so he sets a harder thing against a hard thingand by a firm and stern resolution he overcomes. That which ought to be done, he declares shall be done in the power of God, and lo, it is accomplished! Blessed is the Church that has her quiver full of these! She shall speak with her adversaries in the gate. These are the men that work our reformations! These are the men who conduct our missions! These are the men who launch out into the deep for Christ! They make the vanguard of the host of God and largely compose the main body of her forces. I trust this Church has many such. May they yet be multiplied and increased among us, that we may never lack for choice soldiers of the Cross, able to lead on the hosts of God!

So, also, are these young men strong to resist attack. They are assaulted, but they carry with them the shield of faith with which they quench the fiery darts of the enemy. Wherever they go, if they meet with other tempted ones, they spring to the front to espouse their cause. They are ready in the day of battle to meet attacks upon the faith with the sword of the Spiritthey will yield no point of faith, but defend the Truth at all hazards. Clad in the panoply of Truth, they meet no deadly wound for, by Grace, they are so preserved that the Wicked One touches them not. They resist temptation and are unharmed in the midst of peril. Do you need an example? Look at Joseph! Where 10,000 would have fallen, he stands in snow-white purity. Joseph, as contrasted with David, is an instance of how a young man may bring greater glory to God than an older man when assailed by a similar temptation.

Joseph is but young and the temptation forces itself upon him while he is in the path of duty. He is alone with his temptress and no one need know of the sin if it is committed. On the other hand, if he refuses, shame and possibly death may await him through the calumny of his offended mistress! Yet he bravely resists the assault and overcomes the Wicked One. He is a bright contrast to the older man, a father in Israel, who went out of his way to compass an evil deed and committed crime in order to fulfill his foul desire. From this case we learn that neither years, nor knowledge, nor experience can preserve any one of us from sinold and young must be kept by the power of Godor they will be overthrown by the Tempter.

Furthermore, these young men are not only strong for resistance, but they are strong for attack. They carry the war into the enemys territory! If there is anything to be done, they are like Jonathan and his armor-bearer, eager for the fray! These are very zealous for the Lord of Hosts and are prompt to undertake toil and travail for Jesus sake. These smite down error and set up the Truth of God! These believe great things, attempt great things and expect great things and the Lord is with them. The archers have sorely grieved them, shot at them and hated thembut their bows abide in strength, for the arms of their hands are made strong by the mighty God of Jacob! One of them shall chase a thousand, and two put 10,000 to flight!

So have I shown you what these young men arethey are strong strong to believe, strong to suffer, strong to do, strong to resist, strong to attack! May companies of these go in and out among us to fight the Lords battles, for to this end has the Lord girded them with strength.

II. Secondly, let us notice that he implies THEIR NEED OF STRENGTH, for he says, You are strong, and you have overcome the Wicked One. Between the lines of the text I read the fact that young men who are strong must expect to be attacked. This also follows from a rule of Divine economy. Whenever God lays up stores, it is because there will be need of them. When Egypts granaries were full with the supply of seven years of plenty, one might have been sure that seven years of famine were about to come. Whenever a man is strong, it is because he has stern work to do for, as the Israelite of old never had an ounce of manna left over till the morning except that which bred worms and stank, so there never will be a Christian that has a pennys worth of Grace left over from his daily requirements.

If you are weak, you shall have no trial happen to you but such as is common to men. But if you are strong, rest assured that trials, many and heavy, are awaiting you! Every sinew in the arm of faith will have to be tested. Every single weapon given out of the armory of God will be called for in the conflict. Christian soldiering is no piece of military pastimeit is no proud paradeit means hard fighting from the day of enlistment to the day of reward. The strong young man may rest assured that he has no force to spend in display, no energy which he may use in boasting and vainglory. There is a heavy burden for the strong shoulder and a fierce fight for the trained hands!

Why does Satan attack this class of men most? I reckon, first, because Satan is not always sure that the babes in Grace are in Grace and, therefore, he does not always attack beginners. But when they are sufficiently developed to make him see who and what they are, then his wrath is awakened. Those who have clean escaped from him, he will weary and worry to the utmost of his power. A friend writes to me to enquire whether Satan knows our thoughts. Of course he does not as God does! Satan pretty shrewdly guesses at them from our actions and our wordsand perhaps even from manifestations upon our countenancesbut it is the Lord, alone, who knows the thoughts of men immediately and by themselves.

Satan is an old hand at studying human naturehe has been near 6,000 years watching and tempting men and women and, therefore, he is full of cunning. But he is not Omniscient and, therefore, it may be that he thinks such and such a person is so little in Grace that perhaps he is not in Grace at all! And so he lets him alonebut as soon as ever it is certain that the man is of the royal seedthen the devil is at him! I do not know whether our Lord was ever tempted at Nazareth, while He was yet in His obscurity, but the moment He was baptized and the Spirit of God came upon Him, He was taken into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. If you become an avowed servant of God, do not think the conflict is overit is then that the battle begins!

Straight from the waters of Baptism, it may be, you will have to go into such a wilderness and such a conflict as you never knew before! Satan knows that young men in Grace can do his kingdom great harm and, therefore, he would gladly slay them early in the day, as Pharaoh wished to kill all the male children in Israel. My Brothers and Sisters, you are strong to overthrow his kingdom and, therefore, you need not marvel that he desires to overthrow you! I think it is right that young men should endure hardness, or else they might become proud. It is hard to hide pride from men. Full of strength, full of courage, full of patience, full of zeal, such men are ready enough to believe the Wicked One when he whispers that they are perfectand, therefore, trial is sent to keep them out of that grievous snare of the Evil One.

The devil is used by God as a householder might employ a dirty, smutty servant to clean his pots and kettles. The devil tempts the saint and thus the saint sees his inward depravity and is no longer able to boast. The devil thinks he is going to destroy the man of God, but God is making the temptation work for the Believers eternal good! Far better to have Beelzebub, the god of flies, pestering you, than to become fly-blown with notions of your own excellence. Besides, not only might this young man be a prey to pride, but he certainly would not bring the glory to God, untried, that he brings to Him when he overcomes temptation.

Read the story of Job up to the time when he is tempted. You say, We have no story to read. Just so, there was nothing worthy of record, only that his flocks and herds continued to multiply, that another child was born and so forth. There is no history to a nation when everything goes well! And it is so with a Believer. But when trial comes and the man plays the man, and is valiant for God against the arch-enemy, I hear a voice from Heaven. saying, Write. Now you shall have historyhistory that will glorify God! It is but right that those who are young men and women in Christ should endure conflicts that they may bring honor to their Father, their Redeemer and the Holy Spirit who dwells in them!

Besides, it prepares them for future usefulness, and here I venture to intrude the testimony of my own experience. I often wondered, when I first came to Christ, why I had such a hard time of it when I was coming to the Lord, and why I was so long and so wearied in finding a Savior. After that, I wondered why I experienced so many spiritual conflicts while others were in peace. Ah, Brothers and Sisters, I did not know that I was destined to preach to this great congregation! I did not understand, in those days, that I should have to minister to hundreds, and even thousands of distressed spirits, storm-tossed and ready to perish! But it is so, now, with me that when the afflicted mention their experience I can, as a rule, reply, I have been thereand so I can help them, as one who has felt the same.

It is necessary, therefore, that the young men should bear the yoke in their youth and that while they are strong they should gain experience, not so much for themselves, as for others, that in later days when they come to be fathers they may be able to help the little ones of the family. Take your tribulation kindly, Brother. Yes, take it gratefullythank your King that He puts you in commission where the thick of the battle centers around you. You will never be a warrior if you never enter the dust clouds where garments are rolled in blood. You will never become a veteran if you do not fight through the long campaign.

So be it unto youmay your Captain save you from the canker of inglorious ease. You must fight in order that you may acquire the character which inspires others with confidence in youand thus fits you to lead your comrades to the fray. Oh, that we may have, here, an abundance of the young men of the heavenly family who will defend the Church against worldliness and error, defend the weaker ones from the wolves that prowl around and guard the feeble against the many deceivers that waylay the Church of God! As you love the Lord, I charge you, grow in Grace and be strong, for we have need of you just now.

Oh, my Brothers, take hold on sword and buckler; watch and stand fast! May the Lord teach your hands to war and your fingers to fight. In these evil days may you be as a phalanx to protect our Israel! The Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites are upon us just now! War is at all our bordersnow, therefore, let each valiant man stand about the Kings chariot, each man with his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night.

III. Thirdly, the text reminds us of THEIR PROOF OF STRENGTHthey have overcome the Wicked One. Then they must be strong, for a man who can overcome the Wicked One is not only a mean man of warwrite him down among the first three! Wicked ones abound, but there is one crafty being who deserves the name of the Wicked Onehe is the arch-leader of rebellion, the first of sinners, the chief of sinners, the tempter of sinners! He is the Wicked One who heads assaults against the pilgrims to Zion. If any man has ever stood foot to foot with him, he will never forget itit is a fight that once fought will leave its scars, even though the victory is won!

In what sense have these young men overcome the Wicked One? Well, first, in the fact that they have broken right away from his power. They were once his slavesthey are not so now. They once slept beneath his roof in perfect peace, but conscience raised an uproar and the Spirit of God troubled themand they then escaped his power. Once Satan never troubled them at all. Why should he? They were good friends! Now he tempts them, worries them and assaults them because they have left his service, engaged themselves to a new Master and become the enemies of him who was once their god. I speak to many who gladly acknowledge that not a bit of them now belongs to the devil! From the crown of their head to the soles of their feet Christ has bought thembody, soul and spiritwith His precious blood!

And they have assented to the purchase and feel that they are not their own, and certainly not the devils, for they are bought with a price and belong to Him who purchased them. The strong man armed has been turned out by a stronger than heJesus has carried the fortress of the heart by storm and driven out the foe! Satan is not inside our heart, now that he entered Judasand he cannot enter into us, for our soul is filled by Another who is well able to hold His own! The Wicked One has been expelled by the Holy One who now lives and reigns within our nature as Lord of All. Moreover, these young men have overcome the Wicked One, not only by breaking away from his power and from driving him entirely out of possession so that he is no longer master, but they have overcome him in the very fact of their opposition to him.

When a man resists Satan, he is victorious over Satan in that very resistance! Satans empire consists in the yielding of our will to his will, but when our will revolts against him, then already we have, in a measure, overcome him. Albeit that sometimes we are much better at

willing than we are at doing, as the Apostle Paul was for he said, To will is present with me; hut how to perform that which is good I find not. Yet, still, the hearty will to be clean from sin is a victory over sin and, as that will grows stronger and more determined to resist the temptations of the Evil One in that device we have overcome sin and Satan! What a blessed thing this is for us to remember, that Satan has no weapons of defense, and so, when we resist him, he must flee! A Christian man has both defensive and offensive weapons! He has a shield as well as a swordbut Satan has fiery darts and nothing else! I never read of Satan having any shield whateverso that when we resist him, he is bound to run away. He has no defense for himself and the fact of our resistance is, in itself, a victory!

But, oh, Brothers and Sisters, besides that, some of us who are young men in Christ have won many a victory over Satan! Have we not been tempted, fearfully tempted? But the mighty Grace of God has come to the rescue and we have not yielded! Cannot you look back, not within Pharisaic boasting, but with gracious exultation, over many an evil habit which once had the mastery over you, but which is master of you no longer? It was a hard conflict. How you bit your lip, sometimes, and feared that you must yield! In certain moments your steps had almost gone; your feet had well-nigh slipped, but here you are, conqueror! Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! Hear what the Spirit says to you when John writes to you because you have overcome the Wicked One! He says, Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

Once more, in Christ Jesus we have entirely overcome the Wicked One, already, for the enemy we have to battle with is a vanquished foeour Lord and Master met him and destroyed him! He is now destitute of his boasted battle-ax, that terrible weapon which has made the bravest men to quail when they have seen it in his hand. What weapon is that? you ask. That weapon is death! Our Lord overthrew him that has the power of death, that is, the devil, and, therefore, Satan has not the power of death any longer. The keys of death and of Hell are at the belt of Christ! Ah, Satan, we who believe in Jesus shall defeat you, for our Lord defeated you! That bruise upon your head cannot be hidden! Your crown is dashed in pieces! The Lord has sorely wounded you, O Dragon, and your deadly wound can never be healed!

We have at you with dauntless courage, for we believe the promise of our Lord, that He will shortly bruise you under our feet. As certainly as you were bruised under the feet of our crucified Lord, so shall you be bruised under the feet of all His seedto your utter overthrow and contempt! Let us take courage, Brothers and Sisters, and abide steadfast in the faith, for we have in our Lord Jesus overcome the Wicked One. We are more than conquerors through Him that has loved us!

IV. Now I close with my fourth point, which isTHEIR SOURCE OF STRENGTH. You have seen their strength and their need of itand their proof of itnow for the fountain of it. The Word of God abides in you. I labor under the opinion that there never was a time in which the people of God had greater need to understand this passage than now. We have entered upon that part of the pilgrim path which is described by Bunyan as the Enchanted Groundthe Church and the world appear to be alike bewitched with folly! Half the people of God hardly know their head from their heels at this time. They are gaping after wonders, running after a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal and waiting for yet more astounding inventions. Everything seems to be in a whirligig! A tornado has set in and the storm is everywhere!

Christians used to believe in Christ as their Leader and the Bible as their rule. But some of them are pleased with lords and rules such as He never knew! Believe me, there will soon come new Messiahs. Men are already pretending to work miracles! We shall soon have false Christs and, Lo! Here! And Lo! There, will be heard on all sides! Anchors are up, winds are out and the whole fleet is getting into confusion! Men in whose sanity and stability I once believed, are being carried away with one fancy or another, and I am driven to cry, What next? And what next? We are only at the beginning of an era of mingled unbelief and fanaticism!

Now we shall know who are Gods elect and who are not, for there are spirits abroad at this hour that would, if it were possible, deceive even the very elect! And those who are not deceived are, nevertheless, sorely put to it. Here is the patience of the saints. Let him look to himself who is not rooted and grounded in Christ, for the hurricane is coming! The signs of the times indicate a carnival of delusions! Men have ceased to be guided by the Word of God and claim to be, themselves, prophets. Now we shall see what we shall see! Blessed is the sheep that knows his Shepherd and will not listen to the voice of strangers. But here is the way to be kept steadfastThe Word of God abides in you. The Word of Godthat is to say we are to believe in the doctrines of Gods Wordand these will make us strong.

What vigor they infuse into a man! Get the Word of God well into you and you will overcome the Wicked One! When the devil tempted Luther, the Reformers grand grip of justification by faith made him readily victorious. Keep a fast hold of the Doctrines of Grace and Satan will soon give up attacking you, for they are like plate armor, through which no dart can ever force its way. The promises of Gods Word, toowhat power they give a man! To get hold of a, shall, and, will, in the time of trouble is a heavenly safeguard! My God will hear me. I will not fail you nor forsake you. These are Divine holdfasts! Oh, how strong a man is for overcoming the Wicked One when he has such a promise at hand!

Do not trust yourself in the morning, in the street, till you have laid a promise under your tongue. I see people put respirators on in foggy weatherthey do not make them look very lovelybut I dare say they are useful! I recommend the best respirator for the pestilential atmosphere of this present evil world when I bid you fit a promise to your lips! Did not the Lord rout the Tempter in the wilderness with that promise, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God shall man live? Get the promises of God to lodge within you and you will be strong! Then mind the precepts, for a precept is often a sharp weapon against Satan. Remember how the Lord Jesus Christ struck Satan a killing blow by quoting a preceptIt is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve. If the precept had not been handy, with what would the adversary have been rebuked?

Nor is a threat at all a weak weapon. The most terrible threats of Gods Word against sin are the best helps for Christians when they are tempted to sinHow can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? How should I escape if I turned away from Him that speaks from Heaven? Tell Satan the threats and make him tremble! Every Word of God is life to holiness and death to sin. Use the Word as your sword and shieldthere is none like it! Now notice that John not only mentions the Word of God, but the Word of God in you. The inspired Word must be received into a willing mind. How? The Book which lies there is to be pleaded here, in the inmost heart, by the work of the Holy Spirit upon the mind. All of this letter has to be translated into spirit and life. The Word of God abides in youthat is, first to know itnext to remember it and treasure it up in your heart. Following upon this, we must understand it, learn the analogy of faith by comparing spiritual things with spiritual till we have learned the system of Divine Truth and more able to set it forth and plead for it.

It is, next, to have the word in your affectionsto love it so that it is as honey or the droppings of the honeycomb to you. When this is the case, you must and shall overcome the Wicked One! A man instructed in the Scriptures is like an armed knight, who, when he goes among the throng, inflicts many a wound, but suffers none, for he is locked up in steel. Yes, but that is not all! It is not the Word of God in you, alone, it is, the Word of God abides in you. It is always there, it cannot be removed from you! If a man gets the Bible right into him, he is all right, then, because he is full, and there is no room for evil! When you have filled a measure full of wheat, you have effectually shut the chaff out. Men go after novel and false doctrines because they do not really know the Truth of God; for if the Truth had gotten into them and filled them, they would not have room for these daydreams!

A man who truly knows the Doctrines of Grace is never removed from them. I have heard our opponents rave at what they call the obstinacy of our Brothers and Sisters. Once get the Truth of God really into you, it will enter into the texture of your being and nothing will get it out of you! It will also be your strength, by setting you watching against every evil thing. You will be on your guard if the Word of God abides in you, for it is written, When you go it will keep you. The Word of God will be to you a bulwark and a high tower, a castle of defense against the foe! Oh, see to it that the Word of God is in you, in your very soul, permeating your thoughts and so operating upon your outward life, that all may know you to be a true Bible-Christian, for they perceive it in your words and deeds! This is the sort of army that we need in the Church of Godmen that are strong by feeding on Gods Word! Aspire to it, my Brothers and Sisters, and when you have reached it, then aspire unto the third degree that you may become fathers in Israel!

Up to this measure, at any rate, let us endeavor to advance, and advance at once. Are there any here who are not young men in Christ Jesus because they are not in Christ Jesus at all? I cannot speak with you this morning, for my time is gone, but I am distressed for you. To be out of Christ is such an awful thing that a man had better to be out of existence! Without God, without Christthen you are without joy in life or hope in death! Not even a babe in the Divine family! Then know this, that God shall judge those that are outside and when He comes, how swift and overwhelming will that judgment be! Inasmuch as you would not have Christ in this day, Christ will not have you in that day! Stay not out of Christ any longer! Seek His face and live, for, He that believes in Him has everlasting life. May you be enabled to believe in Him at this moment, for Jesus sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON1 John 2** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK678, 681, 674.

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FATHERS IN CHRIST   
NO. 1751

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 18, 1883, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

I write unto you, fathers, because you have known Him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, fathers, because you have known Him that is   
from the beginning.   
1 John 2:13, 14.

OBSERVE the difference in the two versesJohn first says, I write, and then, I have written. When in two former discourses I preached upon the beloved Apostles address to the young men and the children, [Sermon #1711*A Sermon to the Lords Little Children* and Sermon #1715*A Description of Young Men in Christ*] I gave you as full an interpretation of this difference as I could commandand I need not, now, repeat it. Certain additional thoughts occur to me, which I will give you, that the matter may be still clearer. The Apostle John says, I write, and, by-and-by, I have written. This shows, I think, the importance of his subject. If he has already written upon it, he must think it to be a very necessary and valuable Truth of God if he writes upon it yet again.

A man does not discourse repeatedly upon the same subject if he is a man full of matter, as this Inspired writer was, unless he feels that it is necessary that he returns, again and again, to his subject until he has impressed it upon the minds of his audience. Hence the Apostle is not ashamed to say, in effectI write this, though you need not remind me that I have written it before, for I feel it to be wise, so long as I am in this tabernacle, to put you in remembrance of what I have said unto you. Nails which are important to a structure must be driven in with diligence. Foundation stones should be laid with scrupulous care and Truths of God which are fundamental, should be repeated by the teacher till the disciple has learned it beyond all fear of ever forgetting it.

This form of speech also reveals the unchanging conviction of the writer, who, having written once, is glad to write the same things again. This shows a mind made up and decided, from which proceeds consistent testimony. In these fickle times, certain of our public teachers must feel unable to say of any one subject, I write, and, I have written, for before the ink is dry they have need to blot out what they have put on paper and to write an amended version of their religious ideas! Scarcely for a month at a stretch do these loose thinkers abide in one placethey are such wandering stars that no chart could ever mark their position for three weeks together!

They might say, I write, but bless you, dear people, I do not know what I wrote six months ago. Very probably my former opinion is not, now, true, for all things are flowing on and my head is swimming with the rest. I am a man of progressforever learning and never coming to the knowledge of the Truth of God! Blot out what I wrote a year ago and read with care what I write today. To which we replyDear Sir, we cannot take much notice of what you write now, because, in all probability, in another week or two you will retract it all, or improve it from off the face of the earth! Neither shall we pay much attention to you, then, for you will probably be on the move as soon as ever you have said your say. We decline to learn what we shall have to unlearn! We will wait in our present knowledge until you have reached something certain for yourself. Perhaps in 20 years time, when you have pitched your gypsy tent, it may be worth our while to hear where it is, but we do not commit ourselves even to that promisefor as the progress you are now making is into deeper darkness, you will probably end in sevenfold night.

I rejoice, dear Friends, in the solidness of the Christians faith! I know nothing of improvements and growths in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, which is summed up in these words, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever. I believe that God the Holy Spirit has given us, in the Scriptures, a perfect and entire Revelation which is to be received by all Christians without addition or diminution. I do not believe that Apostles, martyrs, confessors and teachers have been living for these 1,900 years upon liesI prefer the faith of saints in Glory to the daydreams of those whippersnappers who nowadays claim to lead us by their thought. Our mind is that of David when he said, I hate vain thoughts. Well says the Scripture, The Lord knows the thoughts of man, that they are vanity. If it is a question of thinking, we can think as well as they canthen our thoughts about the modern theology are full of sorrowful contempt.

Perhaps the doctrine is new, though even this we doubt! But if it is new, it is not true, for the Truth of God must necessarily be as old as the everlasting hills! We observe that the word, meditation, is now seldom used and, thought, is the modern idol. Just so. We meditate on revealed Truths of Godthis notion of thought sets aside the Truths of God and sets up mere fancy. We refuse to be of this vagrant party of thinkers! We are of the settled race of Believers. We can say what we have written, we still write. What we have preached, we still preach, for inasmuch as we have preached that which is revealed in Holy Scripture, to that Truth we stand and shall stand, God helping us. If we live a thousand years, at the close of life we shall have nothing more nor less to say than the fixed, Immutable, eternal Truth of God. We hope to understand the Truth better, but we shall never discover better Truth!

I write, and, I have written, also indicate the abiding need of men they require the same teaching from time to time. I suppose that John alludes to his Gospel when he says, I have written, and now, a little later, he writes his Epistle and says, I writegiving, in each case, the same teaching. Mens natures are still the same; mens spiritual conflicts and dangers are still the same and, therefore, the same Truth of God is suitable, not only from day to day, but from century to century! There is but one food for soul hunger and but one help in spiritual danger. The true teacher always comes to men with the same Truths because men continue to have the same dangers, necessities, sorrows and hopes.

The fathers who needed that John should previously write to them, still needed that he should write to them the same thing. Though they may have grown more fatherly, they have not outgrown Apostolic teaching. The former Truth is good for our latter days. Many years ago, when some of us were mere boys, we listened to the Gospel of Jesus and our heart leaped as we embraced it. It was the life and joy of our spirit and now, today, after having advanced far in the Divine Life, if we hear one of those simple sermons that first brought us to Christ concerning the precious blood of Jesus and child-like faith in Him, it suits us quite as well as in those early days!

I have noticed with regard to well-grown Christian people, that when I have given a purely evangelical discourse, meant only for sinners and not at all designed for the edifying and comforting of full-aged saints, they have sucked it in with as much delight as if they were, themselves, newly converted! After all, though you and I are not now fed upon milk, yet a drink of milk is still most refreshing! Though we can now digest the solid meat of the Kingdom of God, yet the childrens bread has lost none of its relish in our esteem. The Truths of God are still sweet to our hearts, yes, sweeter than they ever were! Though we have advanced to the higher courses of the edifice of holy knowledge, yet we never cease to look with intense delight upon those foundation Truths of God which concern our Lord Jesus. We cleave with full purpose of heart to Him of whom the Lord God has said, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation. Jesus remains to us, elect, precious, and we know it will be so with us till lifes last hour.

From this text I am to preach principally to the fathers, but as the Church has not many fathers, I may be supposed to have a slender audience! But this is hardly so, since I hope and trust that the area of the sermons influence will include young men, for you, my Brothers, aspire to reach the front rank and to be numbered among the fathers. Even to you who are little children, the text has its word of instruction, for you will be glad to hear what the fathers know, since you hope, before long, to know the same. The life of God is so much the same in all stages that the Word which is profitable to fathers has a use for babiesand that which is spoken to little children has a voice in it for young men. May God the Holy Spirit bless this Word of God to the hearts of all His people!

Concerning the fathers, I am going to inquire three things this morning. First, who are they?You fathers. Secondly, what is their peculiar characteristic?You have known Him that is from the beginning. And, thirdly, what is the message to them?I have written unto you, fathers. What is it that John has written to fathers in the Church of God?

I. First, WHO ARE THE FATHERS? We usually associate that idea somewhat with age, but we must take care that we do not make a mistake here, because age, in Grace, albeit that it may run parallel with age in nature in many cases, does not always do so. In the Church of God there are children who are 70 years old. Yes, little children displaying all the infirmities of declining years! It is not a pleasant sight to see gray-headed babies, yet I must confess I have seen such and I have even been glad that I could dare to go the length of hoping that they

were babies in Christ! One would not like to say of a man of 80 that he had scarcely cut his wisdom teethand yet there are suchscarcely out of the nurses arms at 60 years of age, needing just as much care and comfort as sucklings at the breast!

On the other hand, there are fathers in the Church of Godwise, stable, instructedwho are comparatively young men. The Lord can cause His people to grow rapidly and far outstrip their years. David, as a lad, was more of a father in God than Eli in his old age. Growth in Grace is not a time growth. In eternal matters, years count for little. The Lord gives subtlety to the simple and to the young men knowledge and discretion. Solomon was wise while yet youngin some respects wiser than when he was old. Some youths have been like Josephmen with God before they were men among men. Joseph, we are told in our translation, was more loved by Jacob than any of his brothers, because he was the son of his old age. This can hardly be a correct rendering, for Benjamin, who was born 16 years later, was far more entitled to be called so.

Another interpretation, which seems to me more correct, signifies that he was a son of the elders and implies that while he was a child, he was an associate of elderly persons and was, himself, so thoughtful, serious and well-instructed as to be an elderly child, a child-man, full of unusual wisdom and prudence. Josephs are still sent into the Church, now and then, and the Lord greatly blesses His people by their means. Oh, for more of them! From their early youth they have a discernment of Gods Word and a quickness of apprehension wonderful to notice. More than that, I have even observed a depth of experience within a very short time granted to certain young Believers, so that though they were but youths in age, they were fathers in piety.

Nevertheless, as a usual thing, it is to be expected that advancement in Grace should be accompanied with advancement in years. And it is so often so that we are known to call those who are fit to look after the souls of others ,the elders of the Church, not necessarily because they are old men, but because they are instructed in the things of God. These are the fathers, thenmen who have aged in Grace, have come to the full development of their spiritual manhoodand have been confirmed in that development by the test of time and trials. Believers, when they have, in the course of years, shown themselves able both to labor and to suffer, are fitly ranked among fathers.

Why do we call the early writers the fathers of the Church? Not, I think, because we owe more to their teaching than to those of a later period, but because they were the first men, the pioneers, the vanguardand so the fathers of the Church. The first and earliest members of a Church will become fathers, in due time, if they continue in the faith, grounded and settled. Their years of persevering holiness entitle them to respect. Paul mentions with honor, certain persons, saying, Who also were in Christ before me. There is an honor in having been a soldier of Christ for a long time. It was no small praise of His disciples when Jesus said of them, You have been with Me from the beginning.

With the idea of fathers, we so far associate that of age that we hope and expect that Believers who have been in Christ, long, have well learned their lesson and have come to a fullness of growth in the things of God. Judge, Christian Brothers, whether you can rank yourselves among the fathers. And if you are not able to do so, yet press onward towards it. I boldly say that in this Church there is a larger proportion of this class of Christians than I have ever seen elsewhere, and for this I thank God with all my heart, for they are of the utmost service to our host.

Fathers, again, are persons of maturity, men who are not raw and greennot fresh recruits, unaccustomed to march or fightbut old legionaries who have used their swords on others and are, themselves, scarred with wounds received in conflict. These men know what they know, for they have thought over the Gospel, studied it, considered it and, having so considered it, have embraced it with full intensity of conviction! Usually we mean by, fathers, men who have become developed in Grace, mature in character, decided in conviction, clear in statement and accurate in judgment. These can discern between things that differ and are not deceived by the philosophies which allure the ignorant. They know the voice of the Shepherdand a stranger they will not follow.

The younger folk may be bewitched so that they do not obey the Truth of God, but these are not fascinated by error. New converts, in their difficulties, resort to these fathers, for doubts which bewilder the beginner are simplicity itself to those who are taught of the Lord. These are the watchmen on the walls who detect where insidious doubt is creeping in, where deadly error under the guise of the Truth of God is undermining the faith of the Churchto that end the Lord has instructed them and given them to have their senses exercised to discern between good and evil. Among them are men who have understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do. If you are such fathers, dear Brothers, I rejoice in you! If you are not such as yet, aspire to this eminence and pray the Lord that you may not be long before you arrive at the ripeness and sweetness which belong to mellow Christians who are prepared for the great ingathering!

Fathers, again, are men of stability and strength. If burglars are planning to attack a house, they care little about the children and make small account of the boys. But if fatherly men are about, the thieves are not eager for an encounter. Even thus, the arch-deceiver has hope of injuring the Church by deceiving the little children and the young men, but the stalwart men of God, who walk in the midst of the household, looked up to by everybody, are not so readily blown to and fro. As the Spartans pointed to their citizens as the real walls of Sparta, so do we point to these substantial men as, under God, the bronze walls and bulwarks of the Church!

Men who are well taught, confirmed, experienced and trained by the Spirit of God are pillars in the house of our God. It may be said of each of them, He keeps himself so that the Evil One touches him not. These are men who know how to wear the armor which God has provided and to use the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. These are men of strong faith and convictions; men of decision and courage; men of prudent action, in no hurry through fear and under no excitement through false hope. These are not men that retract, or shuffle, or evadebut witnesses who are faithful and trueimparting confidence to the feebler sort by their calm defiance of the foe. Oh, that all Christians would grow into such solid saints!

Many light, frothy, chaffy minds come into the Church and give us untold trouble to keep them rightand infinitely more trouble because they will not be kept right! Oh, for more men of such a sort that if the whole world went wrong they would still abide by the right! Men who cannot be carried away by superstition let it adorn itself with all the beauties of art! Men who cannot be borne down by skepticismlet it flaunt all the pomp of its pretended culture and wisdom! These fathers know and are sure. They have learned to be, on their own accounts, determined and unyielding, for they will not stir beyond, It is written, nor tempt eternal ruin by building upon the shifting quicksand of the hour!

At this moment there is large need for an army of invincibles. Be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. But there is something more than this in Christian fatherhood. The fathers of the Church are men of heart who naturally care for the souls of others. It is upon the father that the weight of the household fallshe goes forth in the morning to his daily labor and he returns at night with the fruit of his toil for the support of the household. It is not for himself that he lives, but for that dear family which is gathered about him. He is not wholly comprised within his own personal self, for he lives in all the househe lives especially in his children. Their suffering or their need would be his suffering and his need.

His heart has grown larger than when he was a child or a young man, for now his heart beats in all that household of which he is the life. It is a grand thing when Christian men and Christian women come to this, that they are not perpetually thinking of their own salvation and of their own souls being fed under the ministry, but they care most of all for those who are weak and feeble in the Church! During a service, their thoughts go out for those assembled. They are anxious as to how that stranger may be impressed by the sermon; how yonder anxious spirit may be comforted; how a backsliding Brother may be restored; how one who is growing somewhat cold may be revived. This paternal care betokens a true father in the Church! May the Lord multiply among us those who feel it to be their lifework to feed the flock of Christ.

Having this care upon him, the father comes to be tender. He partakes somewhat of the tenderness of a mother and thus is called a nursing father. A true father, such as fathers should be, has a tender love for all the little ones. He would not hurt them. Nothing would be more painful to him than to grieve themon the contrary, he studies to give them pleasure and lays himself out for their good. It is a great blessing to the Church, when the leading spirits are lovingnot rough and uncouth, domineering or hectoring, but gentle and Christ-like! Oh, my Brothers who take the lead, let us bear and forbear, and put up with a thousand trying things from our Masters children whom He has committed to our care! Let us make ourselves the servants of all! Is not the father the laborer for the children? Does he not lay up for them? Is not his superiority best seen by his doing more for the family than anybody else?

This is how Christians grow great, by making themselves greatly useful to others! If you are the slave of all, willing to do anything so that you can but help them and make them happy and holythis is to be a father in the Church of God! Sympathetic care and hearty tenderness are gifts of the Holy Spirit and will bring you a happiness which will richly compensate you for your pains. Not yet have I quite reached the full meaning of a father, for the father is the author, under God, of the being of his childrenand happy is a Church that has many in it who are spiritual parents in Zion, through having brought sinners to Christ! Happy are the men by whose words, acts, spirit, prayers and tears, some have been begotten unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

What an honor it is to be such a father! Some of us have been filled with this joy till it has well-near broken our hearts even to think of it, for the Lord has fulfilled to us the promise which He made to Abraham when He bade him lift up his eyes to the stars and said, So shall your seed be. This cannot fall to the lot of all, but in the Church of God every man and woman should pray that he may not be barren or unfruitful. May we all be soul-winners! Not the minister alonenot the Sunday school teachers alonebut each one without exception! Why should not each saint bring someone to the Lord Jesus? At least, by our united prayers and godly living, by our united testimony and fidelity, let us labor for the increase of Messiahs kingdom! I hardly think we can put anyone among the fathers until he has won some heart for Jesus.

Thus have I described the fathers. They are never very numerousthey are never so numerous as they ought to be. Paul says, Yet have you not many fathers. But wherever they are, they are the strength of the Church. I have seen in the army a number of veterans marching in front an ornament and an honor to the whole company. Your short-service men come and go, but these tried men stick to the colors and are the backbone of the regiment. If a tough bit of fighting has to be done, you must rely upon such as these. Like Napoleons Old Guard, they cannot be shaken or driven backthe smell of gunpowder does not alarm them, nor the whistling of the shot, nor the roar of the artillerythey have seen such things before. They can also bide their time and wait, which is a great thing in a soldier. And when at last they are bid to charge, they leap like lions on their prey and the enemy is driven before them.

Such men we have in the Church of God and such we needmen that are not flattered by opposition, nor made to lose their heads by excitement. They believe in God and if others doubt, they are not infected by their folly. They know! They are certain! They have put their feet down and will not move from their persuasion. When the time comes for action, they are ready for it and throw their whole weight so heartily into the war that every charge advances! God send us more regiments of these in this evil day and preserve to us such as we have!

II. Secondly. WHAT IS THE PROMINENT CHARACTERISTIC OF A FATHER IN CHRIST? Read the text. I write unto you, fathers, because you have known Him that is from the beginning. He repeats the expression without alteration. Observe, here, the concentration of their knowledge. Twice he says You have known Him that is from the beginning. Now, a babe in Grace knows 20 thingsa young man in Christ knows 10 thingsbut a father in Christ knows one thing and that one thing he knows thoroughly! It is very natural for us, at first, to divide our little stream into many rivulets, but as we grow gray in Grace, we pour it all into one channeland then it runs with a force efficient for our lifework. I trust I know many doctrines, many precepts and many teachingsbut more and more my knowledge gathers about my Lord even as the bees swarm around their queen!

May it come to this with us allI determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. May all our knowledge be focused as with a burning glass upon this one point! May the adorable Person of Him that was from the beginning fill the entire horizon of our thought! Oh, to have one heart, one eye, for our one Lord and for Him alone! Note, next, the peculiarity of their knowledge as to its objective they know Him that was from the beginning. Do not the babes in Christ know the Lord Jesus? Yes, they do, but they do not know Him in His full Character. They know Him as having forgiven their sins, and that is much, but it is not all. Yonder is the blessed Christ and I, a poor sinner, look to Him just as He comes to meand I am lightened and become one of His little children.

Yes, and as I grow and become a young man, I approach nearer to Jesus and get another view of Him, for I overcome the Wicked One even as He did! And thus I stand side by side with Him in the conflict. But if I come to be a father, I enter into fellowship with the great Father, Himself, for it is union with God the Father that makes a man a father in God! Then do we, as it were, not only look toward Jesus as coming to save, but we look on Christ from the Fathers point of view. The sinner sees Jesus coming to him, but the Father sees Jesus as sent from Him. When we grow in Grace we, in our measure, see Jesus from Gods point of view that is to say, we see Him as Him that was from the beginning, and in due time was manifested to take away sin.

These are ancient things, says one. Just so, but fathers are also ancient menand the deep things of God are suitable to them. Believers see Christ in a fashion similar to their own. I scarcely need allude to that which I have often mentioned to you, that every man in the Old Testament who saw the Lord saw Him in a character like his own. Abraham, the pilgrim, saw Christ as a pilgrim. Jacob, the struggler, saw the Covenant Angel wrestling with him through the night. Moses, the representative of a people tried as by fire and yet continuing, saw the Lord as a burning bush. Joshua, the valiant warrior, saw the Captain of the Lords host as a man with a sword drawn in His hand. The three holy children saw the Son of God in the fiery furnace, even as they were, themselves. When you become a father in Christ, you see Christ from the Fathers point of view not as newly come to savebut as, from the beginning the Savior of men!

The father in Grace rejoices to behold the Lord Jesus as God. He beholds the glory of His adorable Person as forever with the Father before the earth was. He knows that without Him was not anything made that was made and, therefore, beholds Him as fashioning everything upon the anvil of His power. He knows that His goings forth were of old, from everlasting, and he delights to see Him planning the salvation of His chosen in the beginning. A glorious sight it is! The grown Believer meditates upon the Covenantthe settlements of Grace in the old eternity. Poor babes in Christ are frequently stumbled by the mysterious Truths of Godhigh doctrine they call it. But when a man grows to be a father, he loves Covenant Truth and feeds on it.

It is one mark of advanced Grace that the sublime Truths which concern eternity are increasingly valued. In gracious maturity the Christian sees the blessed Persons of the Divine Trinity entering into a compact for the salvation of men. And he sees the Son of God, Himself, from the beginning acting as the Representative of His elect and taking upon Himself to answer on their behalf to the Father. He sees the Eternal Son then and there becoming the Sponsor and the Surety for His chosen, engaging to pay their debt and make recompense to the injured Justice of God on account of their sins. He sees that Covenant even from of old ordered in all things and sure in the hands of Him that was from the beginning!

There is one point that the father in Christ delights to think upon, namely, that the coming of Christ into the world was not an expedient adopted after an unavoidable and unforeseen disaster in order to retrieve the honor of God! He understands that the whole scheme of events was planned in the purpose of Divine Wisdom for the glorifying of Christ, so that from the beginning it was part of Jehovahs plan that Jesus should take upon Himself human nature and should manifest, in that Nature, all the attributes of the Father! It was the original plan that the Incarnate God should reveal infinite Grace and boundless love by laying down His life for sinners, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.

The Only-begotten Son is not introduced into the Divine economy as an afterthoughtthe whole arrangement is shaped with an eye to Him who was before all things and for whom all things were created. It pleased the Father that He should lift up creation by uniting the creature and the Creator in one Person and that He should ennoble our nature, which is a combination of the spiritual and the material, by assuming a body and bearing that body to the Throne of God. O matchless plan, by which the redeemed are ennobled and God, Himself, is glorified! Oh, fathers, if you have ever seen this, I know that you will say, The preacher does not describe the half of it! No, I do notI wish that I couldbut neither time nor ability are present with me. Still, I delight in the everlasting glories of the Lord Jesus who was from the beginning.

Greatly dear to my own heart are the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills. I believe in my Lord Jesus Christ as second to none, but as the King and Lord from the beginning, who, though He was despised and rejected of men, yet still is God over all, blessed forever, and will be so forever and ever! Though the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing, Jehovah has set His Son as King upon His holy hill of Zionand Gods decree shall stand! He that is Alpha shall be OmegaHe that is from the beginning shall be to the end, King of kings and Lord of lords! My heart cries, Hallelujah! Oh, you fathers, cry Hallelujah with me!

Yes, but I need to notice, again, that this knowledge is, in itself, special. The knowledge, itself, is remarkable as well as the Object of the knowledge. You have known Him. A dear servant of Christ on this platform, the other evening, sat beside me. He belonged to quite another part of the Church of Christ, but he said to me, of such-and-such a person, You know, dear Brother, he is one that knows the Lord. He is not merely a Christian, but he knows our Lordyou and I know what that means, do we not? I could only look at him with a deep look of loving appreciation. Yes, we do know the Lord as a living, bright reality! A daily Friend, Counselor and Companion.

True fathers in Grace meditate upon Christ. They feed upon Scripture, press the juice of it and inwardly enjoy the flavor of it. People say they have a sweet tooth. It is a good thing to have a sweet tooth for the Lord Jesus Christ! They not only know the Lord by much meditation upon Him, but they know Him by actual communionthey walk with Him, they talk with Him! Such saints are more with Christ than with anyone elseto no one do they tell so much as they have told Himand no one has ever told them as much as Jesus tells them, for the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His Covenant. Ask them, Who is your dearest friend? and they will reply, The Well-Beloved is my next of kin, my dearest companion.

They know the Lord by communion and they have come to know Him, now, by having an intense sympathy with Him. They feel as Jesus does about matters and so they know Him. His tender pity for sinners stirs their hearts, not in the same degree, but yet in like manner according to their measure. They often feel as if they could die for sinners. One of these fathers said, I could wish myself accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh. They look upon matters not from mans standpoint, but from Christs point of view and, therefore, they understand much of the Lords ways which, before, were dark to them. He who very deeply sympathizes with a man knows him well.

Learning by faith to sit still and believingly wait on the event, these fathers calmly expect that all things will work together for good to them and, therefore, they understand the unbroken serenity of the heart of Jesus and know Him in His joys as well as in His sorrows. Such saints know what it is to weep over the city with Jesus and to rejoice over returning sinners with the Good Shepherd! Yes, they know what it is to sit down with Him on His Throne, waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. They are calm with Jesus, for they have drunk in the meaning of the text, He must reign. Yes, He must reign! He must reign till all His enemies shall be under His feet! This knowing Him that is from the beginning is the chief characteristic of the father in Christ.

III. Thirdly, dear Friends, WHAT IS THE MESSAGE TO THE FATHERS? I would indicate that message very briefly by referring you to the context. John has been saying to you, dear fathers, and indeed to all of us who are in Christ, that we should love one another. If you are truly fathers, you cannot help loving all the familythe fatherly instinct is loveand fathers in Christ should be full to the brim with it. Little ones should be induced, by our loving spirit, to come around us, feeling that if nobody else loves them, we do; if nobody else cares for them, we do. I have known a father in Christ to whom a convert would speak much more readily than he would to his own earthly father or mother. I suppose they see an invitation in the faces of these fathers. I do not quite know how they discover it, but somehow converts feel that such an one is a man whom they could address, or a woman whom they could talk with.

These fathers and mothers in Israel are full of love and their speech betrays the fact. I know some men who are like great harbors for shipsa soul tossed with tempest makes for them as for a harbor! Breaking hearts say, Oh, that I could tell him my troubles and get his prayers. May you and I be just such persons and may the Holy Spirit use us for the good of our fellows. The next message immediately succeeds the textLove not the world, neither the things that are in the world. Oh, dear fathers, you must not love the world, for it passes awayand this is specially true of you! If any Christian man might love the worldand I hope none will do socertainly the fathers may not! You know so much of Christ that you may well despise the worldand you are so soon going Home so that you ought to set little store by these fleeting things.

You have all the marks of what they call declining yearsI call them ascending yearsyou will soon be gone from the world and its changing vanities, therefore do not set your love on earthly treasures. Hold wealth with a loose hand! Be ready to depart, for depart you soon will. Before the morning watch, you may be gone to your Fathers House on high! Love not the world. Another duty of fathers is also mentioned here. While they are not to love the world, they must take care that they do not fall victims to any of the lusts of this present evil world, such as the lust of the flesh. Can fathers ever fall that way? Ah me, we have to speak very solemnly and admit that the most advanced saint still needs to be warned against the lust of the flesh, the indulgence of appetites which so readily lead men to sin.

Then there is the lust of the eyes. David fell into that when he repined because of the prosperity of the wicked. He was obliged to confess, So foolish was I, and ignorant. He looked at the prosperous wicked till he began to fret about them. That lust of the eyes, in desiring more for yourself and envying those that have morenever let it happen to a father! And the pride of lifethat thirsting to be thought respectable, that emulation of others, that struggling after honor and such likethis must not be in a father! You are men and must put away childish things. My dear and honored Brothers, fall not prey to vanitiesthese toys are for the children of the worldnot for you who are so near to the Glory of the Lord! You are grown ripe in Grace and will soon enter Heavenlive accordingly. Let all earthly things be like babies baubles beneath your feet while you rise to the manhood of your soul.

The next exhortation to the fathers is that they should watch, for, says the Apostle, You have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists. Oh, valiant fathers, keep watch and ward! I marvel that members of Churches agree to the choice of ministers who are not sound in the faith, no, who do not seem to have any faith at all! Why is this? We used to have, in our Baptist Churches, substantial men who would as soon have entertained Satan at their own table as an unsound preacher in the pulpit! There used to be a company in the north of Scotland called, The Men. Why, if heresy had been preached before them, they would have been as provoked as Janet Geddes when she threw her milking stool at the head of the preacher! They would not have endured these modern heresies as the present effeminate generation is enduring them! Let the new theologians have liberty to preach what they like on their own ground, but not in our pulpits!

Alas, the leading members in many Churches are Christians without backbones! I would call them slimy, spongy snailsonly they have not the consistency of a snails shell! They are ready to swallow any mortal thing if the preacher seems clever and eloquent. Cleverness and eloquenceaway with them forever! If it is not the Truth of God, the more cleverly and eloquently it is preached the more damnable it is! We must have the Truth of God and nothing but the Truth of God and I charge the fathers in Christ all over England and America to see to this! Get to your watchtower and guard the flock, lest the sheep be destroyed while they are asleep!

Lastly, it is the duty of the fathers to prepare for the coming of the Lord. How beautifully it is put in the 28th verse Abide in Him; that when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. It is addressed to you all, for you are all little children, but it is specially incumbent upon those of you who are fathers. Awaken all your faculties! Watch for the coming of the Lord and keep your loins well girded! Jesus may come todaythis Lords Day may be the last Sabbath of this dispensation! Yet He may not come for 10,000 years for all we know!

Therefore weary not if you wait through a long night. Say not that He delays His coming, for He will return at the day appointed. Only let us hold fast that which we have received and stand waiting for the midnight cry. He will come! He will not tarrytherefore go forth to meet Him

*Hold the fort, for I am coming,   
Jesus signals still!   
Wave the answer back to Heaven,   
By Your Grace we will.*

Amen.   
Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #811 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

UNTO YOU, YOUNG MEN   
NO. 811

DELIVERED ON WEDNESDAY EVENING, MAY 13, 1868, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT WESTMINSTER CHAPEL.

Being the Annual Sermon to Young Men in Connection with the London Missionary Society.

I have written unto you, young men, because you are strong, and the Word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the Wicked One. 1 John 2:14.

JOHN abounded in charity, but with the utmost stretch of it he could not have written to all young men in this style, for, alas, all young men are not strong, nor does the Word of God abide in them all, nor have they all overcome the Wicked One. Strong in muscle they may be, like Samson, but like Samson they are weak in moral principle and before long are found in the lap of a sinful Delilah to their own destruction. What multitudes of young men there are in London who, instead of being spiritually strong, are weakness itselfbending like the willow in every gale, drifting down the stream like dead fishhaving neither the wish nor the ability to stem the torrent of temptation!

These weak young men who are entrapped in every snare, taken with every bait, are the objects of our earnest anxiety. But to them we can address no Epistles entreating their aid in holy work, or cheering them with sacred consolations. It is painful to reflect that in the vast mass of ripening manhood the Word of God does not abide. Tens of thousands of them do not even hear it! They look upon the Sabbath as a day of amusement and to religious exercises as a slavery. Thousands more attend to the Word only after the fashion of the old proverb, In at one ear and out at the other. They see their natural face in the glass of the Word, but they go their way and straightaway forget what manner of men they are.

They are young men of good judgment, too, in worldly things and yet so foolish as to esteem eternal things as mere trifles! They play with immortality and value the joys of an hour of sin at a higher price than unending bliss. Assuredly in this land there are multitudes of young men who have not overcome the Wicked One. No, they never thought of doing so for they are hand in glove with himthey are among his best allies. Shame that it should be so, that when Satan seeks recruits for his army, he should straightaway send his recruiting sergeant for these fine young fellows. They ought to serve a better master but they are all too willing to give up at once the strength of their youth and the force of their character to the service of a deceiverovercome the Wicked One, indeed!

In many young men he reigns supreme and they are led captive by him at his willwickedly insinuating all the while that they are the milksops and the fools who dare to do right and scorn to fling away their souls for the sake of temporary pleasures. Now, there may be in this place tonight some of these young men who are not strong, in whom the Word of God does not abide, and who have not overcome the Wicked One. Let conscience seek out such and when they are fully revealed and discovered to themselves, let them deliberately take stock of their position in the light of death and judgmentand may they, by Gods Grace, be made to pause awhile and then to decide that it will be a wiser course of action to repent before God, to believe in Jesus and to give themselves up to Him who can make them strong, and put the living seed of His Word into their hearts and enable them to overcome the Wicked One!

But I address myself to many, I trust, this evening, who are such as John described and who can give praise to distinguishing Grace that they are such, for they feel that had they been left to themselves they would have possessed no strength and would not have held the living Truth of God within their hearts. O for a shout of sacred joy from everyone who has been redeemed from his estate of bondage, brought up out of the wilderness and led into the Canaan of salvation! O for something better than shouts of praisenamely, holy lives, devoted actions, constant consecration from those who thus have been strengthened and quickened, and made victors over sin!

Two or three things we shall speak about tonight. First, our text describes the model young man. Secondly, we infer from it that such model men have within them qualifications for usefulness. John wrote to these young men because they were so-and-so, and so-and-so. I shall ask some here to serve God for the same reason, because those parts which make the model man are just such as will qualify them to serve God! And, in the third and last place, I shall try to urge the conscription upon many here, hoping that many will be written down as Gods warriors from this good hour.

I. First, then, we have before us THE PHOTOGRAPH OF THE MODEL YOUNG MAN. Nothing is said about his learninghe may be a model of everything that is spiritually good though his education may have been neglected. Nothing is said about his wealth, his position in society, or his personal appearancewithout anything to boast of in relation to any of these things he may yet be in the advance guard of Christs soldiers.

1. What is spoken in the text has to do only with spiritual qualifications, and it deals with three points. First, this young man is strong. The strength here meant is not that which is the result of his being in his youthnot a mere natural vigor, but a spiritual strengtha strength which comes from the Lord of Hosts. The strength here meant is a strength which is the result of the indwelling of the Spirit within the mana strength which brings out and consecrates the natural energy and makes the young man with his vigor to be vigorous in the right direction. I have written unto you, young men, because you are strong.

Now, the spiritually strong man may be described in this wayhe is one who is very decided for Christ. He is not half-hearted, halting between two opinions. There is nothing about him now, as there once might have been, of questioning or hesitation. He is for Christ. Whoever may be for the false, he is for the true. Whoever may side with the unjust, he is for the honest. Whoever may adopt crooked policies, he is for straightforward principles. He has made up his mind to it, that he is Christs, and therefore he does not tolerate within his soul anything like a question on that matter. He is decided, not only in his service for Christ, but in his opinions. He knows what he knows. He holds firmly what he holds. He is a strong man in the Truth of God.

You cannot pull him by the ear this way today and that way tomorrow. He does not depend upon his religious teacher for his religious thought he does his own thinking with his Bible before him. By the Grace of God he has grown strong by feeding on an heavenly diet. He is a man with his feet firmly planted on a rock. You may meet with weak professors almost everywhere and you may, by specious arguments, entice them to almost everything. But the young man who is strong will listen to what you have to say and weigh it in the scales of judgmentbut when once weighed and found wantinghe will reject it without hesitation. He at once rejects the wrong and cleaves to that which is right, for God has made him strong in integrity of heart.

While thus strong in decision, he is also strong in the matter of establishment. He once believed the Truths of God because he was so taught, but now he begins to search to the roots of them and to find out the arguments which support them. He has proven, if not all things, yet enough to hold fast that which is good. He has become established by some little experience, for, though a young man, experience may come to him and, indeed, it does come to some young men without the lapse of many years. The experience of a single night has taught a man more than the experience of years, and the experience of a single day, a bitter sorrow, or ardent labor, has been more valuable than the mere lapse of a score of ordinary years of prosperity and joy.

What little experience the man has had, and what little observation he has been able to make have joined together to confirm what he believes, and now, though he does not care to be always arguingin fact, he has passed beyond that stage. Though he does not care to be always testing and trying thingshe has advanced farther than thatyet he is prepared, when objections are advanced, to meet them in a spirit of meekness. And he is prepared to instruct the ignorant and those who are out of the way. He is strong in establishment, as well as in decision. Nor is this all, he has become strong, through the Divine Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in a vigor diffused throughout his whole spiritual constitution.

A very large proportion of the members of our Churches are, I trust, alive, but you have to try them by various experiments to know whether there is any life in them. They are like persons just fished up from the waterin order to discover whether they are alive you place a mirror before their mouth and watch for a little dampness upon ityou kneel down and try to detect the faint sound of breathing

*Tis a point I long to know,*

*Oft it causes anxious thought.*   
This is the miserable cry of many. There may be life in them, but it is life in a fainting fit or sound sleep!

But the vigorous Christian is far different from this! He does not ask whether he is alive or nothe knows he is by that which he is enabled to doby the strength of his life! He knows he is by that which he feels palpitating withinby the aspirations that glow within his soul! Yes, and even by the griefs and pains which make him bow his head. He knows that he lives! Others in our Churches do something for Christ and know that they are alive, but their whole spiritual system is relaxed. If they take up the hammer and work for God, they strike such feeble blows that the nails do not know it! If they take the spade in their hand to dig in the Masters vineyard, the weeds laugh them to scorn!

They are so exceedingly feeble, and generally so changeable, so fond of new work and of running after this and that, that they are of little or no real service to the Church. But the strong man in Christ Jesus is one who, if he fights, dashes to pieces the helmet of his foe. And if he wields the sling and the stone, he takes care that the stone shall be sent with force enough to go through Goliaths skull. He is a man who, if he prays, makes the gates of Heaven shake and the vaults of Heaven ring. He is a man who, when he pleads with sinners, pleads all overhands and face, and every muscle revealing his earnestness. He cannot drag on in a dead and alive life. He feels that if religion is worth anything it is worth everything, and he throws his whole being into itbody, soul, and spirit ardently and to the utmost pitch of energy being given up to the Masters cause.

Meanwhile he is not only strong in actual service, but he is strong in what he cannot do. Some of the most acceptable things which are recorded in Heaven are the things which are in our hearts, but which cannot come to our hands for lack of power. It is a great thing, Brothers, to always have some work before you which makes you stand on your tiptoes to reach itand to be

continually reaching up till at last you attain itand then to reach for something still beyond you! I like the thought of David sitting down before the Lord and meditating about that house of cedar which he was not permitted to build. The strong young man will have many schemes crossing his brain and while he is in his youth he will not be able to realize them. But they will flit before him so often that at last he will pluck up courage, and as he grows in years and possibilities, he will at last make real that which once was but a dream.

Do not be ashamed, my dear young Friends, you who have scarcely left your fathers roofdo not be ashamed, sometimes, to have a few right thorough daydreams! Do not be ashamed to indulge in thoughts of what you would do if you could! I say this provided that you are now doing all you can and this day consecrating to God all you have. Go to Him and ask Him to enable you to do more in your future lifeand plan and work for that future life! Have a strength of purpose, and it may be God will give you strength of opportunity! And if He does not, yet it shall be well that it was in your heart.

I may say, too, even in the presence of the honored fathers who surround the pulpit, we sadly need a generation of stronger men in our Churches. We will not decry the blessings which God has given us already. I do not believe that any age was better than this, all things consideredbut this is the time when we need our young men to be strong to all the intents of strength. Battles are coming in which they will need to stand with firm feet. There will be strifes in which they will not be of the slightest value if they cannot brave the conflict in the very front, or fight where fly showers of fiery arrows and hot bolts of Hell. Rest assured these are not silken days, nor times to make us dream that we have won the victory!

Our fathers, where are they? They are looking down upon us from their thrones, but what do they see? Do they see us wearing the crown and waving the palm branch? If so, they see us lunatics, indeed, for that were a madmans sport. But rather they see us sharpening our swords afresh, and buckling on our panoply anew to fight the same fight which they fought under other circumstances. The young blood of the Church, under God, is our great hope in the conflict for King Jesus! The young men of the Church must be, in the next 20 years, the very soul and vigor of it, and therefore, may God raise up among us a goodly seed, a race of heroes swifter than eagles for zeal, and stronger than lions for faith!

2. The text gives a further description of the model Christian young man in the words, And the Word of God abides in you. Her Majesty was on the south side of the water today, but she does not abide there. All the pomp and sunshine of her presence have vanished, and Westminster Bridge and Stangate are as they were before. The Word of God sometimes comes with right royal pomp into the minds of young menthey are affected by it for a time and they rejoice in itbut, alas, that blessed Word soon departs and they are none the better for that which they have heard.

Multitudes are still stony ground hearersthey receive the Word with joy but they have no rootand by-and-by they all wither away. The model young man in the text is not of this kind. The Word of God abides in him, by which I understand that he is one who understands the Word, for it must get into him before it can abide in him, and it can only enter by the door of the understanding. He understands the Word and then, by having an affection for the Word, he shuts that door and entertains the Truth of God.

Men who understand the Gospel are not quite so common as we sometimes suppose. I am not certain whether the giving up of the use of the Westminster Assemblys Catechism was a very wise thing. That grand old epitome of doctrine conveys to those who are taught it intelligently, a most solid basis upon which afterwards the Truth may be built. A considerable number of our Church members do not understand the Truth which they profess to have received. I believe this is more or less true of all denominations and that the pastors need to adopt measures, by classes or otherwise, which, under the Holy Spirits blessing, might build up our youth in our most holy faith.

The model young man is thus taught. He understands the Truth so far as it is a matter of intellect. He grapples it to himself as with hooks of steel by intense affection, and then he lives it out with all his soul. While he holds the Word of God as a doctrine, it holds him as a living indwelling force. The Word of God abides in him, that is, he is constantly feeling its effects. It abides in him, a well of water springing up unto everlasting lifea sacred fire consuming his sins and comforting his spirit. It abides in hima heavenly messenger revealing to him the freshness of celestial Truth, uplifting him from earthly desiresand preparing him for the mansions in the skies. The Gospel permeates his nature. It is inter-twisted into his very self. You would more readily destroy him than make him apostatize!

*The cords that bind around his heart   
Tortures and riches might tear off;   
But they could never, never part   
The hold he has on Christ his Lord.*

The Word of God has become Gods resident lieutenant, dwelling in his spirit, reigning like a sovereign over his entire soul. It abides within him as an incorruptible seed which death itself cannot kill. This is the blessed young man, indeed! God has blessed him, and who shall reverse the benediction?

3. Thirdly, the text adds, And you have overcome the Wicked One. This is said of the young man. He is but a young man in Grace. He has not reached the point of fatherhood in Christ, but for all that he has overcome the Wicked One! It strikes me that Christianity use to be spoken of as a more effective thing than it is now. When people pray they seldom speak positively about what religion has done for them. I have often heard a Brother say, The Lord has done great things for us: and we desire to be glad. Why, dear Brother, if the Lord has done great things for you, you are glad!

I have known that text, The love of Christ constrains us, preached from as if it said that the love of Christ ought to constrain us, which is very true, but it is not the truth of the text! It does constrain us! It does rule in the soul! We often speak of wrestling with Satan, struggling and striving to overcomebut the text speaks of a victory already achieved, and too, by young men! We dishonor God and make people think little of the Gospel when we put in those pretended humbling terms which are only used to let people see how exceedingly humble we are. We are so mock-modest as to refuse to acknowledge the power of Divine Grace in our own souls!

As a man I would speak diffidently about anything that I do myself, but of anything that God has done in me, or for me, or by me. I shall not speak with bated breath, but affirm it and rejoice in it that God may be glorified. There are men here who have overcome the devil and they have overcome him in many shapes. There are many pictures of the devil about but I am afraid there are none of them accurate, for he assumes different shapes in different places. He is a chameleonalways affected by the light in which he happens to bea Proteus, assuming every shape so that it may but help his purpose.

Some young men have overcome that blue devil which keeps men despairing, doubting, trembling, and fearing. You once were subject to him. You could not, you said, believe in Christ. You were afraid you never should be saved. You wrote bitter things against yourself. Ah, but you have cast him out, now, by a simple faith in Jesus! You know whom you have believed and you are persuaded that He is able to keep that which you have committed unto Him. You have overcome that devil and though he does try to come back, and when your business is a little troublesome, or the liver may not be acting properly, he endeavors to insinuate himself. Yet, by Gods Grace, he shall never fasten on the old chains again!

Then there is that dust-eating devil of whom we can never speak too badlythe yellow devil of the mammon of unrighteousnessthe love of gold and silver. He is the dreaded god of London, rolling over this city as if it were all his own! I think I see him as a dragon on the top of the Church steeple, chuckling at the inscription over the Royal ExchangeThe earth is the Lords, and the fullness thereof, and laughing because he knows better, for he reckons it all belongs to him! Even as of old he said to Christ, All these things will I give You, if You will fall down and worship me.

What tricks are done nowadays in business for the love of gold! In fact, we know, some of us who are not business men, but who, nevertheless, are not blind, that dishonest marks and dishonest measures have become so systematic that their effect is lost and the thing itself is almost as honest as if it were honest. It is the fact that men have become so accustomed to say that twice three make seven that their neighbors all say, Exactly so, and we will pay you for the goods after the same reckoning!

But the genuine Christian, the man who is strong and has the Word of God abiding in him, scorns all this. He hears others say, We must live, but he replies, Yes, but we must die. He determines that he will not throw away his soul in order to grasp wealth, and that if it is not possible to become a merchant prince without the violation of the code of honor and of Christs Law, then he will be content to be poor. O young Man, if you have come to this you have overcome the Wicked One, indeed! I am afraid there are some here with gray heads who have hardly ventured on the fight. Alas, for them!

Another form of the Wicked One we must speak of but softly, but oh, how hard to be overcome by the young man. I mean Madam Wanton, that fair but foulthat smiling but murderous fiend of Hell by whom so many are deluded! Solomon spoke, of the strange woman, but the strong Christian in whom the Word of God abides passes by her door and shuts his ear to her siren song. He flees youthful lusts which war against the soul! He reserves both his body and his soul for his Lord who has redeemed him by His precious blood.

Young Man, if you are strong and have overcome the Wicked One, you have overcome, I trust, that Lucifer of pride, and it is your endeavor to walk humbly with your God! You have given up all idea of merit. You cannot boast nor exalt yourself, but you bow humbly at the foot of the Cross, adoring Him who has saved you from the wrath to come. You have given up, also, I trust, young Man, all subjection to the great red dragon of fashion who draws with his tail even the very stars of Heaven! There are some who would think it far worse to be considered unfashionable than to be thought unchristian. To be unchristian would be but such a common accusation that they might submit to itbut to be unfashionable would be horrible, indeed!

Young men in London get to be affected by this. If the young men in the house are going to such-and-such an entertainmentthey all read a certain class of booksif they are dissipated and skeptical, then the temptation is to chime in with them! Only the man who is strong, and has the Word of God abiding in him will overcome the Wicked One by doing the right, aloneFaithful among the faithless found.

II. Thus I have described a model Christian young man. Let us further observe that THESE THINGS WHICH CONSTITUTE WHAT HE IS ARE HIS QUALIFICATIONS FOR USEFULNESS. Of course certain talents are necessary for certain positions, but it is a rule without exception that every child of God may be useful in the Divine family. God has not one single servant for whom He has not appointed a service.

Now, observe, my Friends, to whom I am now addressing myself you are strong! That granted, then this very strength which you now have will enable you to do mission work for God, and the Graces which have been worked in you, through Christ Jesusfaith, love, courage, patienceare your fitness for sacred labor. If you are to be a minister you may need to acquire a measure of learning. If you are to be a missionary you will need a peculiar training, but you can get these! God will give you strength to obtain them and the spiritual strength will go very far to help you. Meanwhile, for other work all the strength you require is that which you already possess.

There are persons in the world who will not let us speak a word to the unconverted because, they say, and say very truly, that unconverted men are dead in sin and therefore we are not to tell them to live because they have no power to live. They forget that we have the power in the quickening Word and Spirit of God, and that as we speak the Word for God, power goes with it! Now, there is among us too much of this forgetfulness of the fact that we actually have power from on high. In prayer we are always praying for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which is very properbut remember, we have the Holy Spiritthe Spirit is here!

He is not always manifest but He is given to His Church to abide in every one of His people. And if we would but believe in His Presence we should feel it more. They who preach most successfully will tell you that one cause of it is that they expect to be successful. They do not preach hoping that perhaps one or two may be saved, but knowing that they will be, because the Word of God is the power of God unto salvation! They believe in the Holy Spirit and they who do so see the Holy Spirit. But they who only waveringly hope in the Holy Spirit discern Him notaccording to their faith so is it unto them.

Believe, my Brother, that you have within you, as a Believer, the power which is necessary for reforming that house of business of yours which is now so godless, into a House of Prayer! Believe it, and begin to work like those who do believe it! Believe that those who pass you in the morning, my young artisan Friend, may be and shall be converted by you and by God, if you speak to them out of your heart. Go up to them as one who knows that God is working with him! They will be awed by your manner and if they reject your message they will feel it go hard with their consciences. I write unto you, young men, for you are strong.

We beg you to use that strength in winning souls for Christ! Remember that this very strength which brings a blessing to yourself will benefit another. That very faith which brought you to Christ is all you need to bring others to Christ! He, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Your sins are forgiven you. You shall find that in which you are weak spiritually within, you will be powerless spiritually without for Christian serviceand in as far as you are strong within for your personal communion with the Lord Jesus, to that extent shall you be strong without for the work of your Lord.

Arise, you strong young men! Arise, you who saw the face of Christ this morning in your closets! Arise, you who have waited upon Him in prayer during the day! Arise, you that delight in His Wordarise, and shake yourselves from the dust! Be active in the might which God has given you to serve Him while yet you may. As the angel said to Gideon, so say I to youyoung Man, The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor. And yet, again, Go in this your strength.

If the young man enquires for tools and weapons with which to serve his Master, we refer him to the next point in the text, The Word of God abides in you. Now, my dear Brother, if you desire to teach others, you have not to ask what the lesson shall be for it abides in you! Do you need a text that will impress the careless? What impressed you? You cannot have a better! You desire to speak a word in season from the Word of God which shall be likely to comfort the disconsolate? What has comforted your own soul? You cannot have a better guide! You have within your own experience a tutor which cannot fail you, and you have also an encouragement that cannot be taken from you. The Word of God within you will well up like a spring and Truth and Grace will pour forth from you in rivers!

I have heard our Lord likened to a man carrying a water pot, and as He carried it upon His shoulder the water fell dropping, dropping, dropping so that everyone could track the water-bearer. So should all His people be, carrying such a fullness of Divine Grace that everyone should know where they have been by that which they have left behind! He who has lain in the beds of spices will perfume the air through which he walks. One who, like Asher, has dipped his foot in oil, will leave his footprints behind him. When the living and incorruptible seed remains within, the Divine instincts of the new nature will guide you to the wisest methods of activity. You will do the right thing under the inward impulse rather than the written Law and your personal salvation will be your prime qualification for seeking out others of your Masters flock.

Once again, you have overcome the Wicked One. The man who has once given Satan a slap in the face need not be afraid of men. If you have often stood foot to foot with a violent temptation, and, after wrestling, have overcome it, you can laugh to scorn all the puny adversaries who assail you. It will breed manliness within the young man and make him a truly muscular Christian to have been practiced in inward conflicts. You have overcome Satan by the power of Divine Gracewhy, then, there is hope that in the Sunday school class which you have to teachin the hearts of those boys and girls, Satan may again be conquered!

There is hope for that drunken man you have been talking with lately why should not he overcome the Wicked One? You were once weak enough, but Divine Grace has made you strongwhat Grace has done for you it can do for another! After I was saved myself said one, I never despaired of any other. So should the fact that you have been enabled to achieve a conquest in a very terrible strife comfort you with regard to all other cases! Go into the back slumsthey are not far off. Penetrate the dark lanes and alleys. You have overcome the Wicked One! You cannot meet with anything worse than he whom you have already vanquished. Let the majesty of Grace in your souls be to you a solace and a stimulus and never say anything is too hard for you to do who have already met Apollyon face to face and put him to the rout!

III. The wording of the text suggested to me TO FORCE THE CONSCRIPTION. I have written unto you, young men. In the French wars, certain young men, unhappily, found their names written down in the conscription and were marched to the wars. Now, in a war from which none of us desire to escape, I hope there are young men here tonight whose names are written downheavenly conscriptswho are summoned tonight, more fully than ever before in their lives, to go forth to the battle of the Lord of Hosts!

I invite every young man here who is already converted to God to dedicate himself to the Lord Jesus Christ tonight. It is not a matter that I can talk you into, nor, indeed, would I try it, but I would ask you to sit still a moment and consider with yourselves thisI am a believer in Christ. I have been lately to the sacramental table. I profess to have been chosen of God, to have been redeemed with precious blood, to have been separated from the rest of mankind to be destined for an immortality most brilliant. Am I living as becomes a redeemed one?

Passing your hand over your brow thoughtfully, you will come to the conclusion, probably, I am not. I am serving God, I trust, in a way, but not with all my heart, and soul, and strength as I should. How about my time? Do I devote as much of that as I can to sacred work? How about my talent? Does that display itself most in the Literary Association or in the Sunday school? Are my oratorical abilities most developed in the debating room or in preaching at the street corner? Am I giving to Christ the prime and choice, and vigor of my life? If I am not, I ought to do so. I ought, I feel I ought to be altogether Christs. Not that I should leave my business, but I must make my business Christs business, and so conduct it, and so to distribute of its results as to prove that I am Christs steward, working in the world for Him, and not for self.

Dear Friends, if this night you shall not so much vow as pray that from this time there shall not be a drop of blood in your body, nor a hair on your head, nor a penny in your purse, nor a word on your tongue, nor a thought in your heart but what shall be altogether the Lords, I shall be glad enough. It will be well if you take a step further as conscripts. You holy-work folkas they used to call those who dwelt around the cathedral at Durham and were exempt from all service to the baron because they served the ChurchI want you now to think of some particular walk and department in which as young men and young women you can devote yourselves wholly to Christ.

Generalities in religion are always to be avoided, more especially generalities in service. If a man waits upon you for a situation, and you say to him, What are you? if he replies, I am a painter, or a carpenter, you can find him work, perhaps, but if he says, Oh, I can do anything, you understand that he can do nothing! So it is with a sort of spiritual jobber who professes to be able to do anything in the Church but who really does nothing. I want my conscript Brethren tonight to consider what they are going to do, and I beg them to consider it with such deliberation that when once they have come to a conclusion, they will not need to change it, for changes involve losses.

What can you do? What is your calling? Ragged schools? Sunday schools? Street preaching? Tract distribution? Here is a choice for you which do you select? Waste no time, but say, This is my calling, and by Gods Grace I will give myself up to it, meaning to do it as well as any man ever did do itif possible, bettermeaning if I take to the Ragged school, to be a thoroughly good teacher of those little Arabs. If I take to the Sunday school, intending to make myself as efficient in the class as ever teacher could be.

It shall be no small blessing to the Churches whom you represent if such a resolve is made. And if the conscripts are found tonight of such a sort, I would enquire next, whether there may not be young men here who can give themselves up to the Christian ministry, which is a step farther. There are many men who ought to be employed in the Christian ministry who stand back. You need not expect that you will gain earthly wealth by it. If you have any notion of that sort, I pray you keep to your breaking of stonesthat will pay you better. If you have any idea that you will find the ministry an easy life, I entreat you to try the treadmillfor that would be an amusement compared with the life of the genuine Christian minister in London, at least.

But if you feel an intense earnestness to win souls, and if you have succeeded in speaking on other subjects and can get some attention, think whether you cannot devote yourself to the work. Ah, young man, if I cast an ambitious thought into your mind I mean it only for my Masters glory! If the Lord should say tonight, Separate me Saul and Barnabas to this work. If He should call out some fine noble young fellow who might have given himself up, perhaps, to the pursuits of commerce, but who now will dedicate himself to the service of the Christian ministry, it would be well! Take care you keep not back whom God would have!

Then, further, I have to ask may there not be here some young man who will become a conscript for missionary service abroad? I write unto you, young men, because you are strong, and the Word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the Wicked One. You are the men we need. Dr. Mullens and Mr. Robinson will be glad to hear of you. I might, tonight, read a sort of proclamation such as I see sometimes issued by Her MajestyWanted, young men. We give no description about the inches, either in girth or the height, but we do give this descriptionWanted, young men who are strong and in whom the Word of God abides, and who have overcome the Wicked One.

You who are weak had better stop at home in the Christian nursery a little while. You in whom the Word of God does not as yet abide had need to stay till you are taught what are the elements of the faith. You who have not overcome the Wicked One had better flesh your maiden swords in home fields of conflict. You are not the men who are wanted. But you who are strong enough to do and to dare for Jesusyou who are spiritually-minded enough to have overcome the monster of evil within yourselvesyou are the men to fight Satan abroad in his strongholds of heathendom, and Popery, and Mohammedanism! You, the choice men of the Churchyou are the men whom the Missionary Society requires! Think of it tonight before you go to sleep, and if the Lord inclines you, come forward and say, Here am I. Send me.

Once again. If this is impossible, and I suppose it may be to the most of us, then may we not get up a conscription tonight of young men who will resolve to help at home those who have the courage to go abroad? You have nobly done, as young men, in endeavoring to raise a large sum for the work. You are an example to every Christian denomination in that respect. But do not let the project fall short of its full completion! And when it is completed take care that you do it again, for it is good to be zealous always in a good thing!

We should forget the things that are behind and press forward to that which is before. It will be a great thing when all Christian merchants do what some are doing, namely, give of their substance to the cause of Christ in due proportion. It is a blessed thing for a young man to begin business with the rule that he will give the Lord at least his tenth. That habit of weekly storing for Christ and then giving to Christ out of his own bag instead of giving from your own purse is a most blessed one! Cultivate it, you young tradesmen who have just set up in business for yourselves and you good wives help your husbands to do it.

You young men who are clerks and have regular incomes, make that a regular part of your weekly business and let some share of the consecrated spoil go to the Lords foreign field. At the same time, never let your subscriptions to this or that act as an exoneration from personal service give yourselves to Christyour whole selves in the highest state of vigor! Your whole selves constantly, intelligently, without admixture of sinister motives. May God send His blessing, for Jesus sake. Amen.

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PREPARATION FOR THE COMING OF THE LORD   
NO. 2105

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 22, 1889, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

And now, little children, abide in Him. That, when He shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. 1 John 2:28.

OUR first anxious desire is that our hearers would come to Christ. We lay ourselves out to lift Him up, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness and to bid men look to Him and live. There is no salvation except by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He said, Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God and there is none else.

When men have looked to Jesus, our next anxiety is that they may be in Christ, the City of Refuge. We long to speak of them as men in Christ Jesus. My beloved Hearers, you must be in living, loving, lasting union with the Son of God, or else you are not in a state of salvation. That which begins with coming to Christ, as the engrafted branch is bound to the vine, continues in your growing into Him and receiving of His life. You must be in Christ as the stone is in the building, as the member is in the body.

When we have good hope that our hearers have come to Christ and are in Christ, a further anxiety springs up in our hearts that they may abide in Christ. Our longing is that, despite temptations to go away from Him, they may always remain at His feet. That, notwithstanding the evil of their nature, they may never betray their Master but may faithfully hold to Him. We would have them mindful of that preceptAs you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in Him. Oh, that they may be rooted in Him, and built up in Himand may always be in union with Him! Then shall we present them to our Lord in the day of His appearing with exceedingly great joy.

To this third anxiety of the minister of Christ I would give my mind this morning. John says, Little children, abide in Him. How sweetly those words must have flowed from the lips and the pen of such a venerable saint! Methinks he is, in this, the echo of the Lord Jesus. For in the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel of John, the Lord Jesus said, Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can you, except you abide in Me. If you abide in Me and My Words abide in you, you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you.

That word, abide, was a very favorite one with the Lord Jesus and it became equally dear to that disciple whom Jesus loved. In our Authorized Version, the translators have interpreted it sometimes, remain, and sometimes, continue. But it is not very wise of them to have so changed the rendering. It is one of the virtues of the Revised Version that it generally translates the same Greek word by the same English word. This may

not be absolutely requisite, for a little variety may be tolerated. But it is eminently instructive, since it allows us to see in our own mother tongue where the Holy Spirit used the same word. And if the translation is correct in one case, we may naturally conclude it will not be incorrect in another. Abide, is one of Johns special words.

May the Lord help us to consider these blessed words! Better still, may He write them on our hearts and may we fulfill their teaching! First, notice to what he urges themabide in Him. Secondly, under what character he addresses themlittle children. And thirdly, by what motive he exhorts themthat, when He shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

I. First, then, OBSERVE TO WHAT HE URGES THEMAbide in Him. By this he meant one thing. But that thing is so comprehensive that we may better understand it by viewing it from many sides.

He meant fidelity to the Truth taught by our Lord. We are sure he meant this, because, a little previously, in the twenty-fourth verse, he had said, If that which you have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, you also shall continue in the Son and in the Father. Beloved, you have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ unto the salvation of your souls. You have trusted in Him as the Son of God, the appointed Mediator and the effectual Sacrifice for your sin.

Your hope has come from a belief in Christ as God has borne witness to Him. Abide in the Truth which you received from the beginningfor in your earliest days it worked salvation in you. The foundation of your faith is not a changeable doctrineyou rest on a sure word of testimony. Truth is, in its very nature, fixed and unalterable. You know more about it than you did. But the thing itself is still the same and must be the same. Take care that you abide in it. You will find it difficult to do so, for there is an element of changeableness about yourselfthis you must overcome by Divine Grace.

You will find many elements of seduction in the outside world. There are men whose business it is to shake the faith of others, and thereby gain a reputation for cleverness and depth of thought. Some seem to think it an ambition worthy of a Christian to be always questioning, or, as the Apostle puts it, to be ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth. To throw doubt into minds which, by a gracious certainty, have been made blessed, is their chosen lifework. Therefore, you will be often led to try your foundation, and at times you will tremble as you cling to it.

Hearken, then, to this Word from the mouth of the Holy SpiritAbide in Him. Stay where you were as to the Truth which you believe. That which has justified you, will sanctify you. That which has, in a measure, sanctified you, will yet perfect you. Make no change as to the eternal verities upon which you ground your hope. As a stone, you are built on the foundationabide there. As a branch, you have been grafted into the stemabide there. As a member, you are in the bodyabide there. It is all over with you if you do not. Abide in that holy mold of doctrine into which you were at first delivered.

Let no man deceive you with vain words, though there are many abroad in these days who would deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. Abide in Jesus, by letting His Words abide in you. Believe what you have found to be the means of your quickening. Believe it with a greater intensity and a greater practicality. Cast not away your confidence, which has great recompense of reward.

Next, John means abide in Him as to the uniformity of your trust. When you first enjoyed a hope, you rested upon Christ alone. I think I heard the first infant prattle of your faith when it said

*Im a poor sinner and nothing at all,*

*But Jesus Christ is my All in All.*   
At first you had no experience upon which you could rely, you had no inward Divine Graces upon which you could dependyou rested wholly upon Christ and His finished work. You rested in no degree upon the works of the Law, nor upon your own feelings, nor upon your own knowledge, nor upon your own resolves. Christ was all.

Do you not remember how you used to tell others that the Gospel precept was, Only believe? You cried to them, Trust in Jesus! Get out of yourselves! Find all your wants provided for in Him. Now, Beloved, you have experiencethank God for it. Now you have the Graces of the Spiritthank God for them. Now you know the things of God by the teaching of the Holy Spiritbe grateful for that knowledge. But do not now fly in the face of your Savior by putting your experience, or your Graces, or your knowledge, where He, and He alone, must be.

Depend today as simply as you depended then. If you have some idea that you are hastening towards perfection, take care that you do not indulge a vain conceit of yourself. But even if it is true, still do not mix your perfection with His perfection, nor your advance in Divine Grace with the foundation which He has laid for you in His blood and righteousness. Abide in Him. He is that good ship into which you have entered that He may bear you safely to the desired haven. Abide in the vesselneither venture to walk on the water, like Peternor think to swim by your own strength. Abide in Him, and you shall weather every storm.

Only as you keep to your first simple confidence in the perfect work of the Lord Jesus can you have peace and salvation. As it is written, You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You. Because he trusts in You.

Moreover, abide in the Lord Jesus Christ in making Him the constant object of your life. As you live by Christ, so live for Christ. Ever since you trusted in Christ as dying for you, you have felt that if He died for you, then you died in Himthat from now on your life might be consecrated to Him. You are not your own but you are Christs and Christs only. The first object of your being is to honor and serve Him who loved you and gave Himself for you. You have not followed after wealth, or honor, or selfpleasing, but you have followed Jesustake heed that you abide in Him by continuing to serve Him.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world passes away and the

lust thereof: but he that does the will of God abides forever.

You may wisely continue where you are, for you have chosen the right pursuit and you have entered upon the right road. That crown which glitters in your eyes at the end of the race is worthy of all your running. You could not have a nobler motive than the constraining love of Christ. To live for Christ is the highest style of livingcontinue in it more and more. If the Lord changes your circumstances, still live for Christ. If you go up, take Christ up with youif you go down, Christ will go down with you. If you are in health, live for Christ earnestly. If you are bound to a sick bed, live for Christ patiently. Go about your business and sing for Jesus. Or if He bids you stay at home and cough away your life, then cough for Jesus. But let everything be for Him. For you, Excelsior means higher consecration, more heavenly living.

Surely, we should also understand by, Abide in Him, that we are to persevere in our obedience to our Lord. The next verse is, If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone that does righteousness is born of Him. What your Lord bids you, continue to do. Call no man Master, but in all things, submit your thoughts, your words, and your acts to the rule of the Lord Jesus. Obey Him by whose obedience you are justified. Be precise and prompt in your execution of His commands. If others reckon you morbidly conscientious, heed not their opinion but, Abide in Him.

The rule of the Master is always binding on all His disciples and they depart from Him in heart when they err from His rule. Reverence for the precept is as much included in our homage of Christ as credence of the doctrine. If you have been upright in your dealings, be upright. Be accurate to the penny in every payment. If you have been loving and generous, continue to be loving and generous. For your Lords Law is love. If you have closely imitated the Lord Jesus, go on to copy Him still more minutely. Seek no new modelpray the Holy Spirit to work you to the same thing. To you, as a soldier, your Captains word is Law

*Yours not to reason why,   
Yours but to dare and die.*

Abide in Him. I know you might be rich by doing that un-Christly actscorn to win wealth in such a way. I know you may involve yourself in persecution if you follow your Lord closelyaccept such persecution gladly and rejoice in it, for His names sake. I know that a great many would say that for charitys sake you had better make compromises and keep in union with evil doctrine and worldly practice. But you know better. Be it yours to follow the Lamb wherever He goes. For this is what His beloved Apostle means when he says, Abide in Him.

But I have not completed the full description yet. I fear I am not able to do so, by reason of my shallow knowledge and forgetfulness. Continue in spiritual union with your Lord. All the life you have is life derived from Himseek no other. You are not a Christian except as Jesus is the Christ of God to you. You are not alive unto God, except as you are one with the risen Lord. You are not saved, except as He is your Savior. Nor righteous, except as He is your Righteousness. You have not a single pulse of heavenly desire, nor a breath of Divine life in you but what was first given you from Him and is daily given to you by Him.

Abide in this vital union. Do not try to lead an independent life. Abide in Him, in complete dependence from day to day upon the life which is treasured up in Him on your behalf. Let your life abide in Him in the sense of being directed by Him. The head directs all the members. The order which lifts my hand, or spreads my palm, or closes my fist, or lowers my arm, comes from the brain, which is the headquarters of the soul. Abide in your Lord by implicitly acknowledging His headship. Let every regulation of your life come from Him who is the Head, and let it be obeyed as naturally as the desires of the mind coming from the brain are obeyed by every part of the body.

There is no war between the hand and the foot, for they abide in the head and so are ruled without force and guided without violence. If the leg were to set up an independent authority over itself, instead of obeying the head, what a strange walking we should see! Have you ever met with afflicted people in whom the nerves have lost vigor and the muscles seem to jerk at random and throw out a leg or an arm without reason? Such movements are painful to see and we know that such a man is diseased. Do not desire to be without Law to Christ. Let that mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesusin that respect, abide in Him.

Abide in Him as the element of your life. Let Him encompass you as the air surrounds you on all sides. As a fish, whether it is the tiniest sprat or the largest whale, abides in the seaso do you abide in Christ. The fish does not seek the sky or the shore, it could not live out of the element of water. And even so, I beseech you, do not seek to live in the world and in its sins. As a Christian, you cannot live thereChrist is your life. There is room enough for you in the Lord Jesus Christ, for He is the infinite God. Go not out of Him for anything. Seek not pleasure outside of Christ, nor treasure outside of Christ. For such pleasure or treasure would be ruinous. Have neither want, nor will, nor wish, beyond your Lord. Let Him draw a line around you and abide within that circle.

Abide in Him in the sense of being at home in Him. What a world of meaning I intend by those words, being at home in Christ! And yet this is the sense of the words, Abide in Him. I was speaking yesterday to a friend who had bought a pleasant house, with a large garden. And he said to me, I now feel as if I have a home. I have lived in London for years and I have changed from one house to another with as little regret as a man feels in changing an omnibus. But I have always longed for the home feeling which hung about my fathers house in the country.

Why, there we loved the cozy rooms and the look-outs from the little windows and the corner cupboards in the kitchen. As for the garden and the field, they yielded us constant delight, for there was that bush in the garden where the robin had built and the tree with the blackbirds nest. We knew where the pike lay in the pool and where the tortoise had buried itself for the winter and where the first primroses would be found in the spring. There is a vast difference between a house and a home.

That is what John means with regard to Christwe are not merely to call on Him but to abide in Him. Do not go to Jesus one day, and to the world another daydo not be a lodger with Him, but abide in Him. My

friend spoke of changing from one omnibus to another, and I fear that some change from Christ to the world when the day changes from Sunday to Monday. But it should not be so. Say with Moses, Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Your Cross is the tree of the family of lovewithin the thorn-hedge of Your suffering love our whole estate is shut in. Your name is posted on our home. We are not to You as tenants with a lease but we have a freehold in You. We can truly say and sing

*Here would I make a settled rest   
While others go and come   
No more a stranger or a guest,   
But like a child at home.*

Lord Jesus, I am at home nowhere but in You. In You I abide. Wherever else I lodge, I have in due time to shift my quarters. Whatever else I have, I lose it, or leave it. But You are the same and You change not. What a comfort to have our Lord Himself to be our chosen dwelling place in time and in eternity!

Now I think I have come nearer to the full sense of my text! Abide in Him, means hold fast to Him, live in Him, let all your noblest powers be drawn forth in connection with Him. As a man at home is all there, feel at ease in fellowship with Him. Say, Return unto your rest, O my Soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.

Why does the Apostle urge us to abide in Christ? Is there any likelihood of our going away? Yes. For in this very chapter he mentions apostates, who from disciples had degenerated into antichrists. He says of them, They went out from us but they were not of us. For if they had been of us they would, no doubt, have continued with us. Abide in Him, then, and do not turn aside unto crooked ways, as many professors have done. The Savior once said to His Apostles, Will you, also, go away? And they answered Him with that other question, Lord, to whom shall we go?

I hope your heart is so conscious that He has the words of eternal life that you could not dream of going elsewhere. But surely it is implied in these warnings that SAINTS leave their Lord and perish? I answer, No. Carefully observe the provision which is made against that fatalitya provision to enable us to carry out the precept of the text.

Will you open your Testaments and just look at the verse which immediately precedes my text. What do you see? You shall abide in Him. And now, little children, abide in Him. There is a promise made to those who are in Christ that they shall abide in Him. But that promise does not render the precept unnecessary. For the Lord deals with us as with reasonable beings, not as with sticks and stones. And He secures the fulfillment of His own promise that we shall abide in Him, by impressing upon our hearts His sacred precept, whereby He bids us abide in Him.

The force He uses to effect His purpose is instruction, heart-winning and persuading. We abide in Him, not by a physical Law, as a mass of iron abides on the earth. But by a mental and spiritual Law, by which the greatness of Divine love and goodness holds us fast to the Lord Jesus. You have the guarantee that you shall abide in Christ in the Covenant engagement, I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me. What a blessed promise that is!   
You are to take care that you abide in Christ as much as if all depended upon yourself. And yet you can look to the promise of the Covenant and see that the real reason for your abiding in Christ lies in the operation of His unchanging love and Divine Grace. Moreover, Brethren, if you are in Christ Jesus, you have the Holy Spirit given you to enable you to abide in Him. Read the twenty-seventh verseBut the anointing which you have received of Him abides in you and you need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you of all things and is truth and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, you shall abide in Him.

The Holy Spirit brings the Truth of God home to your heart with savor and unction, endearing it to your inmost soul. The Truth of God has so saturated you through the anointing, that you cannot give it up. Has not your Lord said, The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life? Thus, you see that what is commanded in one Scripture is promised and provided for in another. To His people, Gods commands are enablings. As He bids you abide in Him, so by that very bidding He causes you to abide in Him to His praise and glory.

II. Secondly, notice UNDER WHAT CHARACTER JOHN ADDRESSES THESE BELIEVERS. He says, And now, little children. This indicates the Apostles love to them. John lived to a great age. The tradition is that they used to carry him into the assembly, and when he could do nothing else, he would lift his hand, and simply say, Little children, love one another. Here, to show his tender concern for those to whom he wrote, he called them, little children. He could not wish them a greater blessing out of the depth of his hearts affection, than that they should faithfully abide in Christ.

Next, by this he suggests their near and dear relation to their Father in Heaven. You are the children of God. But as yet you are little ones, therefore do not leave your Fathers house, nor run away from your elder Brothers love. Because you are little children, you are not of traveling years, therefore stay at home and abide in your Lord. Does he not hint at their feebleness? Even if you were grown and strong, you would not be wise to gather all together and wander away into the far country. But as you are so young, so dependent, so feeble, it is essential that you abide in Him. Shall a babe forsake its mother? What can you do apart from God? Is He not your life, your All?

Does not the Apostle also gently hint at their fickleness? You are very changeable, like little babes. You are apt to be hot and cold in half an hour. You are this and that and fifty other things, in the course of one revolving moon. But, little children as you are, be faithful to one point abide in your Savior. Change not towards your Redeemer. Stretch out your hands and clasp Him and cry

*My Jesus, I love You, I know You are mine, For You all the follies of sin I resign.*   
Surrender yourself to Him by an Everlasting Covenant never to be cancelled. Be His forever and ever.

Did not this remind them of their daily dependence upon the Lords care, as little children depend on their parents? Why, Beloved, the Lord has to nurse you. He feeds you with the unadulterated milk of the Word. He comforts you as a mother does her child. He carries you in His bosom,

He bears you all your days. Your new life is as yet weak and struggling do not carry it into the cold atmosphere of distance from Jesus. Little children, since you derive all from Jesus, abide in Him. To go elsewhere will be to wander into a howling wilderness.

The world is emptyonly Christ has fullness. Away from Jesus you will be as a child deserted by its mother, left to pine and starve and die. Or as a little lamb on the hillside without a shepherd, tracked by the wolf, whose teeth will soon extract your hearts blood. Abide, O Child, with your mother! Abide, O Lamb, with your shepherd! We may all come under Johns description at this time. The beloved John speaks unto us as unto little children, for we are none of us much more. We are not such wonderfully knowing people as certain of our neighborswe are not such learned scientists and acute critics as they areneither have we their marvelous moral consciousness, which is superior to inspiration itself.

Therefore we are bound by our very feebleness to venture less than they do. Let the men of the world choose what paths they willwe feel bound to abide in Christ because we know no other place of safety. They may push off into the sea of speculation. Our smaller boats must hug the shore of certainty. To us, however, it is no small comfort that the Lord has revealed to babes the things which are hidden from the wise and prudent. Those who become as little children enter into the kingdom of Heaven.

Cling to the Lord Jesus in your feebleness, in your fickleness, in your nothingness. And abidingly take Him to be everything to you. The conies are but a feeble sort, yet they make their houses in the rocks. Be you like they are. Abide in the rifts of the Rock of Ages and let nothing tempt you to quit your stronghold. You are no lion, able to fight your foes and deliver yourself by main strength. You are only a little cony and you will be wise to hide rather than fight. Little children, abide in Him.

III. I now come to my last point, which is most important, for it finds steam to drive the engine. Thirdly, we shall consider BY WHAT MOTIVE JOHN EXHORTS US TO THIS PLEASANT AND NECESSARY DUTY OF ABIDING IN CHRIST.

Kindly look at the text, for there is in it a little word to be noticed. The Apostle exhorts us by a motive in which he takes his share. Let me read itNow, little children, abide in Him. That, when He shall appear, you may have confidence. No, no. Look at that little wordit runs thus, that WE may have confidence. The beloved John needed to have confidence at the appearing of the Lord and confidence fetched from the same source as that to which he directed his little children. They must abide in Christ, that they might have confidenceand the dearest of the Apostles must practice the same abiding. How wisely and yet how sweetly he puts himself upon our level in this matter!

Notice, further, that the motive is one drawn from Jesus. John does not drive Believers with the lash of the Lawhe draws them with the cords of love. I never like to see Gods children whipped with rods gathered from the thorny sides of Sinai. We have not come to Mount Sinai but to Mount Zion. When a man tries to pommel me to my duty by the Law, I kick at the goad like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. And rightly so, For you are not under the Law but under grace. The motive which sways a free-born heir of Heaven is fetched from Divine Grace and not from Law. It is from Jesus, not from Moses. Christ is our example and our motive, blessed be His name!

The motive is drawn from our Lords expected advent. Notice how John puts it. He uses two words for the same thingWhen He shall appear, and, at His coming. The second advent may be viewed in two lights. First, as the appearing of One who is here already but is hidden. And next, as the coming of One who is absent. In the first sense, we know that our Lord Jesus Christ abides in His Churchaccording to His words, Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Yet, though spiritually present, He is unseen. Our Lord will, all of a sudden, be manifested, as the Revised Version has it. The spiritual and secret Presence of Christ will become a visible and manifest Presence in the day of His appearing.

The Apostle also uses the term, at His coming, or, His Presence. This is the same thing from another point of view. In a certain evident sense our Lord is absentHe is not here, for He is risen. He has gone His way unto the Father. In that respect He will come a second time, without a sin-offering, unto salvation. He who has gone from us will so come in like manner as He was seen to go up into Heaven. There is, then, a difference of aspect between the second advent when it is described as, His appearing, and His coming. John pleads the glorious manifestation of our Lord under both of these views as a reason for abiding in Him.

As to our Lords appearing, he would have us abide in Christ, that we may have confidence when He appears. Confidence at His appearing is the high reward of constant abiding in Christ. The Apostle keeps most prominent the appearing as an argument. A thousand things are to happen at our Lords appearing. But John does not mention one of them. He does not hold it up as a thing to be desired that we may have confidence amid the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds, when the stars shall fall like autumn leaves, when the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood.

He does not mention that the graves shall be opened and the dead shall rise, or when the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heatthe earth also, and the works that are thereinshall be burned up. Those will be direful times, days of terror and dismay. But it is not of these that he speaks particularly. For he regards all these events as swallowed up in the one great fact of the glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

His desire is that we may have confidence if He appears all of a sudden. What does he mean by having confidence when He shall appear? Why, thisthat if you abide in Him when you do not see Him, you will be very bold should He suddenly reveal Himself. Before He appears, you have dwelt in Him and He has dwelt in you. What fear could His appearing cause you? Faith has so realized Him, that if suddenly He were to appear to the senses, it would be no surprise to you.

And, assuredly, it would cause you joy, rather than dismay. You would feel that you at last enjoyed what you had long expected, and saw somewhat more closely a Friend with whom you had long been familiar. I

trust, Beloved, that some of us live in such a style that if, all of a sudden, our Lord were to appear, it would cause no alarm to us. We have believed Him to be present, though unseen, and it will not affect our conduct when He steps from behind the curtain and stands in the open light. O Lord Jesus, if You were now to stand in our midst, we should remember that we had Your presence before, and lived in it, and now we should only be the more assured of that which we before knew by faith.

We shall behold our Lord with confidence, freedom, assurance and delightfeeling perfectly at home with Him. The Believer who abides in his Lord would be but little startled by His sudden appearing. He is serving his Lord now, and he would go on serving Him. He loves Him now, and he would go on loving Him. And because he would have a clearer view of Him, he would feel a more intense consecration to Him.

The word translated confidence means freedom of speech. If our Divine Lord were to appear in a moment, we should not lose our tongue through fear, but should welcome Him with glad acclaim. To desert our Lord would rob us of that ease of mind which is betokened by free speech. But to cleave to Him will secure us confidence. We now speak to Him in secret, and He speaks again to us. We shall not cease to speak in tones of reverent love when He appears. I have preached concerning my Lord, while He is not seen, those Truths of God which I shall not blush to admit before His face.

If my Lord and Master were, at this instant, to appear in His Glory in this Tabernacle, I would dare, with confidence, to hand Him the volumes of my sermons, in proof that I have not departed from His Truth, but have heartily continued in Him. I ought to improve in many things but I could not improve upon the Gospel which I have preached among you. I am prepared to live by it, to die by it, or to meet my Lord upon it if He should, this day, appear.

O my Hearers, if you are in Christ, see to it that you so abide in Him that, should He suddenly appear, you would behold Him with confidence. If we abide in Him, if he were to unveil His majestic face, we might be overcome with rapture. But our confidence in Him would grow stronger, our freedom with Him would be even more enlarged and our joy in Him would be made perfect. Has He not prayed for us that we may be with Him, and behold His Glory? And can we be afraid of the answer to His loving prayer? If you abide in Christ, the manifestation of Christ will be your manifestation and that will be a matter of delightnot of fear.

Beloved, if you do not abide in Him, you will have no confidence. If I were to compromise the Truth of God and then my Lord were to appear, could I meet Him with confidence? If, to preserve my reputation, or be thought liberal-minded, I played fast and loose with the Gospel, how could I see my Lords face with confidence? If any of you have failed to serve your Master. If you have preferred gain to godliness, and pleasure to holinessif He were suddenly to shine forth in His Glorywhat confidence could you have in meeting Him?

A good man was asked, one day, If the Lord were now to appear, how would you feel? He replied. My Brother, I should not be afraid. But I think I should be ashamed. He meant that he was not afraid of connation but he blushed to think how little he had served his Lord. In this case it was genuine humility. I pray you, get not only beyond being afraid, but may the Lord make you so to abide in Him that you would not even be ashamed at His appearing!

The other point is that you should not be ashamed before Him at His coming. That means that having regarded Him as being absent, you have not so lived that, if He should suddenly be present in Person, you would be ashamed of your past life. What must it be to be driven with shame away from His Presence into everlasting contempt? The text may have such a meaning. What have you been doing while He has been absent?

This is a question for a servant to answer at his employers arrival. You are left in his house to take care of it while he is in the far-off country. And if you have been beating his servants and eating and drinking with the drunken, you will be greatly ashamed when he returns. His coming will be in itself a judgment. Who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appears? Blessed is that man who, with all his faults, has been so sanctified by Divine Grace that he will not be ashamed at his Lords coming.

Who is that man? It is the man who has learned to abide in Christ. What is the way to prepare for Christs coming? By the study of the prophecies? Yes, if you are sufficiently instructed to be able to understand them. To be prepared for the Lords coming, some enthusiasts might ask, had I not better spend a month in retirement and get out of this wicked world? You may, if you like. And especially you will do so if you are lazy. But the one Scriptural prescription for preparing for His coming is this: Abide in Him.

If you abide in the faith of Him, holding His Truth, following His example, and making Him your dwelling place, your Lord may come at any hour and you will welcome Him. The cloud, the Great White Throne, the blast of trumpets, the angelic attendants of the last assize, the trembling of creation, and the rolling up of the universe as a worn-out vesture will have no alarms for you. For you will not be ashamed at His coming.

The date of that coming is concealed. When He shall come, no man can tell. Watch for Him and be always ready, that you may not be ashamed at His advent. Should a Christian man go into worldly assemblies and amusements? Would he not be ashamed should his Lord come and find him among the enemies of the Cross? I dare not go where I should be ashamed to be found should my Lord come all of a sudden. Should a Christian man ever be in a passion? Suppose his Lord should then and there come? Would he not be ashamed at His corning?

One here says of an offender, I will never forgive her. She shall never darken my doors again. Would you not be ashamed if the Lord Jesus came and found you unforgiving? Oh, that we may abide in Him and never be in such a state that His coming would be unwelcome to us! Beloved, so live from day to day in duty and in devotion that your Lords coming would be timely. Go about your daily business and abide in Him, and then His coming will be a glorious delight to you.

I called to see one of our friends and she was whitening the front steps of the house. She apologized very much and said that she felt ashamed of being caught in such a position. But I assured her that I should like my Lord to come and find me, just as I found her, doing my daily work with all my heart. We are never in better trim for seeing our Master than when we are faithfully doing His work. There is no need for a pious smartening uphe that abides in Christ always wears garments of glory and beauty. He may go in with his Lord into the wedding whenever the midnight cry is heard. Abide in Him and then none can make you ashamed. Who shall lay anything to your charge?

He will comebehold, He is coming even now. Hear you not the sounding of His chariot wheels? He may arrive before yon sun goes down. In such an hour as you think not, the Son of man comes. When the world is eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, He will bring destruction upon the ungodly. Be you so engaged, day by day, that you will not be taken at unawares. What will it be to be caught up together with the saints in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air! What will it be to see Him come in the glory of the Father and all His holy angels with Him! What will it be to see Him reign upon the earth, with His ancients gloriously!

Can you imagine the millennial splendor, the age of gold, the halcyon days of peace? As for the judgment of the world, know you not that the saints shall judge angels? They shall appear as assessors with Christ and the Lord shall bruise Satan under their feet. Glory awaits us and nothing but glory, if we abide in Christ. Therefore, keep your garments unspotted, your loins girt, your lamps trimmed, and your lights burningand you, yourselves, as men and women that look for your Lordwhen He comes, you may have confidence and not shame.

May the Holy Spirit, without whom this cannot be, be freely given to us this day, that we may abide in the Lord! And you who have never trusted in Christ for salvation, may you come to Him and then abide in Him from this good hour! To His name be glory! Amen.

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AND WE AREA JEWEL FROM THE REVISED VERSION

NO. 1934

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, DECEMBER 19, 1886,   
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, JULY 19, 1885.

DEAR friends, the most of my text will be found in our Old Version, but for once I shall ask you to look elsewhere for a part of it. A genuine fragment of Inspired Scripture has been dropped by our older translators and it is too precious to be lost. Did not our Lord say, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost? The half lost portion of our text is restored to us in the Revised Version. Never did a translation of the New Testament fail more completely than this Revised Version has done as a book for general reading, but as an assistant to the student, it deserves honorable mention, despite its faults! It exhibits, here and there, special beauties and has, no doubt, in certain places, brought into notice words of sacred Scripture which had fallen out. We have a notable instance in my present text. Turn to the First Epistle of John, the third chapter, at the first verse

*Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.* So far we keep to our Authorized Version. Now read the Revised Version, and note the words added   
*Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God: and such we are.*

The word such is not in the original. We therefore leave it out and then we get the wordsAND WE ARE. There are only two words in the Greekand we are. That the addition is correct I have not the slightest doubt. Those authorities upon which we dependthose manuscripts which are best worthy of noticehave these words and they are to be found in the Vulgate, the Alexandrian and several other versions. They ought never to have dropped out. In the judgment of the most learned and those best to be relied on, these are veritable words of Inspiration. So far as doctrine is concerned, it does not matter, much, whether they are or are not in the original text because we get the same words farther on. Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if He shall be manifested, we shall be like He; for we shall see Him even as He is.

The point that struck me as being most worthy of notice was that when the Apostle had said, We shall be called children of God, he then adds We are not only to be called so, but we are so. The glory of it is that we now have this thing. We have it in possessionand we are. This little interjected assertion, and we are, brings most forcibly before my own mind the truth of our present sonship towards GodThat we should be called children of God: and we are.

Let me now introduce to you my text as I mean to preach from it *Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God: and we are.*

Our text begins with the exclamation Behold. This word, Behold, is a word of wonder. John had lived among wonders. Johns life, from the time of his conversion, was a life of wonders, not only in what he saw with his natural eyes, but in all the sights that the Lord gave him to see with his spiritual eyes when He appeared to him in the isle which is called Patmos. His life was crowned with wonders in his memorable escape from martyrdom, when, according to tradition he was cast into a caldron of boiling oil, but came out unharmedhis Master having determined that he was not by martyrdom to glorify His name. If ever there was a Seer among men to whom wonders became common things, it was John! Yet as he wrote this heavenly Epistle, he could not help bursting out in exclamations of amazement such as do not generally come from writers so much as from speakersBehold, he says, Behold, what manner of love!

I believe, my Brothers and Sisters, that if we realized the truth of our own adoption into the family of God, we would never leave off marveling at it. That any man of mortal race should become a child of God might astound us, but that we, ourselves, should be such should amaze us beyond degree! We ought to cry, Behold! Behold! Let us begin to talk of it now, for we shall never cease to speak of it when we reach the New Jerusalem. Our regeneration and adoption are complex miracles of Gracea cluster of wonders condensed into one. It would seem too good to be true if the Lord, Himself, had not revealed it! We will call upon angels, principalities and powers and say to them with delighted wonder, Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us. Admire, O sanctified intelligences, that God should do this for unworthy sons of Adam!

*Behold what wondrous Grace   
The Father has bestowed   
On sinners of a mortal race   
To call them sons of God!*

But this, Behold, is also a note of instruction . It is as if the man of God said, Stand still and consider the extraordinary love of God. Do not speak of it, for some of these things slip glibly from the tongue. No, rather sit down and ponder, and weigh, and mark and behold! Behold, what manner of love. Here, take your glass and look at it microscopically. Study it. Wonder at it. Study it with every faculty concentrated upon it, for you shall find new excellences in it every time you look into it. Behold, what manner of lovethe very manner of it is exceedingly sublime and adorable! Do not merely glance and go your way, but stop and rest and pry into this secret, comparing this love with all other loves, and the manner of it with the manner of men. Come here and dig where there are nuggets of pure gold to reward every moment of your industry! Here sink your shafts and go into the depths to bring up this priceless treasure. Behold read, mark, learn, inwardly digest and still behold again! Look, and look, and look onfor there will be no end to the discoveries you will make. When you have looked, remember that you have not been gazing upon a mere appearance, but have beheld an actual factBehold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God. When you have beheld this, then look again and behold with equal admiration that it is no supposition, or fancy, or romancethe Lord calls us childrenand we are.

Thus having introduced the text with its own note of exclamation, I invite you to behold the two wonders which are enshrined within it. I would first say

Let us behold with joyful wonder our being called the sons of God. And then, secondly, let us behold the equal wonder of our being really so, expressed in those three words, and we are.

I. First, then, behold THE WONDER OF OUR BEING CALLED THE SONS OF GOD.   
Who calls us so? That is the wonder! Men take upon themselves great names without any right to them. There are degrees among men that are degrees of shame because the persons who claim them were never justly entitled to them. It is one thing for us to call ourselves children of God and another thing for the Father to bestow His love so that we are truly called the sons of God. From where does this princely title of sons of God come? Who calls the saints, the sons of God?   
The Father Himself does! He speaks unto them as unto children. He deals with them as with sons. He is pleased in infinite love to bid them say, Our Father, and He answers to them by calling them children and heirs. He acknowledges their sonship and pities them as a father pities his children. He has called them sons, saying, I will be a Father unto you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord God Almighty. Oh, what a blessing it is to have God calling you His childthe great Almighty and Infinite One looking upon you with a Fathers love and saying, You are My son! He speaks the truth and we may believe it and be sure! He knows His own children and gives the name of sons to none whom He will, in the end, disown. He calls us His childrenand we are!   
Who has called us the sons of God? Jesus Himself, the first-born among many Brethren, has called us so! Did He not speak of, My Father and your Father? What did He mean when He was not ashamed to call us Brothers and Sisters? Everywhere our dear Lord and Master speaks of us as belonging to the one family of which He is the Head. By sweetly taking us into union with Himself, Jesus practically calls us Sons of God and we are!   
The Holy Spirit also dwells in all the heirs of Heaven and thereby calls them sons of God. He bears witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God and it is He who is given to us to be the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. That, Abba, Father, of ours is prompted by the Spirit of Grace who would never prompt a stranger and an alien to claim kinship with the Lord. Oh no! The witness of the Holy Spirit is the witness of truth! A filial spirit implanted by the Spirit of God cannot deceive us. Thus Father, Son and Holy Spirit call us the children of Godand we are!   
With these the holy angels are in full accord. Not in words, perhaps, but in acts and deeds which speak quite as loudly, they declare us to be the children of God. They bear us up in their hands, lest we dash our foot against a stone and this they do because we belong to the Divine family! Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? They acknowledge that we are heirs of God and, therefore, they act as our waiting servants.   
All Providence, Brothers and Sisters, acknowledges us to be children of God, if we are, indeed, so. This is specially true of chastening Providences. When they come to us, they gently whisper, What son is there whom the Father chastens not? Yes, trials and afflictions, especially such as come for the Truth of Gods sake and because of our love to Christ, are tokens of sonship. The persecution which is involved in holy and separated living is the witness of Providence that we are no longer of the evil seed, but are adopted sons of God.   
Yes, and I trust that there are some here who can modestly say that they have, even, the witness of men, for they are called the children of God even by men who do not know much about the mysteries of the new birth. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of Godthey shall not only be so, but they shall extort from others the confession that they are so. I am sure that when William Penn dealt so kindly and peacefully with the Indians when everybody else was false to them, the untutored man of the woods felt that the Quakers were children of the Great Spirit. Their peacefulness was a mark of their descent from the God of Peace. Any man or woman who shall be well known to bear injuries with patience and to make no return but that of doing good for evil shall be recognized, even by scoffers and blasphemers, as a child of God! God is Loveand wherever there is love, men with more or less of intelligence trace it to God. They cannot help it. Blessed are you, Beloved, if you have the witness, even, of your enemies, that you are the children of Godand you will have that witness if your lives are conformed to the holy Law of Love!   
Behold, then, how Gods people are called the sons of Godcalled with a Divine calling to which all things bear corroborating witness so that they believeand are sure! And in reply to all voices attesting their sonship they cry, and we are!   
Enquire next, what is involved in this calling them to be the children of God? What is there conspicuous in it? Read the passage. Behold, what manner of\_\_\_\_\_\_. What is the word? What manner of gift the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God? It might have been so written and have been quite correct. But it is not so written. Behold what manner of honor the Father has bestowed? No, no! Behold what manner of LOVE the Father has bestowed upon usas much as to say that the adopting of a man to be a son of God is an act which involves so much of love that you are bid, especially, to fix your eyes on the love of it and to notice its manner. Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God.   
Now just think for a minute what intense love is manifested to that man who is favored to be called a child of God. It is love in the highest degree! What love you would have in your heart if you were to take a wanton and malicious enemy and say, You shall be my son! If one had wronged you and despised you and defied your authorityand you should say to him, You shall be my child from this time forthwhat an amazing deed of love this would be! Yet it might not be very much for you to do, my dear Friend, for you may be, after all, nothing very great! It would, however, be the utmost your love could devise! Only think of what it must be for God even that Infinite and Eternal Spiritto say, You shall be My child. I will take you, though you are an heir of wrath, and make you Mine. Herein, indeed, is love! Love worth the beholding!   
It is certainly an undeserved love because no man can possibly deserve to be made into a child of God. Grace in this instance is the sole source of the stream of goodness. You might think it possible that you could deserve some ordinary gift, but such a blessing as to be made a son of God you could not deserve! If you had never sinned, I do not see that you could have had any right to sonship. The most faithful service does not make a servant into a son. Had you been perfect, what would you have given to God as purchase money for this high dignity? He is great and glorious without your service! To be promoted to be a prince of the blood royal of Heavenit is not possible for any man to deserve this! No works can climb to this lofty placeonly faith can reach it by the power of Grace. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name. This power, this privilege, this honor of sonship before God is gained in no other way but that of faithand that is the gift of God!   
And oh, see the blessed manner of love there must be in it, since there is everlasting love in it for, if God makes you to be called a son of God, that is done and done foreverand it never can be undone. Here is the joy of it. The servant abides not in the house foreverbut a son abides always. The relationships that come of service begin and end. You know it is so among men. You can say to a hired servantThere, take your money and be gone. But you cannot say that to your son! Whatever you give him, or do not give him, if he is your son, he is your son and always must be so. Especially is this true of the children of Godthat they are not only called the children of God, but it is addedand we are. In very deed we are and always shall be His sons! We are made really to be what we are said to be. We are called the children of God and we are the children of Godand this cannot be undone. How greatly do I rejoice in the final perseverance of the saints! As I have often said, I would not go across the street to pick up the other kind of salvation which only saves me for a while and afterwards lets me slip through! Grace brings me into the family of God and keeps me there. When the Lord calls me His son, I know what He meansHe intends all that we mean by the relationship and more! He does not mean that He will cast His children away, or suffer them to perish, but He means thisI will put My fear in their hearts and they shall not depart from Me. Or, as the Lord Jesus puts it, I give unto My sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.   
Behold, then, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. It is infinite love that knows no end. It is the love of the Fatherthat glorious Person of the blessed Trinity in whom the fountain of all Grace is seen. It is the Father who in boundless love has called us to be His sons! How I delight to trace this love up to the Fountainhead! Jesus says, the Father Himself loves you. It is not the death of Jesus which moved the heart of the Father to love us, as some fondly dreamthe truth is that the Fathers love is the reason why Jesus was given. Behold, what manner of love the FATHER has bestowed upon us. How it unveils the heart of the Father when we see that He who gave His Son for us has also bestowed upon us this manner of love that we should be called His sons! Let us adore and love the great Father of our spirits, whose love is the first cause of all our blessings.

Now, while I am asking for your wonderment in answer to the questionsWho calls us sons? and, What is involved in the call? I will reply to another questionWho are the persons thus called sons? Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God. It is bestowed upon us men and women. We are poor creatures when we make the best of ourselves and yet He calls us sons of God. Unto which of the angels said He at any time, You are My son? Brethren, this dignity is reserved for us whom He has made a little lower than the angels! Think of what His Only-Begotten Son is likethat glorious Son of God of whom He says, Let all the angels of God worship Him. Behold how in splendor of beneficence He deigns to call us, also, His sons and so to put us side by side with the Only-Begottennot on an equality as far as His Godhead is concerned, for that cannot bebut yet bestowing on us that same love with which He loves His Son! He loves us in Christ even as He loves Christ Himself! Behold, what manner of love it is, that we should be adopted and regenerated by the living God!   
And this is true, remember, of that poor man who does not know where tomorrows bread shall come from. You say he is not respectable, but I say that he is right honorable, for God has called him His son! I mean that man whose name was never heard of, who lives in a room in a back street and when he dies will be buried in the corner of the cemetery, unwept, unhonored, and unsung. Yes, God has bestowed this manner of love upon himthat he is called one of His sons! Yes, I mean that poor consumptive girlI mean that lame, decrepit youth! I mean that blind man who begs his bread. Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed on such as these! Poor cottagers, hard-working men and women, cobblers and tinkers! Chimney sweepers and laborerssuch as these He calls the sons of God when He has renewed them by His Grace! Ah, and I mean those who are lying yonder in the hospital and in the workhouse infirmary who are nearing their last hour upon beds found for them by charity. These are Gods children if they believe in Jesus! They pine away till bedsores make it hard to move and harder to lie still. Dissolved by pain, they are melting away into eternitybut behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon such poor, frail mortals as these, that they should be called the sons of Godand they are!   
Yet the wonder rises a stage higher when we recollect that these are not only men and women, but sinners. Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us sinful ones, that we should be called the children of God! He has taken us from the dunghill and washed usand then made us to sit at His royal table! You know the story in Ezekiel of the infant cast out in the open field, defiled in its own blood and how He that passed by looked on it, and said, Live, and washed it, and swaddled it, and fed it. It is just what the Lord has done for us poor sinful men and women. We were cast out under condemnation, but behold what manner of love He has bestowed upon us guilty ones to make us children of God! Alas, even after we are made His sons, we are not free from evilwe still need that abundant Grace should have patience with us. We still grieve Him by lukewarmness and backslidingand yet He calls us children! Behold what manner of love He has bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God!   
There! I do not feel as if I wanted to preach about it. I long to sit down and cry over it for very joy of heart. That ever God should have put me among His children shall be my everlasting wonder! How could He love such a vain, frail, sinful, troubled creature, full of all manner of infirmities! Yet the Spirit of adoption makes me cry with boldness, Doubtless You are my Father! I cannot help it. I know that I am His and I dare not question it. But what manner of love, what manner of love, He has bestowed on me! Do you not say the same? Does not the gracious Spirit of God now move on your soul and make you stand in amazement at Divine Grace? Do you not melt with humble gratitude? What was there in you? What is there in you that you should be a son of God? If children, then heirsheirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christwhy are we lifted to such a privilege? The blessing of sonship has earth and Heaven wrapped up in it and all this is ours! If we know ourselves, we mourn our lack of worthiness and yet we rejoice that we are the Lords dear children. When we consider the persons who are called the children of God, there is, indeed, reason to say, Behold, what manner of love!   
And, once more, let me just go over the ground again, and show you what is connected with being called the children of God.   
It is, as it were, Gods public acknowledgment of His relation to usHe acknowledges us as sons! Sometimes we hear of clandestine marriages which may be valid, but the man seems to be ashamed to acknowledge his wife. He pleads that he be permitted to not introduce her into the noble family to which he belongs and so he keeps the marriage in the dark. And he does not admit there are children. This is after the manner of wicked men! But God is not ashamed of us when He takes us to be His children. It is written concerning our Lord Jesus, For this cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren. I have heard of some fine gentleman in London, dressed in all his best, walking out in the park. He had a poor old father who lived in the country and who came up dressed in his rustic raiment to see his son. As the son was not at home when the father reached the house, he went into the park to find him. Now, the fine gentleman did not absolutely disown his father, but he went out of the park at a pretty sharp trot, for fear anybody should say, Who is that country fellow you were talking with?   
He did not like to acknowledge his father because he was a laborer. That is mean as the mud in the kennel, is it not? We would not thus wonder if the glorious Lord refused to acknowledge us! There is such a comedown from the loftiness of His holiness to the depth of our faultiness. But yet He has such love, such a manner of love, that He bestows upon us this honor, that we should be openly called the sons of God! He Himself tells us so in our text. His Spirit makes the avowal. There, He says, you poor people that love Me. You sick people, you unknown, obscure people, without any talentI have published it before Heaven and earth and made the angels know ityou are My children and I am not ashamed of you! I Glory in the fact that I have taken you for My sons and daughters.   
There is, moreover, this involved in it, that He claims our loving obedience. Do not put dishonor upon your Fathers name! Stand up for your Father. It is one of the marks of a true child that he cannot bear to say or do anything that would place his Fathers name under a cloud. God, as it were, stakes His honor upon the character of everyone of His people. He has said, They shall be called My children. Now, if you do anything that is wrong or base, what will men think of your Father? He has condescended to call you a childdo not let His name be evilly spoken of through you. He has put this high honor upon us, that we should be called His sons and daughterslet us seek so to behave ourselves that men may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in Heaven! I have taken up all this time with the first part of the verse, but we must not forget the second part of it, and we are. I shall only introduce it to your meditation and, indeed, this is all that is needed if you are able to repeat the words on your own account and say, and we are.   
II. The second and greatest wonder is THE WONDER OF OUR REALLY BEING THE SONS OF GOD. And we are.   
Adoption gives us the name of Gods children. The new birth gives us the Nature of Gods children. And so in both senses we are. Adoption is the legal act by which our Father receives us. Regeneration is that spiritual deed by which we receive the nature of our Father. Every man that is really adopted into the family of God also really becomes a son of God by being begotten, again, unto a lively hope. I want to put it to you, my Hearers, whether you can, on this double ground, join in these Inspired Words, and say, And we are?   
Let us work out the question. Are we really the children of God? We must answer that question by anotherDo we truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? I have already quoted the Inspired DeclarationBut as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name. We can answer that question. Are we believing in the Lord Jesus Christ with all our heart? Is He our confidence? Do we trust in His blood and righteousness? If so, if we believe in Him, then He has given us the right and the power to become the sons of God!   
That question, alone, might settle it, but let us go a little farther. If we indeed can say, and we are, then we have received some measure of the Nature of God. Have you, Brothers and Sisters, become spiritual? God is a spirit. Do you hate sin? God is holy. Do you love that which is right? Let your conscience speak. Do you endeavor to act generously? Does love rule you? Do you seek to be full of pity, tender, courteous and kind? Have you love to God and love to men? For, if not, you have not the Nature of God, for God is Love. Have you somewhat of that Nature and is there within you a longing and a striving to have the whole Nature of God in you, as far as it can dwell in mortal man? Remember, no person can be a child of God if he has not something of likeness to God. If you are not in the least like your Father, then you make a mistake if you profess to be His child. You are made partakers of the Divine Nature, says one of the Apostles, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.   
Am I a child of God? Then listenI have a love to my Father. If you are truly born from above, your heart goes out in longings after Him to whom you owe your heavenly birth! If you are no child of God, you can live without Him. Indeed, you will

try to do so! To the most of men, God is virtually non-existent. They look up to the skies and view the wondrous lights of Heaven, but they never think of Him who shines through them. They do not believe that there is such a Being, or else they have to admit that there must be a design and a Designerand that is an end of the matter with them. Whether there is a God or not is no matter of importance to them. How different is it with the regenerate! To us God is All in All. To love God is the great fact of my life! The tears run down my cheeks when I think of Him. He is everything to me   
*Do not I love You from my soul?   
Then let me nothing love!   
Dead be my heart to every joy,   
When Jesus cannot move.   
Have You a lamb in all your flock   
I would disdain to feed?   
Have You a foe, before whose face   
I fear Your cause to plead?*   
It cannot long be a question with the child of God whether he loves his Father or not. It may occasionally happen that he has to make the enquiry, for times and circumstances will test him, but before long he comes to the solemn conclusion, You know all things; You know that I love You.   
More than thatif I am a child of God, I learn to trust my Father. I do not know a more delightful act of childhood than trustfulness in a parent. And how often, if we trust God, we shall be rewarded! A circumstance happened to me yesterday. I cannot help telling it to you. I received a note from one of the trustees of the Orphanage to say that the running account was so low that when the checks were paid on Friday morning, we should have overdrawn our banking account. I did not like that state of things, but I did not fret about it. I breathed a prayer to God that He would send money to put into the bank to keep the account right. Last night, at nearly ten oclock, I opened a letter that came from Belfast and it had in it a check for £200, being the amount left as a legacy. I wrote across my acknowledgment, O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together!   
That amount put the account square for the time being and though the Orphanage has no ready money to go on with, still that does not matter God will send more means during the week and at all other times when the expenditure calls for it. At the moment when I opened the letter and found the £200, I felt as if my hair stood on end because of the conscious nearness of the Lord my God! My Brother, Hugh Hannah, when he sent that check and sent it on that particular day, did not know that it would come just when I was praying to God for help in a time of troubleyet it came exactly when it was sought for! If I were to tell my own personal experience of the way in which God hears prayer, it would seem to you as if it could not be trueit would appear too romantic. But oh, it is a blessed thing to take everything to God, little or big, and leave all with Him! I am resolved to live and die trusting in the living God and you shall all mark for yourselves whether He forsakes me, or bears me through!   
Look how your child trusts you. He comes to you, and cries, Please, father, I have a thorn in my finger. Or, Please, father, I have lost my pocket handkerchief. No matter what his trials are, the child brings them all to father or mother. You turn from your business and attend to him. You say, My dear, I will see to you directly. You love your little boy and, therefore, his little concerns are not too little for you. And God, who gave us to be called the sons of God, teaches us to cry, and we are, and leads us in that confidence to go to Him with each days burden and careand prove for ourselves that we are the objects of the Fathers love!   
Now, the true child of God not only shows love and trust, but he also suffers sorrow when he has grieved his Father. If you grieve over sin, if you grieve over error, if you grieve over your omissions, if you go to God with tears in your eyes because you are not what He would have you to be, this sorrow proves that you are one of His children. He that can sin without sorrow will one day sorrow without hope! A broken heart is one of the most sure signs of sonship. We have this grief and this proves that we are sons of God, and we are.   
You may also know a child by his joys. If a child has joy when his father is glad, when his fathers name is honored, oh, then you believe that he is his fathers child! I thought to myself one day, Well, I have preached this Gospel to vast crowds of people but is it my own? Perhaps I have only an official hold of it and have no personal grip of it for myself. I had a days respite and I went in to hear the Word of God in a humble, out-ofthe-way room. I sat down on a form and heard a working-man preach the Gospel very sweetly. By the way, the sermon was originally my own, and this the preacher acknowledged most freely! But as he preached it, I found myself melted down with the story of Gods Love. My heart was so hot within me that I was ready to shout, Hallelujah! when I heard the preacher magnifying the name of Christ Jesus, my Lord! And I said to myself, Oh, you are a child of God, after all! You love this food as well as the other children do! And though you generally have to stand at the table and be a waiter and sometimes wish you could sit and have a meal, yourself, you still do love this heavenly Bread! You have a taste for the things that God provides for His people. Yes, I could talk thus to myself and of myselfand feel myself to be a child of God. I came away comforted, for I felt that I had a share in the joys of the heirs of salvation!   
Need I go on to tell you what are the sure evidences of being a child of God? The man who is truly such cries, Why, everything is an evidence. Wherever he is, God is with him! And if he thinks that he has wandered away from God five minutes, he cries to be back again. He sees his Father everywherewhere the infidel cannot see Him at all. He spies Him in the clouds. He hears Him in the thunder. He beholds His flaming Glory in every lightning flash and His tender pity in every dewdrop. With God and on God the Believer lives! In God he lives and God lives in him! All his expectations are from God. Everywhere, in every time and in every way, he proves that he is a child of God because he continues to draw his life from his Divine Father!   
Then God gives him one more seal of his being His child and that is that He chastens him. I know an old friend who used to tell me that for 60 years he had never known a days illness. A splendid healthy old man he wasand about three months ago the old man took typhoid fever. I went to see him and when he got better, he came to see me and, sitting down, he said, Well, Sir, you see I am not the man I was, but I have made a great advance through this sickness. I have never known any weakness before, but now I have been brought very low. The Bible says, If you are without chastisement, of which all are partakers, then are you bastards, and not sons. Oh, he said, I am not a bastard after all! I have had my chastening and I hope I shall take up my sonship more than I ever did before. God grant that every chastened child may gather assurance from the Covenant rod! You, dear child of God, will not be long without a touch of the rod! May you have as little of it as the Lord judges to be proper! As for myself, I owe everything to the furnace and the hammer. I have made no progress in heavenly learning except when I have been whipped by the Great Schoolmaster! The best piece of furniture in my house has been the Cross! My greatest enricher has been personal pain and for that I desire to thank God. I can sing with the poet   
*God in Israel sows the seeds   
Of affliction, pain and toil.   
These spring up and choke the weeds   
Which would else overspread the soil.   
Trials make the promise sweet!   
Trials give new life to prayer!   
Trials bring me to His feet,   
Lay me low, and keep me there.*   
The children of God under the rod can say, And we are! Thank God for anything which emphasizes that affirmationAnd we are. It is wondrous love that we should be called the children of God, and we are. The bastard kicks against his fathers stroke, but the wise child kisses the rod and blesses the hand that uses itand cries, Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. This is a sure seal of our true sonship.   
The text says, And we are. I must turn it round, and ask, Are we? And when you have worked that out and you can say, Yes, then I want you all to get to be very positive about this matterNow are we the sons of God. I pray that you may be able to say boldly, And we are. When you are depressed and your spirit hangs fire, say, We are. When the devil says, If you are the children of God, give him a slap in the face with this, And we are. And when the world says, What? You call yourselves sons of God? say, Yes, and we are. Whenever doubts and fears come in, drive these evil birds away from eating your ripe fruit and let this be the shout you use, And we are. Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God: and we are. Called by His name, may we enjoy the full assurance of faith through believing in Jesus! Amen.

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A PRESENT RELIGION   
NO. 196

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MAY 30, 1858 BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God. 1 John 3:2.

I SHALL not pretend to preach from the whole of my text this morning, short though it is. The word now is to me the most prominent word in the text and I shall make it so this morning. Beloved, now are we the sons of God.

It is astonishing how distance blunts the keen edge of anything that is disagreeable. War is at all times a most fearful scourge. The thought of slain bodies and of murdered men must always harrow up the soul. But because we hear of these things in the distance, there are few Englishmen who can truly enter into their horrors. If we should hear the booming of cannon on the deep which girdles this island. If we should see at our doors the marks of carnage and bloodshedthen should we more thoroughly appreciate what war means. But distance takes away the horror and we therefore speak of war with too much levity and even read of it with an interest not sufficiently linked with pain.

As it is with war, so it is with death. Death is a frightful thing. He who is the bravest must still fear before it, for at best it is a solemn thing to die. Man, therefore, adopts the expedient of putting off all thoughts of death. It may be very near to him but he conceives it to be at a distance and then the same effect is produced as when war is at a distanceits horror is forgotten and we speak of it with less solemnity.

So likewise with true religionmen are constrained to believe that there is the Truth of God in religion. Though there are some foolhardy enough to deny it, the most of us in this enlightened land are obliged to acknowledge that there is a power in Godliness. What, then, does the worldling do? He practices the same expedient. He puts religion far awayhe knows that its disagreeableness will be diminished by his believing it to be distant. Hence there has sprung up in the minds of the unregenerate world a notion that religion is a thing to be accomplished just at the close of life and the usual prayer of an ungodly man, when in the slightest degree pricked in his conscience, is, Oh, that I may be saved at last! He does not feel anxious to be saved NOW. Religion is a thing for which he has no appetite and therefore believing it essential to insure his eternal welfare, he adopts the alternative of saying, I hope to have it at last.

The religion, then, of the present, is not the worldlings religion. He tolerates that which speaks of eternity. That which deals with dying. That which leads him to look back with a specious repentance upon a life

spent in sin, but not that which will enable him to look forward to a life spent in holiness. Very differently, however, do we act with affairs of the present lifethings that are sweet to us become the more sweet by their nearness. Was there ever a child who longed for his fathers house who did not feel that the holidays grew more sweet in his estimation the shorter the time was that he had to tarry?

What man is there who having once set his heart on riches did not find his delight in the thought of being rich increase with the nearness of his approach to the desired object? And are we not all of us accustomed, when we think a good thing is at a distance, to try if we can shorten the time between us and it? We try anything and everything to push on the lagging hours. We chide them, wish that Time had double wings, that he might swiftly fly and bring the expected season. When the Christian talks of Heaven, you will always hear him try to shorten the distance between himself and the happy land. He says

*A few more rolling suns at most   
Will land me on fair Canaans coast.*   
There may be many years between him and Paradise, but still he is

prone to say   
*The way may be rough, but it cannot be long.*   
Thus do we all delight to shorten the distance between us and the things   
for which we hope. Now let us just apply this rule to religion. They who   
love religion love a present thing. The Christian who really seeks salvation   
will never be happy unless he can say, Now am I a child of God. Because   
the worldling dislikes it, he puts it from him. Because the Christian loves   
it, therefore its very fairest feature is its present existence, its present enjoyment in his heart. That word now which is the sinners warning and   
his terror, is to the Christian, his greatest delight and joy. There is thereforeand then the sweetest bell of all ringsthere is therefore now no   
condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. To the sinner that same   
idea is the blackest of all, He that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed on the Son of God.   
This morning, in Gods name, I shall endeavor to plead with men and   
show them the importance of having a present religion. I am quite certain  
that this is a habit which is too much kept in the background. I am sure  
from mixing with mankind that the current belief is that religion is a future thing, perhaps the wish is father to the thought. I am certain the   
ground of it is men love not religion and therefore they desire to thrust it   
far from them.   
I shall commence by endeavoring to show that religion must be a thing   
of the present, because the present has such intimate connection with the   
future. And to proceedwe are told in Scripture that this life is a seed  
time and the future is the harvest, He that sows to the flesh, shall of the   
flesh reap corruption. He that sows to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life   
everlasting. The Scripture often speaks to us in words like these, They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy. It is always supposed in Scripture that this life is the time of generating, if I may use such an expression the life that is to comeas the seed generates the plant, even so does this present life generate the eternal future.   
We know, indeed, that Heaven and Hell are, after all, but the developments of our present character, for what is Hell but this, He that is filthy, let him be filthy still and he that is unholy, let him be unholy still? Do we not know that in the heart of every sin, damnation slumbers? Is it not a fearful Truth of God that the germ of everlasting torment sleeps in every vile wish, every unholy thought, every unclean act, so that Hell is but a great breaking out of slumbering lava which had been so quiet, that while the mountain was covered with fair verdure, even to its summit, death comes and bid that lava rise? And down the steeps of manhoods eternal existence the fiery flame and the hot scalding lava of eternal misery does pour itself. Yet it was there beforefor sin is Helland to rebel against God is but the prelude of misery.   
So is it with Heaven. I know that Heaven is a reward, not of debt, but of grace. But still the Christian has that within him which forestalls for him a Heaven. What did Christ say? I give unto My sheep eternal life. He did not say, I will give, but, I give unto them. As soon as they believe in Me, I give them eternal life, and, He that believes has eternal life and shall never come unto damnation. The Christian has within him the seedbeds of a Paradisein due time the light that is sown for the righteous and the gladness that is buried beneath the black earth for the upright in heart shall spring up and they shall reap the harvest.   
Is it not plain, then, that religion is a thing which we must have here? Is it not prominently revealed that religion is important for the present? For if this life is the seed time of the future, how can I expect to reap in another world other crops than I have been sowing here? How can I trust that I shall be saved unless I AM saved? How can I have hope that Heaven shall be my eternal inheritance unless the earnest is begun in my own soul on earth?   
But again, this life is always said in Scripture to be a preparation for the life to come, Prepare to meet your God, O Israel. They that were ready went in with Him to the supper and the door was shut. There is in this world a getting ready for another world. To use a Biblical figure, we must here put on the wedding dress which we are to wear forever. This life is as the vestibule of the kings courtwe must put our shoes from off our feet. We must wash our garments and make ourselves ready to enter into the marriage supper of the Lamb. Somehow, in Scripture, the thought comes out as plain as if written with a sunbeamthis world is the beginning of the endit is the preparing-place for the future.   
Supposing you have no religion nowhow will you stand when now is turned into eternity? When days and years are gone, how will it fare with you, if all your days have been spent without God and without Christ? Do you hope to hurry on the white garment after death? Alas, you shall be girt with your shroud, but not be able to put on the wedding raiment. Do you trust that you shall wash and make yourself clean in the river Jordan? Alas, you shall breed corruption in your tomb, but you shall not find   
holiness there! Do you trust to be pardoned after you have departed? *There are no acts of pardon passed   
In the cold grave to which we haste.   
Darkness, death and fell despair,   
Reign in eternal silence there.*   
Or do you think that when you near the borders of the grave, then will   
be the time to prepare? Be not deceived. We read in Scripture an instance   
of a man saved at the eleventh hour. Remember, there is but one. And we  
have no reason to believe that there ever was, or ever will be another.   
There may have been persons saved on their dying beds, but we are not   
sure there ever were. Such things may have happened, but none of us can  
tell. Alas, facts are sadly against it. For we have been assured by those   
who have had the best means of judgingthose who have long walked the   
hospital of humanitythat such as thought they were dying and made   
vows of repentance, have almost invariably turned back, like the dog to   
his own vomit and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.   
Oh noToday if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts. For today is the preparing-time for the dread tomorrowtoday is the making  
ready for the eternal future.   
Let me urge one other reflection here. How are we saved? All through  
Scripture we are told we are saved by faithexcept in one passagewhere   
it is said, we are saved by hope. Now note how certain it is that religion   
must be a present thing if we are saved by faith, because faith and hope  
cannot live in another world. What a man sees, why does he yet hope   
for? Hope cannot exist in that world of realities where shadows are unknown. How can faith be exercised when we see a thing? For what a man   
perceives by faith that he realizes not by sense. And although we say seeing is believing, it is quite certain that seeing and believing are at opposite poles.   
Believing is an assurance of that which we see not and in confidence of  
faith waiting until we do see it. But seeing is sensuous and the very reverse of faith. Now if I am to be saved by faith, it is quite certain I must be

saved in a state where faith can be exercisedthat is in this world. And if  
I am to be saved by hope, I cannot be saved by hope in that world where   
hope cannot exist. I must be saved here, for here is the only place where   
hope can breathe an air that lets it live.   
The air of Heaven is too bright and pure, too heavenly, too warm, too   
sweet with angels songs, for faith and hope to inhabit. They leave us on   
this side of the Jordan. If then we are saved by these, I think it follows  
and everyone of you must perceive the inferencewe must be saved now,   
because faith and hope are not things of the future. Oh how pleasant, if after these remarks we can say, Yes, it is so. It is even so and we rejoice therein, for now are we the sons of God.   
In the second place, as I have briefly shown the connection between the present and the future, let me use another illustration to show the importance of a present salvation. Salvation is a thing which brings present blessings. When you read Scripture, and alas, there are few who care to read it as they ought in these timesthey read anything but their Bibles when you read Scripture, you will be struck with the fact that every blessing is spoken of in the present tense. You remember how the Apostle in one of his Epistles says, Unto them which are saved, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. He does not say to them who shall be saved, but to them which are saved.   
We know, too, that justification is a present blessingthere is therefore now no condemnation. Adoption is a present blessing, for it says, Now are we the sons of God, and we know also that sanctification is a present blessing for the Apostle addresses himself to the saints who are sanctified in Christ Jesus and called. All the blessings of the new Covenant are spoken of in the present tense, because with the exception of eternal glory in Heaven, they are all to be enjoyed here.   
I know this, that I shall be one day, if I am a believer in Christ, more sanctified than I am todayif not in the sense of consecration, yet still in the sense of purificationbut at the same time I know this for a fact, that when I stand at Gods right hand, amidst the lamps of eternal brightness and when these fingers move with vigor across the golden strings and when this voice is filled with the immortal songs, I shall not be one whit more a child of God than I am now! And when the white robe is upon me and the crown upon my head, I shall not be more justified than I am at  
the present moment, for it is the doctrine of Holy Scripture that *The moment a sinner believes,   
And trusts in his crucified God,   
His pardon at once he receives   
Salvation in full through His blood.*   
But the assurance of our possession in these things is a present blessing, also. I will illustrate what I mean by a circumstance which happened   
to myself. A lady called upon me in some distress of mind and this was  
her difficultyshe had, she trusted, been converted to God, enjoyed great  
peace of mind and for a little season was very full of joybecause she believed that she had been forgiven and was accepted in the Beloved. Naturally enough, seeking her religious instructor, she went to the clergyman  
of the parish, who, unfortunately for her was a blind guide, for when she   
began to tell him concerning her joy, he checked her by saying, My good  
woman, this is all presumption. No, Sir, said she I trust notmy hope   
is fixed on nothing else than Jesus. I repose alone in Him. That is right  
enough, said he, but you have no authority to say you know you are  
saved. You have no authority to believe that you are already pardoned. And he told her that he did not believe it possible for any Christian to be assured of this except a very few eminent saintsbut they might only hope, that was all. They might trust but they could never be sure. Ah, methinks he had gone but a very little way on the road to the kingdom of Heaven. He must have been but a very small infant in Christ, if in Christ at all, to have told her so. For those of us who have for a few years put on the Lord Jesus know of a surety that there is such a thing as infallible assurancewe know that although there is such a thing as presumption, there is a distinction which every Christian can easily mark between the one and the other.   
Presumption says, I am a child of God and I may live as like. I know I am saved, I need not therefore seek to have present communion with Christ. But Assurance says, I know whom I have believed. I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day. And then she meekly bows her head and says, Hold You me up and I shall be safe, keep me and I shall be kept; draw me and I will run after You. Oh, my dear Hearers, never believe that falsehood of the daythat a man cannot know himself to be a child of God! For if you tell us that, we can refute you with a thousand testimonies. We have seen the poor, the humble and the illiterate confident of their interest in Christ. It is true, we have seen them doubt. We have heard their wailings when they could not see Christ with their heart. Yes, we have known the time when the greatest of Gods people have had to tremble   
and say   
*Tis a point I long to know,   
Oft it causes anxious thought   
Do I love the Lord, or no?   
Am I His, or am I not?*   
But still, Gods people may be assured. They may know, by the witness   
of the Spirit within, that they are born of God. For does not an Apostle  
say, We know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the   
Brethren? The Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are born of  
God. I would that we had more Christians who lived in the enjoyment of  
full assurance. How precious it is when the milk of faith settles down and   
the thick cream of full assurance can be skimmed from the surface as   
marrow and fatness to the children of God. Religion, then, is a thing of  
present assurance. A man may know in this life, beyond the shadow of a   
doubt, that he is accepted in Christ Jesus.  
Yet I am inclined to think that the worldly man most of all objects to   
present religion because he does not like its duties. Most men would be   
very religious if religion did not entail obligations. Many a man would be a   
very pious man if he were not curtailed of a few of his bottles of wine.   
Many a loose character would have no objection to go up to the temple  
and pray and subscribe his name to the God of Jacob if the Gospel did not   
forbid all uncleanness and everything that is lascivious. Many a tradesman would put on the Lord Jesus Christ if there were no necessity to put off the old manif he could keep his sins and have Christ, toooh, how willing would he be!   
Indeed, there are a great many who are so fond of it, that they have tried it. We know people who are like the Roman Emperor who believed that Jesus Christ was God, but thought that all the other strange gods were likewise to be worshipped. So these people think religion a very good thing but think sin a very good thing, tooso they set up the two together and their whole life is like Janustwo-faced. They are the most comely Christians in the synagogue, but they look most unmistakable hypocrites if you see them in the market. Men will not direct a single eye to religion because it curtails license and entails duties. And this, I think, proves that religion is a present thing, because the duties of religion cannot be practiced in another world, they must be practiced here.   
Now, what are the duties of religion? In the first place, there are its active duties which a man should do between man and man, to walk soberly and righteously and uprightly in the midst of an evil generation. Lightly as some people speak about morality, or against morality, there is no true religion where there is no morality. Do not tell me about your orthodoxy, do not come and tell me about your private prayers and secret pietyif your life is badyou are bad altogether.   
A good tree cannot bring forth anything but good fruit and a corrupt tree will bring forth corrupt fruit. There is no questioning that. What your life is, that you arefor as out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, so out of the abundance of the heart the man lives. It is an in vain for you to deprecate so strong a sentiment as this and to say, The best of saints are fallible. I know they are. I know that even the best of men will sin, but they will not sin willingly. If they sin publicly, it will be but an exception, their lives, under the power of Divine Grace, will be holy and pure and upright.   
I believe the devil likes Antinomianism and he says to the Romanist, Preach on, you Priest. I do not mind what you preach, for you will enter my dominions. You tell people that they may live in sin and then procure absolution for a shilling! Fine doctrine that! And he pats the priest on the back and gives him all the assistance he can. Then comes there an Antinomian minister into the pulpit. The devil says, Ah, though he rails against the Pope of Rome, I like them both, the one as much as the other. Then how he preaches! He begins preaching justification by faith alone and he carries his argument a step too far, for he begins railing at good works, calls them legalists who think it their duty to lead a holy life and hints with a smirk and a smile, that the excellent conduct of a man is of little importance, so long as he believes the Truth and goes to his Chapel. Ah, says the devil, preach away. I love the two things, Antinomianism and Popery, for they are two of the finest quacks for canting souls. Again, I say, Be not deceived, God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap. By our works we are not to be justified, but still by our works we shall be judged and by our works we shall be condemned. So says the Scriptures and this we must receive. Religion, therefore, must be a present thing. We need not talk of walking righteously and   
soberly in the world to come   
*There all is pure and all is clear,   
There all is joy and love.*   
There will be no duty to discharge between the tradesman and the customer, between the debtor and the creditor, between the father and the

child, between the husband and the wife in Heaven. All relationships shall  
have passed away. Religion must be intended for this life. The duties of it   
cannot be practiced, unless they are practiced here.   
But besides these, there are other duties delegated to the Christian.   
Though it is every mans duty to be honest and sober, the Christian has   
another code of Law. It is the Christians duty to love his enemies, to be at   
peace with all men, to forgive as he hopes to be forgiven. And it is his duty   
to resist evil, when smitten on the one cheek to turn the other also. It is   
his duty to give to him that asks of him and from him that would borrow   
of him not to turn away. He is to be a liberal soul devising liberal things. It   
is the Christians duty to visit his Masters children when they are sick, so  
that it may be said to him at last, I was sick and naked and in prison and   
you visited Me and ministered to My necessities.   
Now, if religion is not a thing for this world, I ask you how is it possible  
to perform its duties at all? There are no poor in Heaven whom we can   
comfort and visit, there are no enemies in Heaven whom we can graciously forgive. And there are no injuries inflicted, or wrongs endured   
which we can bear with patience. Religion must have been intended in the   
very first place for this world, it must have been meant that now we  
should be the sons of God. For again I repeat itthe major part of the duties of religion cannot be practiced in Heaven and therefore religion must  
be a present thing.   
But, coming near to our conclusion, I believe there are many more persons who do not like religion for today, but who want to have it at the last,   
for this reasonthey think religion is not a happy thing. They believe it  
makes men miserable. They have met with persons with long faces. They  
have seen some who were born in stormy weather and who seem to have   
lived all their lives long with a hurricane inside their hearts, never having  
one flash of sunlight, nor one pleasant rainbow across their brow. Many   
young people imbibe this idea. They think that surely religion must be a   
thing that will make men go moping and melancholy all through this   
world. In fact, they enter the Chapel sometimes and they hear the saints   
singingand what a sweet hymn it isa sorry sweetness in the Truth of   
God!   
*Lord, what a wretched land is this,*   
and they go out and say, No doubt it is, we will have nothing to do with   
it. Looking upon religion as medicine which is extremely nauseousif  
they must drink itthey will put it off to the last. They will gulp it down at their death bed with a, Lord, have mercy on me! and before its bitterness is fairly in their mouth, they expect to begin to enjoy its sweetness in Heaven.   
What a mistake! Religion has its present enjoyments. I do solemnly affirm today, in the face of this congregation and before Almighty God, if I were certain that I were to die like a dog and when I was buried there would be an end of mehad I my choice of the happiest life a man could lead, I would say, Let me be a Christian. If, as some say, it is a delusion, it is one of the most magnificent delusions that ever we devised! If any man could prove the religion of Christ to be a delusion, the next thing he should do would be to hang himself, because there is nothing worth living for. He might as well sit down and weep to think he had made a ruin of so goodly a structure and dissolved such a pleasant dream.   
Ah, Beloved, there are present enjoyments in religion. Speak, you that know them, for you can tell. Yet you cannot recount them all. Oh, would you give up your religion for all the joys that earth calls good or great? Say, if your immortal life could be extinguished, would you give it up, even for all the kingdoms of this world? Ohyou sons of poverty, has not this been a candle to you in the darkness? Has not this lightened you through the dark shades of your tribulation? Oh, you rough-handed sons of toil, has not this been your rest, your sweet repose? Have not the testimonies of God been your song in the house of your pilgrimage? Oh, you daughters of sorrow, you who spend the most of your time upon your bedsand your couch to you is a rack of painhas not religion been to you a sweet quietus? When your bones were sore vexed, could you not even then praise Him on your beds?  
Speak from your couches today, you consumptives, blanched though your cheeks are. Speak this day from your beds of agony, you that are troubled with innumerable diseases and are drawing near your last home! Is not religion worth having in the sick chamber, on the bed of pain and anguish? Ah, they heartily say, We can praise Him on our beds. We can sing His high praises in the fires. And you men of business, speak for yourselves! You have hard struggles to pass through life. Sometimes you have been driven to a great extremity and whether you would succeed or not seemed to hang upon a thread.   
Has not your religion been a joy to you in your difficulties? Has it not calmed your minds? When you have been fretted and troubled about worldly things, have you not found it a pleasant thing to enter your closet and shut the door and tell your Father in secret all your cares? And O, you that are rich, cannot you bear the same testimony, if you have loved the Master? What had all your riches been to you without a Savior? Can you not say that your religion did gild your gold and make your silver shine more brightly? For all things that you have are sweetened by this thoughtthat you have all these and Christ, too!   
Was there ever a child of God who could deny this? We have heard of many infidels who grieved over their infidelity when they came to die. Did you ever hear of a Christian acting the counterpart? Did you ever hear of anyone on his deathbed looking back on a life of holiness with sorrow? But we have seen the poor debauched child of sin rotting with disease and listened to her shriek and heard her miserably curse herself that she ever turned aside to what was called the path of gaiety, but what was really the path to Hell.   
We have seen the miser, too, who has gripped his bags of gold and on his dying bed we have found him curse himself, that when he came to die, his gold, though laid upon his heart, could not still its aching and give him joy. Never, never did we know a Christian who repented of his Christianity! We have seen Christians so sick that we wondered that they livedso poor, that we pondered at their misery. We have seen them so full of doubts, that we pitied their unbelief. But we never heard them say, even then, I regret that I gave myself to Christ. No! With the dying clasp, when heart and flesh were failing, we have seen them hug this treasure to their breast and press it to their heart, still feeling that this was their life, their joy, their all!   
Oh, if you would be happy, if you would be saved, if you would strew your path with sunshine and dig out the nettles and blunt the thorns, Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you. Seek not happiness firstseek CHRIST first and happiness shall come after. Seek first the Lord and then He will provide for you everything that is profitable for you in this life and He will crown it with everything that is glorious in the life to come. Beloved, NOW are we the sons of God.   
Before closing this discourse, I fear that there are a great many of you who will say, Well, I care nothing at all about religionit is of no avail to me. No, my Friends and it is very probable that you will not care about it until it shall be too late to care. Maybe you will go on putting off these thoughts until the day shall come when they will come so thick upon you that you will not be able to procrastinate any longerand then will you in right earnest set about seeking Christ. But at that hour He will say to you, Inasmuch as Moab has wearied himself upon the high places and he betakes himself to My sanctuary, I will not hear him, says the Lord. Strive to enter in at the strait gate now, for many shall seek to enter in, but shall not be able. Let us fear, lest, having the Gospel preached in our ears, we should neglect and put it off until the last hour has struck and we find ourselves without hopewhen there is no time to seek a Savior. I know where this mornings sermon will be found profitable. It will be in the case of those who are seeking Christ. Old Flockhart, who used to preach till within the last few months in the streets of Edinburgha much despised, but a very godly man, used to sayWhen I begin my sermon, I begin by preaching the Law and then I bring the Gospel afterwards. For, he said, it is like a woman who is sewingshe cannot sew with thread alone. She first sticks a sharp needle through and then draws the thread afterwards. He continues, So does the Lord with us. He sends the sharp needle of conviction, the needle of the Law, into our hearts and pricks us in the heart and He draws through the long silken thread of consolation afterwards.   
Oh, I would that some of you were pricked in the heart today! Remember, there are thunders in this Bible. Though they are sleeping now, they will awake by-and-by. There are in this Bible curses too horrible for heart to know their full extent of meaning. They are slumbering now, but they shall waken and when they leap from between the folded leaves and the seven seals are brokenwhere will you flee and where shall you hide yourselvesin that last great day of anger? If, then, you are pricked to the heart, I preach to you the Gospel now. Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. This day look to Him that hung upon the Cross. This day believe and live.   
And now to illustrate the manner in which rebellious sinners are reconciled to God, I will relate to you an interesting anecdote from the life of a soldier. It may picture to your minds the majesty of God in strewing grace and the humbling experience of the sinner in receiving it and help us to answer that solemn questionWhat must I do to be saved? My author says that he and his comrades of a certain regiment serving in India had been without pay for about six months and there was strong suspicion throughout the ranks that their commanding officer had embezzled the money. He was a great gambler and they thought it most likely that he had gambled away their pay.

They were determined to seek redress. So all the private soldiers (with the exception of non-commissioned officers) agreed that on a particular morning, when on parade, they should not obey the word of command. The day arrived and they carried their design into execution. The regiment was assembled. The men in companies headed by their respective officers proceeded to the parade ground and formed into open columns. The commanding officer took his station in front and gave the word of command. Not one, however, of the privates obeyed. This being the conduct of the regiment, the commanding officer, with great self-possession, ordered every tenth man to be confined in the guardhouse. It was done without a show of resistance. But then all the privates fixed bayonets, shouldered arms and marched offthe band playing and the drums beating alternatelyall the way to the residence of the general, about a mile distant. There they halted and formed a line in a most orderly manner fronting the house. One man from each of the ten companies then stepped forward and they proceeded to lodge a written complaint against the colonel. Having thus fulfilled their purpose they marched back and dismissed. The next thing they did was release the prisoners and this they did without any violence being offered by the guard. Whatever extenuations we may conceive for such conduct, according to military Law, it was a heinous crime.   
The soldiers duty is to obey. He must not think for himself, but he must be as a tool in the hands of his superior officersto do as he is told and not to complain. Shortly after this, to the surprise of these soldiers, the general was seen approaching with a large army of Sepoys, infantry and cavalry, with field pieces in front. The regiment went out and respectfully saluted him, forming in line. But this was not what the general came for. They saw the storm brewing and prepared to fight.   
After the two lines had been formed, facing each other, the General moved out on horseback and said, Twenty-second, take the command from me. They obeyed. He then said, Order arms. NextHandle arms. And last, which was most disgraceful to themGround army. Having thus disarmed, he ordered his black cavalry to charge upon them and drive them from their arms. One more order he gave to those disaffected menthat they should strip off their accoutrements, and lay them on the ground, and be off to their barracks. When he had thus disarmed and dishonored the men, he forgave them.   
And now will not this incident fitly represent the manner of God with sinners, when according to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, He brings terms of peace and reconciliation to us who are in revolt against Him? He says, Ground arms, give up your sins, take off your self-righteousness. He disarms us, dishonors us and strips off all our comely array and then says, Now I will forgive you.   
If there is anyone here who has thrown down his weapons of rebellion and whose fine ornaments of beauty are stained with shame, let him believe that God will now forgive him. He forgives those who cannot forgive themselves. The great Captain of our salvation will pardon those whom He has humbled. He will have you submit to His will and though that may at first seem imperious to drive you from your quarters and visit you with punishment, you shall presently find that His sovereign will is gracious and He delights in mercy. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, for thus says the Word, He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believes not shall be damned.  
May you believe, by His Grace. Amen. Amen.

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THE CHRISTIANS MANIFESTATION   
NO. 3004

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 1906.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 5, 1866.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. 1 John 3:2.

THE text mentions, now, and then passes on to the future and speaks of, yet. It does, however, speak of, now and, after all, despite our trials, there is much to make us happy in our present condition. Beloved, now are we the sons of God. Our manifold temptations and infirmities cannot make us lose the blessings that come to us through our adoption into the family of God! Happy are you, O Israel: who is like unto you, O people saved by the Lord? Today, even today, we are the blessed of the Lord and we find in godliness the blessing of the life that now is.

Yet, Beloved, for all that, we are still forced to cry   
*Alas for us if you were all,   
And nothing beyond, O earth!*

If this were all our life, it would have been better for us not to have lived. Woe unto us if we had to live here always! Young says

*Were there no death, even fools might wish to die* and, certainly, wise men would do so, for, Brothers and Sisters, this is a life of distractions, cares, anxieties, disappointments and, what is worse, it is a life of sins, sorrows and bitter repentances for wrong-doing! This life is to us a travelers life with all the inconveniences that we meet with in travelling. We are here today and we are gone tomorrow! Sometimes the heat consumes us and at other times the cold bites us. We are like men at seawe have not yet cast our anchor, nor furled our sails, nor reached the port where we are boundand the sea in which we are sailing is rough, tempest-tossed and beset with rocks, shoals and quicksands. Our soul is often half a wreck and longs for the desired haven where, the wicked cease from troubling and, the weary are at rest. Ours is a soldiers lifewe have to be constantly fighting, or else continually upon our guard. Think not, you who have just buckled on your harness, that you have won the victory, for the good soldiers of Jesus Christ must fight from morn till evening, from youths happy morning till the eve of gray old age!

I would not paint life in sadder colors than it needs, but I dare not shut my eyes to the fact that this is a sad world and that our path is one of sorrow, for it is through much tribulation that we enter into the Kingdom of God.

*The path of sorrow and that path alone, Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.*

It is to that other and better land that I would, for a little while, bear away your thoughts. We shall borrow the wings of our text and, like the eagle, soar towards Heaven!

I. We will begin with this sentenceIT DOES NOT YET APPEAR WHAT WE SHALL BE.   
What we are to be, we can scarcely guess. Indeed, we cannot guess at all by the use of our senses. Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him. But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit. But only to our spirits! Flesh and blood, as they are, cannot inherit the Kingdom of God and cannot even guess what that Kingdom is like. This is not the place where the Christian is to be seen. This is the place of his veilingHeaven is the place of his manifestation. This is the place of his night. Yonder is the place of his day. Our portion is on the other side of the riverour days of feasting are not yet!   
Some of the reasons why it does not yet appear what we shall be may be as follows. First, our Master was, to a great extent, concealed and hidden, and we must expect to be as He was. Is it not written, in this very Epistle, as He is, as are we in this world? Jesus said to His followers when He was here upon earth, The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. My Brothers and Sisters, see that Man wearing a coat without seam, woven from the top throughoutthe carpenters son, the heir of poverty, the Companion of the humblest classes of mankind? Can you see in Him God over all, blessed forever? If you can, you are not looking with the eyes of your flesh, I am sure, for in that manner, you cannot detect the Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ beneath so humble a garb. The veil which the Savior cast about Himself was not so thick but that some rays of His Glory burst through when He trod the waves, rebuked the winds and raised the dead, but still, it was sufficiently dense, for He cried, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head. You will see that Christ was concealed as you remember that.   
But, as Dr. Watts says   
*All riches are His native right*   
yet, when He had to pay the Temple tax, He had to work a miracle that Peter might be able to catch the fish which had the exact amount required in its mouth. He was so poor that He had to live upon the charity of His followers. Would you have believed that He was the Lord of all creation if you had seen Him up on yonder lonely mountains side without a bed to rest upon, or sitting wearily upon Jacobs well at Sychar and asking a sinful woman to give Him a little water to drink? The Savior was, indeed, masked and hidden so that the vulgar eye could not detect His Glory. Only such eagle-eyed men as John were able to say, We beheld His Glory, the Glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and truth. Our Lords wisdom, Grace, power and all His other illustrious attributes were concealed beneath the veil of our inferior clay. Dr. Watts was right, as I reminded you just now, when he wrote *Worthy is He that once was slain   
The Prince of Peace that groaned and died Worthy to rise, and live, and reign   
At His almighty Fathers side!   
Power and dominion are His due   
Who stood condemned at Pilates bar.   
Wisdom belongs to Jesus, too,   
Though He was charged with madness here. All riches are His native right,   
Yet He sustained amazing loss!   
To Him ascribe eternal might   
Who left His weakness on the Cross.*   
So fully did He veil His Glory that some even ventured to call Him Beelzebub and to say that He was a gluttonous man and a winebibber!

Now, Christian, as you think of all this, do you wonder if worldlings do not know you and only speak of you to slander you? Do you wonder if your integrity is questioned and your most manifest virtue is misrepresented? And if the Grace which really is within you is laughed at and despised? How could the world know you when the Savior, Himself, was not discovered? As the bright gleams of His Divine Glory were almost wholly concealed, surely the weaker gleams of your earthly and human glory must be altogether hidden! That, perhaps, is the first reason why it does not yet appear what we shall be.   
I think I may also remark, Brothers and Sisters, that we are not yet fit to let it appear what we shall be. The son in the house, says one, is treated as if he were a servantand even worse than if he were a servant. A servant is not chastisedhe may do many wrong things and yet escape without a stripeyet it is not as with the son. Why does not his father give him the honor and dignity which belong to his sonship? Simply because he is at present only a child and he must be treated as a child for a time, in order that he may be fitted to adorn his sonship. It would spoil him to receive at once all that is to be his when he enters upon his inheritance. He is the heir to all his fathers estates, yet he has to be thankful to his father for even a pennyand he receives his pittance week by week, as though he were a poor pensioner upon his fathers bounty or a beggar at his door. Why does not the father give this heir to large estates a thousand pounds? Why does he not entrust him with a great store of wealth? Because he is in his nonage and if he were trusted with a large sum of money at so early an age, he might grow profligate and so be unfit to use his wealth rightly if he should reach riper years.   
Brothers and Sisters, you and I, if we are Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, are kingsnot only sons of God, but kings who are to reign with Him forever! Then why are we not treated like kings? You know that in some earthly royal families, it is thought best for the prince, the heirapparent to the throne, that he should be a soldier or a sailor and serve his country in that capacity, so that, when he comes to the throne, he may understand how to wield his scepter for the good of all classes of his subjects. So, Christian, is it with you. You are so childish at present you have just lately begun to learn the nature of Divine things. You are uninstructedyou know but in part and you know that part so badly that it would not be fitting that your greatness should be revealed to you at present! You must be held back for a while till you have been better trained in the Holy Spirits schooland then it shall appear what you shall be!  
A third reason why it does not yet appear what we shall be is, I think, because this is not the world in which the Christian is to appear in his glory, for, if he did, his glory would be lost in this world. The multitude climbed to the tops of the trees, or the roofs of the houses, from where they might see Caesar or Pompey returning with the spoils of war. And the multitudes still clap their hands when a warrior has overcome his countrys enemies and so become a great man. But the world cares little or nothing about self-denial, about Christian love, about consecration and devotion to Christ and His causeyet these things are the glory of a Christian! That morel excellence, that spiritual worth which flashes from the eyes of the holy angels and the saints in Glory is almost unappreciated here. Your Master has had this Glory, though it was usually veiled while He was here below, yet the people cried out, away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him! And if you had here, to its full extent, the glory which will be revealed in you in Heaven, people would say the same concerning you! This is not the world in which you are to display your full honors. When a king is journeying through a foreign country, he does not wear his crown, nor the rest of his regal clotheshe often travels incognito and even when he reaches his own country, he does not put on his royal robe for fools to admire at every village wake and fair! He is not a puppet-king, strutting upon the stage to show himself to the common peoplehe reserves his grandeur for great public occasions and grand court ceremonies. In this poor sinful world, you Christians would be out of place if you could be what you shall yet be! You, also, must go incognito through this world to a large extent. But, by-and-by, you shall take off the travel-worn garments that you have worn during your earthly pilgrimage and put on your beautiful array and be manifested to the whole universe as a son or a daughter of the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible!   
And to close this part of the subject, It does not yet appear what we shall be, because this is not the time for the display of the Christians glory. If I may use such an expression, time is not the time for the manifestation of a Christians glory. Eternity is to be the period for the Christians full development and for the sinless display of his God-given glory. Here he must expect to be unknownit is in the hereafter that he is to be discovered as a son of the great King. At present it is with us as it is with the world during winter. If you had not seen the miracle worked again and again, you would not guess, when you look upon those black beds in the garden, or when you walk over that snowy and frosty covering, crisp and hard beneath your feet, that the earth will yet be sown with all the colors of the rainbow and that it will be gemmed with flowers of unspeakable beauty! No, the winter is not the time when the beauty of the earth is to be best seen. And, Christian, you, also, must pass through your winter season. Yes, but let that wintry weather once be over, let the bleak December winds howl into your ears, let the cold and cheerless January come and go, let February also pass and, behold, the springtime comes! I might also say that gray hairs come upon your head like the snowflakes appear upon the earthas the forerunner of spring and of summerand your soul shall yet blossom with unspeakable joy and full of glory, and all the graces and excellence of the Christian shall be revealed in you! It is winter with you now, but the summer comes!   
If you stand, as many of you have often done, at the seaside, you have noticed that at certain hours of the day there is a long expanse of mud, or of dry sand, and it may not seem to one who sees it for the first time as though the sea had ever rolled over it, or that it ever would. Ah, but it does not yet appear what it will be! It is ebb-tide now, but wait till the flood comes and then you will see the whole of that black mire or that yellow sand glistening in the sunshine! So, the flood of glory is rising, Christian! Can you not see the breakers in the distance, the white crests of the incoming waves? Gods great sea of eternity draws nearer and nearer! Can you not hear the booming of that mighty flood? Soon shall your ransomed spirit float and bathe in that sea of Glory where not a single wave shall cause you a moments grief or pain! This is not the time, Christian, in which you are to be fully revealed. You are, today, like that ugly shriveled seedthere is no beauty in it that you should desire it. Yes, but wait a little while and the sweetly-perfumed flower shall shed its fragrance in the air and make the gazer pause to admire the matchless colors with which God has been pleased to paint it! Then shall its full glory be known and seen! At present you are in your seed stage and your sowing time is coming. Tremble not that it is so. There will be a time for your poor flesh to sleep in the silent grave, but, at the voice of the archangel and the blast of the trumpet of the Resurrection, you shall arise! Just as the flower rises in spring, the dead body, which was put into the tomb, shall rise incorruptible in the image of the Savior!   
So, you see, it does not yet appear what we shall be, because the Lord Jesus Christ was not fully revealed here, because we are not fit to appear in Glory, because we are not here in the midst of the men and women who should see us in our glory and because it is not yet the right time for us thus to appear. To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heavens, but this is not the time for the full manifestation of Christians and, therefore, it does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.  
II. Having spent so much time over the previous clause, we will merely hint at the teaching of the next words of the textBUT WE KNOW THAT WHEN HE SHALL APPEAR.   
So, then, it is quite certain that Christ will appear. John does not stop to prove it. He speaks of it as though it were perfectly understood that Christ would again appear and he mentions what is to be the nature of that appearing.   
Christ will appear in Person. This is what the two angels declared to the disciples after His Ascension, This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven. That is, as the Incarnate God He will come back from Heaven.   
When He comes, He will appear full of happiness. There will be no more sorrow to winkle His brow, no more furrows to be plowed on His back, no fresh wounds to be made in His hands or his feet, no more offering of a Sacrifice for sinHe will come to forever rejoice with His people!   
Further, when He comes, He will appear in His Glorynot as the Man of Nazareth to be despised and spit uponbut as The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. If any of you are tempted to ask, When will He come? I give you His own assurance, Surely I come quickly. So go your way and pray, as John did, Even so, come, Lord Jesus, yet do not forget Pauls Inspired sentence, But of the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. Christ is coming, Beloved, literally comingnot figuratively and by His Spirit, but literally, actually, really

*Lo! He comes with clouds descending   
Once for favored sinners slain.*   
He is coming in Glory to dwell in the midst of His saints forever. This is our blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.   
III. Now, passing on, We know that when He shall appear, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM; FOR WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS.   
There are other passages in His Word where we are distinctly told that His manifestation will be coincident with our manifestation. Here we are told that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him. And the reason given for this is, for we shall see Him as He is.   
Let us, while pondering the text, then, meditate upon this great Truth of GodWe shall be like Him. This afternoon, meditating upon this glorious assurance that I shall be like Christand I fully believe that I shall be like Himit did seem to me as if it were almost too good to be true!

Yet it is true that we are to be like Christ, first, as to our body. Here we are like the first Adam of the earth, earthy. But we shall, one day, have a body like that of the second Adam, a heavenly body! Like the first Adam, we are now mortal. Like the second Adam, we shall, by-and-by, be immortal! Christs body is not now subject to any pains, or to any decay or diseaseneither shall our body be. It is quite true that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, yet it will be this very body of ours that will inherit the Kingdom of God, only that which is corruptible in it, that which is mere flesh and blood, will then have been removed! As the Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians in that wonderful chapter about the Resurrection, It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. It is a spiritual body which the Lord Jesus Christ has today. I cannot imagine how glorious the Savior is in Heaven, but I always think of Him, even when He was upon this earth, as being far fairer than any artist ever depicted Him. I have gazed a long while upon many paintings of Christ, both in England and abroad, but I have never yet seen one which appeared to me to be equal even to my ideal of the Savior! I have looked and I have said, Oh, no! He was far fairer than that! There must have been more beauty in His face than even that great master has portrayed. Well, Brothers and Sisters, if that is true concerning Him as He was when among the sons of men, how true it must be concerning Him as He is now! He is fairer than all the fair spirits that surround the heavenly Throne! He is the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valleys. Among the shining seraphim and cherubim, none can be compared with Him and, Christian, you are to be like Him! Whatever are the Characteristics of the Saviors glorified body, they are to be the characteristics of your body, also! You are to have an immortal body, a spiritual body, a body incapable of pain, suffering, decaya body which shall be suited to your emancipated spirit, a body having a wider range than this limited earthly sphere, having greater powers at locomotion, perhaps flying, swiftly as light, from world to world, or possibly having the power even to outrun the lightnings flash! I do not know how wondrous Christs glorified body is, but I do know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him (even in body); for we shall see Him as He is.

But, far more important than that, we shall also be like Christ in soul. Have the eyes of your spiritual understanding or sanctified imagination ever looked upon Christs spotless, perfectly-developed soulthat equably-adjusted spirit, in which no one power or passion was too prominent or predominantbut in which His whole Being was beautifully molded and rounded according to the perfect pattern of moral excellence and beauty? Now, Beloved, you are to be just like thatnot quick in temper, as perhaps you now are, but meek and lowly as He wasnot haughty and prone to pride, but humble and gentle as He wasnot selfish and self-seeking, but as disinterested and as tender to others as He wasin fact, perfections own self! It was said of Harry the Eighth that if all the histories of all the tyrants who ever lived had been lost, you might have composed them all with the material from the life of that execrable monster! And I will venture to say that if all the biographies of all the good men and holy angels that have ever existed could be blotted out of existence or memory, they might all be written again with the material from the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, for in Him dwells all excellence and all goodness! What a joy it is to us to know that we shall be like Him! Brothers and Sisters in Christ, this blessed Truth of God is enough to make you stand up or even leap in the exuberance of your joy! I have heard of our enthusiastic Welsh friends dancing during some of their preachers sermonsand if it is this or a similar Truth which makes them dance, who can wonder at it? We shall be like Himlike Him in soul, with no more infirmities of temper, or sloth, or undue haste. Our human nature shall be rid of all its rags and we shall be perfect, even as our Father in Heaven is perfect! Oh, that the blessed day had already come and that we were like our Lord! But we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.

*Nor does it yet appear   
How great we must be made!   
But when we see our Savior here,   
We shall be like our Head.*

Time fails me to say what I should have liked to have said, yet I ought to add that we shall be like Christ not only in body and in soul, but also in condition. We shall be with Him where He is and we shall be as happy as He is, as far as our capacity for happiness goes. We shall be crowned even as He is crowned and we will sit upon thrones even as He sits upon His Fathers Throne. He shall lead us to living fountains of water and be our constant Companion, never going away from us again. He shall call us His brethren and we shall share in His honor and Glory. The joy of which we shall partake shall be His joy, and it will be in us that our joy may be full. O Christian, think lofty thoughts concerning the Lord in Glory and remember that you shall be like Him! I cannot help repeating that quaint little ditty which Rowland Hill was so fond of humming in his old age

*And when Im to die, Receive me, Ill cry, For Jesus has loved, I cannot tell why!   
But thus I do find, we too are so joined   
Hell not live in Glory and leave me behind.*

IV. So, we shall be like Him. And the reason why we shall be like Him is thus given by John, FOR WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS.   
How is it that we shall be like Him because of that? Partly, by reflection. Perhaps you are aware that in the olden time, looking-glasses (if I may use an Irishism), were not looking-glasses at all, for they were made of polished brass. If a person looked into such a mirror when the sun was shining upon that mirror, not only would the mirror itself be bright, but it would also throw a reflection on the face of the person who was looking into it. This is only according to the laws of light. When a man looks into a bright mirror, it makes him, also, bright, for it throws its own light upon his face and, in a much more wonderful fashion, when we look at Christ, who is all brightness, He throws some of His brightness upon us! When Moses went up into the mountain to commune with God, his face shone because he had received a reflection of Gods Glory upon his face. He had looked into the blazing light of Deity, as far as a created eye could look there and, therefore, that light was so brilliantly reflected in his own face that Aaron and the people were afraid to draw near himand he had to cover his face with a veil while he spoke to them.   
Further, Beloved, we get to be like Christ by seeing Him in type and symbol, as through a glass darkly. The Lords Supper is one of the glasses. Believers Baptism is another. The preaching of the Word is another. The Bible, itself, is another of these glasses. It is only a partial reflection of Christ that we get from all these glasses yet, as we look at it, as Paul writes to the Corinthians, We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, or, by the Lord, the Spirit.   
But, Brothers and Sisters, if there is such a sanctifying influence about the very reflection of Jesus Christ, what a wondrous power it must have upon us when we see Him as He is! When we shall gaze upon Him with unveiled vision and see Him as He is, do you wonder that John says that then, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is? Oh, that amazing sight, that unique sight of Jesus as He is! It would be worthwhile to die a thousand painful deaths in order to get one brief glimpse of Him as He is! I do not think that Rutherford exaggerated when he talked of swimming through seven Hells to get at Christ if he could not get at Him any other way. A distant view of Him, as we have seen Him leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills, has so ravished our souls that we have scarcely known whether we have been in the body or out of our body. When we have heard His voice, we have longed to be with Him. The very thought of Him has made us like the dove separated for a while from her mate, long to cleave the air with rapid wing and fly home to our dovecote and to our blessed Noah. What must it be to be there? What must it be to see our Savior as He is?   
In some of the houses not far from here, I noticed some finches in cages in which there were tufts of grass, or small branches of trees as perches for the poor prisonersyet they were singing away right merrily. I suppose that grass and those fragments of trees were meant to remind them, in this great, dirty, smoky Babylon, that there are green fields and wide forests somewhere. I thought, as I looked upon them, Ah, you poor birds are like what I myself am! My Master has put me in a little cage and bid me bide here for a whileand He has given me my little tuft of grass as an earnest of my inheritance in the

*Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood.* He graciously sends me a few comforts on the way. Ah, but that poor little tuft of grass, what is it in comparison with the fields and the hedges which are the proper home of the singing birds which have their liberty? And, Christian, you do not know what it will be for you to have your cage door opened that you may fly away to that blessed land where the true birds of Paradise forever warble, from their joyful throats, the loudest praises to the great King who has set them free forever! Let us begin the music here! Let us try, even now, to anticipate that happy day as we sing of  
*Jerusalem the golden, With milk and honey blest* where   
*The daylight is serene.* And where   
*The pastures of the blessed   
Are decked in glorious sheen.*   
I leave my text with you who love the Lord. As for you who do not love Him, I dare not give it to you. Oh, that you did love Him and that you did trust Him! He waits to be gracious. Seek His face and He will be found of you. Fly to Him and He will not reject you. Trust in Him and He will wash you from all your sins and bring you to His Presence in eternal Glory, to go no more out forever! May He give you this unspeakable blessing, for His loves sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: 1 JOHN 2; 3:1, 2.

1 John 2:1. My little children, these things I write unto you, that you sin not. This is one of the great objectives of all that is written by Inspirationthat we may be kept from sin. O child of God, as you would fear to drink poison, as you would flee from a serpent, dread sin!

1. And if any man sins. Is it a hopeless case then? Far from it! If any man sins.   
1-3. We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. Holiness of life is the best proof that we know God. It matters not how readily we can speak about God, nor how much we suppose that we love Himthe great test is, do we keep His commandments? What a heart-searching test this is! How it should humble us before the Mercy Seat!   
4-6. He that says, I know Him, and keeps not His commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him. He that says he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked. When we try to be, in every respect, what Gods Word tells us we ought to be, then may we know that we are in God. But if we walk carelessly, if we take no account of our actions, but do, after a random fashion, whatever comes into our foolish hearts, then have we no evidence at all that we are in God!   
7. Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which we had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you have heard from the beginning. From the time when Christ first began to preach, or when the Gospel was first preached in your ears.

8. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in Him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shines. That which is new in the Gospel, in one sense, is not new in another, for, though John was about to write what he called a new commandment, yet, at the same time, he was writing something which was not novel, something which was not grafted upon the Gospel, but which grows naturally out of it, namely, the Law of Love.

9. He that says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness, even until now. God is Love and God is Light. Therefore, love is light, and the Light of God is Love. Where enmity and hatred are still in the heart, it is proof positive that the Grace of God is not there.

10-15. He that loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hates his brother is in darkness, and walks in darkness, and knows not where he goes, because that darkness has blinded his eyes. I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His names sake. I write unto you, fathers, because you have known Him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because you have overcome the Wicked One. I write unto you, little children, because you have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because you have known Him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because you are strong, and the Word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the Wicked One. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For this sinful world is directly opposed to the Father. You cannot send your heart at the same time in two opposite waystowards evil and towards good. You must make a choice between the two.

16, 17. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of God abides forever. It ought not, then, to be difficult to make a choice between these fleeting shadows and the everlasting substance.

18. Little children, it is the last time. You may read the passage, It is the last hour, as if John wanted to show how late it was and how soon Christ would come. It is the last hour.

18. And as you have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. How much more emphatically John might write this verse if he were writing today!

19. They went out from us. For, alas, many of the antichrists came out of the Church. They sprang up from among the followers of Christ. They went out from us.

19, 20. But they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. But you have an unction from the Holy One, and you know all things. You who know Godand even the little children, the babes in Christ, know the Fatherknow all things. And you will not be led astray and deceived by these antichrists who have gone out into the world.

21. I have not written unto you because you know not the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. The truth is all of a piece, and a lie cannot be a part of the truth. Christ does not teach us a Jesuitical system in which error and falsehood are mixed up with truth the Gospel is all truthand to those who believe it we may say, You know the truth, and you also know that no lie is of the truth.

22, 23. Who is a liar but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son, the same has not the Father. They who deny the Deity of Christ practically deny the Divine Fatherhood of God. It is not possible for us to understand the rest of the Truth of God if we do not believe in Christ, who is the Truth. As the poet says

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

23-28. [But] he that acknowledges the Son has the Father also. Let that therefore abide in you, which you have heard from the beginning. If that which you have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, you also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And that is the promise that He has promised us, even eternal life. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which you have received of Him abides in you, and you need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and in truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, we shall abide in Him. And now, little children, abide in Him. That which is the subject of promise is also the subject of precept. And the precepts of the Gospel are given to Christians because, in this way, God keeps His own promise and so leads me to obey His precepts.

28, 29. That, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone that does righteousness is born of Him.

1 John 3:1, 2. Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knows us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermons #61, 62 New Park Street Pulpit 1

THE BEATIFIC VISION   
NOS. 61, 62

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 20, 1856, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

We shall see Him as He is.   
1 John 3:2.

IT is one of the most natural desires in all the world that when we hear of a great and a good man, we should wish to see him in person. When we read the works of any eminent author, we are accustomed to turn to the frontispiece to look for his portrait. When we hear of any wondrous deed of daring, we will crowd our windows to see the warrior ride through the streets. When we know of any man who is holy and who is eminently devoted to his work, we will not mind tarrying anywhere if we may but have a glimpse of him whom God has so highly blessed. This feeling becomes doubly powerful when we have any connection with the manwhen we feel not only that he is great, but that he is great for us not simply that he is good, but that he is good to us! Not only that he is benevolent, but that he has been a benefactor to us as individuals. Then the wish to see him rises to a craving desire and the desire is insatiable until it can satisfy itself in seeing that unknown and hitherto unseen donor who has done such wondrously good deeds for us. I am sure, my Brothers and Sisters, you will all confess that this strong desire has arisen in your minds concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. We owe to none so much! We talk of none so much, we hope and we think of none so muchat any rate, no one so constantly thinks of us! We have, I believe, all of us who love His name, a most insatiable wish to behold His Person. The thing for which I would pray above all others would be forever to behold His face, forever to lay my head upon His breast, forever to know that I am His, forever to dwell with Him! Yes, one short glimpse, one transitory vision of His Glory, one brief glance at His marred but now exalted and beaming Countenance would repay almost a world of trouble! We have a strong desire to see Him. Nor do I think that that desire is wrong. Moses, himself, asked that he might see God. Had it been a wrong wish arising out of vain curiosity, it would not have been granted. But God granted Moses his desireHe put him in the cleft of the rock, shaded him with His hands, bade him look at the skirts of His garments, because His face could not be seen. Yes, more. The earnest desire of the very best of men has been in the same direction. Job said, I know that my Redeemer lives and though worms devour this body, yet in my flesh shall I see Godthat was his desire. The holy Psalmist said, I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness. I shall behold Your face in righteousness. And most saints, on their deathbeds, have expressed their fondest, dearest and most blessed wish for Heavenin the expression of longing to be with Christ, which is far better. And not ill did our sweet singer of Israel put the words together, when he humbly said and sweetly, too

*Millions of years my wondering eye   
Shall over Your beauties rove.   
And endless ages Ill adore   
The glories of Your love.*

We are rejoiced to find such a verse as this, for it tells us that our curiosity shall be satisfied, our desire consummated, our bliss perfected. WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS. Heaven shall be ours and all we ever dreamed of Him shall be more than in our possession!

By the help of Gods mighty Spirit, who alone can put words in our mouths, let us speak, first of all, concerning the glorious positionAS HE IS. Secondly, His personal identitywe shall see HIM as He is. Thirdly, the positive visionWe SHALL SEE Him as He is. And fourthly, the actual personsWE shall see Him as He is.

I. First then, THE GLORIOUS POSITION. Our minds often revert to Christ as He was and as such we have desired to see Him. Ah, how often have we wished to see the Baby that slept in Bethlehem! How earnestly have we desired to see the Man who talked with the woman at the well! How frequently have we wished that we might see the blessed Physician walking among the sick and dying, giving life with His touch and healing with His breath! How frequently, too, have our thoughts retired to Gethsemane. How we have wished our eyes were strong enough to pierce through 1,850 years which part us from that wondrous spectacle, that we might see Him as He was! We shall never see Him thusBethlehems glories are gone forever. Calvarys glooms are swept away. Gethsemanes scene is dissolved. And even Tabors splendors are quenched in the past. They are as things that were. Nor shall they ever have a resurrection. The crown of thorns, the spear, the sponge, the nailsthese are not. The manger and the rocky tomb are gone. The places are there, unsanctified by Christian feet, unblessed, unhallowed by the Presence of their Lord! We shall never see Him as He was. In vain our fancy tries to paint it, or our imagination to fashion it. We cannot, must not see Him as He was! Nor do we wish to, for we have a larger promiseWe shall see Him as He is. Come, just look at that a few moments by way of contrast and then I am sure you will prefer to see Christ as He is, rather than behold Him as He was!

Consider, first of all, that we shall not see Him abased in His Incarnation, but exalted in His Glory. We are not to see the Infant of a span long. We are not to admire the youthful Boy. We are not to address the incipient Man. We are not to pity the Man wiping the hot sweat from His burning brow. We are not to behold Him shivering in the midnight air. We are not to behold Him subject to pains, weaknesses, sorrows and infirmities like ours. We are not to see His eyes wearied by sleeplessness. We are not to behold His hands tired in labor. We are not to behold His feet bleeding with arduous journeys too long for their strength. We are not to see Him with His soul distressed. We are not to behold Him abased and sorrowful. Oh, the sight is better still! We are to see Him exalted! We shall see the head, but not with its crown of thorns

*The head that once was crowned with thorns, Is crowned with Glory now.*

We shall see the hand and the nail prints, too, but not the nails. They have been drawn out and forever. We shall see His side and its pierced wound, but the blood shall not issue from it. We shall see Him not with a peasants garb around Him, but with the empire of the universe upon His shoulders! We shall see Him, not with a reed in His hand, but grasping a golden scepter! We shall see Him, not as mocked and spit upon and insulted, not bone of our bone, in all our agonies, afflictions and distresseswe shall see Him exaltedno longer Christ, the Man of Sorrows, the acquaintance of griefbut Christ the Man God, radiant with splendor, effulgent with light, clothed with rainbows, girded with clouds, wrapped in lightning, crowned with stars, the sun beneath His feet! Oh, glorious vision! How can we guess what He is? What words can tell us? Or how can we speak thereof? Yet whatever He is, with all His splendor unveiled, all His glories unclouded and Himself unclothedwe shall see Him as He is.

Remember againwe are not to see Christ as He was, the despised, the tempted One. We shall never see Christ sitting in the wilderness, while the arch-traitor says to Him, If You are the Son of God command that these stones be made bread. We shall not see Him standing firmly on the Temples pinnacle, bidding defiance to the Evil One who bids Him cast Himself down from that towering height. We shall not see Him erect on the mountain of temptation, with the earth offered to Him if He will but crouch at the feet of the demon. No! Nor shall we see Him mocked by Pharisees, tempted by Sadducees, laughed at by Herodians. We shall not behold Him with the finger of scorn pointed at Him. We shall never see Him called a drunken Man and a winebibber. We shall never see the calumniated, the insulted, the molested, the despised Jesus! He will not be seen as One from whom we shall hide our faces, who was despised and we esteemed Him not. Never shall these eyes see those blessed cheeks dripping with spit! Never shall these hands touch that blessed hand of His while stained with infamy. We shall not see Him despised of men and oppressed. But we shall see Him as He is

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

No tempting devil near Himfor the dragon is beneath His feet. No insulting men, for lo, the redeemed cast their crowns before His feet! No molesting demons, for angels sound His lofty praise through every golden street! Princes bow before Him. The kings of the isles bring tribute. All nations pay Him homage, while the great God of Heaven and earth, shining on Him, gives Him mighty honor! We shall see Him, Beloved, not abhorred, not despised and rejected but worshipped, honored, crowned, exalted, served by flaming spirits and worshipped by cherubim and seraphim! We shall see Him as He is.

Mark againWe shall not see the Christ wrestling with pain, but Christ as a conqueror. We shall never see Him tread the winepress alone, but we shall see Him when we shall cry, Who is this who comes from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength? We shall never see Him as when He stood foot to foot with His enemywe shall see Him when His enemy is beneath His feet! We shall never see Him as the bloody sweat streams from His whole body, but we shall see Him as He has put all things under Him and has conquered Hell, itself! We shall never see Him as the wrestler. But we shall see Him grasp the prize. We shall never see Him sealing the rampart. But we shall see Him wave the sword of victory on the top thereof! We shall not see Him fight. But we shall see Him return from the fight victorious and shall cry, Crown Him, Crown Him! Crowns become the Victors brow. We shall see Him as He is.

Yet againWe shall never see our Savior under His Fathers displeasure, but we shall see Him honored by His Fathers smile. The darkest hour of Christs life was when His Father forsook Himthat gloomy hour when His Fathers remorseless hand held the cup to His Sons own lips and bitter though it was, said to Him, Drink My Sonyes, drink. And when the quivering Savior said, My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Oh, it was a dark moment when the Fathers ears were deaf to His Sons petitions, when the Fathers eyes were closed upon His Sons agonies. My Father, said the Son, Can You not remove the cup? Is there no way else for Your severe justice? Is there no other medium for mans salvation? There is none! Ah, it was a terrible moment when He tasted the wormwood and the gall! And surely darker, still, was that sad midday midnight, when the sun hid his face in darkness, while Jesus cried, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Believer, you will never see that sick face. You will never see that wan, thin forehead. You will never see that poor scarred brow. You will never see those tearful eyes. You will never see that pale emaciated body. You will never see that weary, weary heart! You will never see that exceedingly sorrowful spirit for the Father never turns His face away, now! But what will you see? You will see your Lord lit up with His Fathers light as well as with His own. You will see Him caressed by His Beloved Parent. You will see Him sitting at His Fathers right hand, glorified and exalted forever! We shall see Him as He is.

Perhaps I have not shown clearly enough the difference between the two visionsthe sight of what He was and what He is. Allow me, then, a moment more and I will try and make it still clearer. When we see Christ as He was, how astonished we are! One of the first feelings we should have, if we could have gone to the Mount of Olives and seen our Savior sweating there, would have been astonishment. When we were told that it was the Son of God in agonies, we would have lifted up our hands and there would have been no speech in us at the thought! But then, Beloved, here is the difference. The Believer will be as much astonished when he sees Jesus Glories, as He sits on His Throne, as he would have been to have seen Him in His earthly sufferings! The one would have been astonishment and horror would have succeeded it. But when we see Jesus as He is, it will be astonishment without horror. We shall not, for one moment, feel terrified at the sight, but rather

*Our joys shall run eternal rounds,   
Beyond the limits of the skies   
And earths remotest bounds.*

If we could see Jesus as He was, we would see Him with great awe. If we had seen Him walking on the water, what awe would we have felt! If we had seen Him raising the dead, we would have thought Him a most majestic Being. So we shall feel awe when we see Christ on His Throne. But the first kind of awe is awe compounded with fearfor when they saw Jesus walking on the water, they cried out and were afraid! But when we shall see Christ as He is, we shall say

*Majestic sweetness sits enthroned*

*Upon His amazing brow!*   
There will be no fear with the aweit will be awe without fear. We shall not bow before Him with trembling, but it will be with joy! We shall not shake at His Presence, but rejoice with unspeakable joy!

Furthermore, if we had seen Christ as He was, we would have had great love for Him. But that love would have been compounded with pity. We would stand over Him and say

*Alas! And did my Savior bleed,   
And did my Sovereign die?   
Would He devote that sacred head   
For such a worm as I?*

We shall love Him quite as much when we see Him in Heaven and more, too, but it will be love without pity. We shall not say, Alas! but we shall shout

*All hail, the power of Jesus name!   
Let angels prostrate fall   
Bring forth the royal diadem   
And crown Him Lord of all!*

Once againIf we had seen Jesus Christ as He was here below, there would have been joy to think that He came to save us. But we would have had sorrow mingled with it to think that we needed saving. Our sins would make us grieve that He should die. And, alas! would burst from us even with a song of joy. But when we see Him up there it will be joy without sorrowsin and sorrow, itself, will have gone. Ours will be a pure, unmingled, unadulterated joy!

Yet moreIf we had seen our Savior as He was, it would have been a triumph to see how He conquered, but still there would have been suspense about it. We would have feared lest He might not overcome. But when we see Him up there it will be triumph without suspense. Sheathe the sword! The battles won! Tis over nowTis finished, has been said! The grave has been past. The gates have been opened. And now, henceforth and forever, He sits down at His Fathers right hand, from where also He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

Here, then, is the difference. We shall see Him as He is. We shall feel astonishment without horror, awe without fear, love without pity, joy without sorrow, triumph without suspense. That is the glorious position! Poor words, why fail you? Poor lips, why speak you not much better? If you could, you would. For these are glorious things you speak ofWE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS.

II. Now secondly, we have PERSONAL IDENTITY. Perhaps while I have been speaking, some have said, Ah, but I want to see the Savior, the Savior of Calvary, the Savior of Judea, the very One that died for me! I do not so much pant to see the glorious Savior you have spoken of. I want to see that very Savior who did the works of love, the suffering Saviorfor Him I love. Beloved, you shall see Him! It is the same one. There is personal identity. We shall see Him. Our eyes shall see Him and not another. We shall see HIM as He is. It is a charming thought that we shall see the very, very Christ. And the poet sung well, who said

*Oh, how the thought that I shall know   
The Man who suffered here below,   
To manifest His favor,   
For me and those whom most I love,   
Or here, or with Himself above,   
Does my delighted passion move,   
At that sweet word, forever.   
Forever to behold Him shine,   
Forever more to call Him mine,   
And see Him still before me.   
Forever on His face to gaze,   
And meet His full assembled rays,   
While all the Father He displays,   
To all the saints forever.*

That is what we wantto see the same Savior. Yes, it will be the same Lord we shall see in Heaven! Our eyes shall see HIM and not another. We shall be sure it is He. For when we enter Heaven, we shall know Him by His Manhood and Godhead. We shall find Him a Man, even as much as He was on earth. We shall find Him Man and God, too, and we shall be quite sure there never was another Man God. We never read or dreamed of another! Dont suppose that when you get to Heaven you will have to ask, Where is the Man, Christ Jesus? You will see Him straight before you at His Throne, a Man like yourselves

*Bright like a Man, the Savior sits   
The God, how bright He shines.*

And you will know Christ by His wounds. Have you never heard of mothers having recognized their children years after they were lost by the marks and wounds upon their bodies? Ah, Beloved, if we ever see our Savior, we shall know Him by His wounds. But, you say, They are all gone. Oh no. For He

*Looks like a Lamb that once was slain,   
And wears His priesthood still.*

The hands are still pierced, though the nails are not there. The feet have still the openings through them. And the side is still gaping wide. We shall know Him by His wounds. We have heard of some who, on the battlefield, have been seeking for the dead. They have turned their faces up and looked at them, but knew them not. But the tender wife has come and there was some deep wound, some saber cut that her husband had received upon his breast and she said, It is he, I know him by that wound. So in Heaven we shall, in a moment, detect our Savior by His wounds and shall say It is He! It is HeHe who once said, They have pierced My hands and My feet.

But then, Beloved, Christ and we are not strangers. For we have often seen Him in this glass of the Word. When by the Holy Spirit our poor eyes have been anointed with eye salve, we have sometimes caught a sufficient glimpse of Christ to know Him by it. We have never seen Him except by reflection. When we have looked in the Bible, He has been above us and looked down upon it. And we have looked there as into a looking glass and have seen Him, as in a glass darkly. But we have seen enough of Him to know Him. And oh, I think when I see Him, I shall say, That is the Bridegroom I read of in Solomons Song. I am sure it is the same Lord that David used to sing of. I know that is Jesus, for He looks even now like that Jesus who said to the poor woman, Neither do I condemn youlike that blessed Jesus who said, Talitha CumiMaid, I say unto you, arise. We shall know Him because He will be so much like the Jesus of the Bible that we shall recognize Him at once!

Yet moreSometimes we have known Him better than by Scripture by close and intimate fellowship with Him. Why, we sometimes meet Jesus in the dark. And we have sweet conversation with Him and He puts His lips against our ear and our lips go so close to His ear, when we talk with Him. Oh, we shall know Him well enough when we see Him! You may trust the Believer for knowing His Master when he finds Him. We shall not need to have Jesus Christ introduced to us when we go to Heaven! If He were off His Throne and sitting down with all the rest of the blessed spirits, we would immediately go up to Him and sayJesus, I know You. The devil knew Him, for he said, Jesus I know. And I am sure Gods people ought to know Him. Jesus, I know You, we shall say at once, as we go up to Him. How do you know Me? asks Jesus. Why, sweet Jesus, we are no strangersYou have manifested Yourself to me as You do not unto the world. Sometimes You have given me such tokens of Your gracious affection. Do you think I have forgotten You? Why, sometimes I have seen Your hands and Your feet by faith and I have put my hand into Your side, like Thomas of old. And do You think that I am a stranger to You? No, blessed Jesus! If You were to put Your hand before your eyes and hide Your Countenance I would still know You! Were You blindfolded once more, my eyes could tell you, for I have known You too long to doubt Your personality. Believer, take this thought with you we shall see Him, despite all the changes in His position! It will be the same Person. We shall see the same hands that were pierced, the same feet that were weary, the same lips that preached, the same eyes that wept, the same heart that heaved with agonypositively the same, except as to His condition. We shall see HIM. Write the word, HIM, as large as you like. We shall see HIM as He is.

III. This brings us to the third pointTHE POSITIVE NATURE OF THE VISION. We shall see Him as He is. This is not the land of sight. It is too dark a country to see Him and our eyes are not good enough. We walk here by faith, not by sight. It is pleasant to believe His Grace, but we had rather see it. Well, We shall see Him. But, perhaps you think, when it says, We shall see Him, that it means, we shall know more about Himwe shall think more of Himwe shall get better views of Him by faith. Oh, no, it does not mean that at all! It means what it says positive sight. Just as plainly as I can see my Brother there, just as plainly as I can see any of you, shall I see Christwith these very eyes, too. With these very eyes that look on you, I shall look on the Savior. It is not a fancy that we shall see Him. Do not begin cutting these words to pieces. Do you see that gas lamp? You will see the Savior in the same fashionnaturally, positively really, actually. You will not see Him dreamily, you will not see Him in the poetical sense of the word. You will not see Him in the metaphorical meaning of the word. You will see Him positivelyyou shall see Him as He is. See himmark that. Not think about Him and dream about Him. But we shall positively see Him as He is. How different that sight of Him will be from that which we have here. For here we see Him by reflection. Now I have told you before, we see Christ through a glass darklythen we shall see Him face to face. Good Doctor John Owen, in one of his books, explains this passage, Here we see through a glass darkly. And he says that means, Here we look through a telescope and we see Christ only darkly through it. But the good man had forgotten that telescopes were not invented till hundreds of years after Paul wroteso that Paul could not have meant telescopes! Others have tried to give other meanings to the word. The fact is, glass was never used to see through at that time. They used glass to see by, but not to see through. The only glass they had for seeing was a glass mirror. They had some glass which was no brighter than our black common bottle glass. Here we see through a glass darkly. That means, by means of a mirror, as I have told you. Jesus is represented in the Bible. There is His portrait. We look on the Bible and we see it. We see Him through a glass darkly. Just as sometimes when you are looking in your mirror, you see somebody going along in the street. You do not see the person. You only see him reflected.

Now we see Christ reflected. But then we shall not see Him in the mirror. We shall positively see His Person. Not the reflected Christ, not Christ in the sanctuary, not the mere Christ shining out of the Bible, not Christ reflected from the sacred pulpit. But we shall see Him as He is.

Again how partially we see Christ here. The best Believer only gets half a glimpse of Christ. While here, one Christian sees Christs glorious head and he delights much in the hope of His coming. Another beholds His wounds and he always preaches the Atonementanother looks into His heartand he glories most in Immutability and the Doctrine of Election. Another only looks at Christs Manhoodand he speaks much concerning the sympathy of Christ with Believers. Another thinks more of His Godhead and you will always hear him asserting the Divinity of Christ. I do not think there is a Believer who has seen the whole of Christ. No. We preach as much as we can do of the Master, but we cannot paint Him wholly. Some of the best paintings, you know, only just give the head and shoulders. They do not give the full-length portrait. There is no Believer, there is no choice divine, that could paint a full-length portrait of Christ. There are some of you who could not paint much more than His little finger. And mark, if we can paint the little finger of Jesus, well, it will be worth a lifetime to be able to do that! Those who paint best, cannot paint even His face fully. Ah, He is so glorious and wondrous that we cannot fully portray Him. We have not seen Him more than partially. Come, Belovedhow much do you know of Christ? You will say, Ah, I know some little of Him. I could join with the spouse, when she declares that He is altogether lovely. But I have not surveyed Him from head to foot. Upon His wondrous glories I cannot fully dwell. Here we see Christ partially. There we shall see Christ entirely, when we shall see Him as He is.

Here, too, how dimly we see Christ! It is through many shadows that we now behold our Master. Dim enough is the vision, here. But there, we shall see Him as He is. Have you ever stood upon the hilltops, when the mist has played on the valley? You have looked down to see the city and the streamlet below. You could just see yonder steeple and mark that pinnacle. You could see that dome in the distance. But they were all so swathed in the mist that you could scarcely discern them. Suddenly the wind blows away the mist from under you and you have seen the fair, fair valley! Ah, it is so when the Believer enters Heaven. Here he stands and looks upon Christ veiled in a mistupon a Jesus who is shrouded. But when he gets up there, on Pisgahs brow, higher still, with his Jesus, then he shall not see Him dimly, but he shall see Him brightly! We shall see Jesus, then, without a veil betweennot dimly, but face to face!

Here, too, how distantly we see Christ! Almost as far off as the farthest star! We see Him, but not near. We behold Him, but not near to us. We catch some glimpse of Him. But oh, what lengths and distances lie between! What hills of guilta heavy load! But then we shall see Him closely. We shall see Him face to face! As a man talks with his friend, even so shall we then talk with Jesus. Now we are distant from Him. Then we shall be near to Him. Away in the highlands, where Jesus dwells, there shall our hearts be, too, when heart and body shall be present with the Lord.

And oh, how transitory is our view of Jesus!! It is only a little while we get a glimpse of Christ and then He seems to depart from us. Our chariots have sometimes been like Amminadibs. But in a little while the wheels are all gone and we have lost the blessed Lord. Have you not some hours in your life, felt so to be in the Presence of Christ that you scarcely knew where you were? Talk of Elijahs chariots and horses of fire. You were on fire yourself! You could have made yourself into a horse and chariot of fire and gone to Heaven easily enough. But then, all of a sudden, did you ever feel as if a lump of ice had fallen on your heart and put the fire out and you have cried, Where has my Beloved gone? Why has He hidden His face? Oh how dark! How dim! But, Christians, there will be no hidings of faces in Heaven! Blessed Lord Jesus, there will be no coverings of Your eyes in Glory! Is not Your heart a sea of love where all passions roll? And there is no ebb tide of Your sea, sweet Jesus, there! Are You not everything? There will be no losing You thereno putting Your hand before Your eyes up there. But without a single alteration, without change or diminution, our unwearied, unclouded eyes shall throughout eternity perpetually behold You! We shall see Him as He is! Blessed sight! Oh, that it were come!

Then, do you know, there will be another difference. When we shall see Him as He is, how much better that sight will be than what we have here! When we see Christ, here, we see Him to our profit. When we see Him, there, we shall see Him to our perfection. I bear my Master witness, I never saw Him yet without being profited by Him. There are many men in this world whom we see very often and get very little good from seeing themthe less we see of them, the better. But of our Jesus we can say we never come near Him without receiving good by Him. I never touched His garments without feeling that my fingers did smell of myrrh, aloes and cassia out of the ivory palaces! I never did come near His lips, but what His very breath shed perfume on me. I was never near my Master, yet, but what He slew some sin for me. I never have approached Him, but His blessed eyes burned a lust out of my heart for me. I have never come near to hear Him speak, but I felt I was melting when the Beloved spokebeing conformed into His image. But, Beloved, it will not be to improve us, it will be to perfect us, when we see Him up there! We shall be like He is. For we shall see Him as He is. Oh, that first sweet look on Christ, when we shall have left the body! I am clothed in ragsHe looks upon me and I am clothed in robes of light! I am black. He looks upon me and I forget the tents of Kedar and become white as the curtains of Solomon! I am defiledsin has looked upon me and there is filth upon my garmentslo, I am whiter than the driven snow, for He has looked upon me! I have evil wishes and evil thoughts, but they have fled like the demon before His face, when He said, Get you hence, Satan. I command you to come out of the man. We shall be like He is. For we shall see Him as He is. I know, Beloved, the Savior seems to you like a great ship and I like some small boat, trying to pull the ship out of the harbor. It is how I feel, myself. I have the oars, I am trying to pull. But it is such a glorious big ship, that I cannot pull it out! There are some subjects, the rudder of which I can take hold of and guide anywhere. They will come out of any harbor, let the passage be ever so narrow. But this is a noble shipso big that we can hardly get it out to sea. It needs the Holy Spirit to blow the sails for you and your whole souls to dwell upon itand desire to think of this wondrous sightand then I hope you will go away dissatisfied with the preacher because you will feel that the subject had altogether mastered him and you, also!

IV. Lastly, here are THE ACTUAL PERSONSWe shall see Him as He is. Come, now, Beloved! I do not like dividing you. It seems hard work that you and I should be split asunder when I am sure we love each other with all our hearts. Ten thousand deeds of kindness received from you, ten thousand acts of heart-felt love and sympathy knit my heart to my people. But oh, Beloved, is it not obvious that when we say, we shall see Him, that word, we, does not signify all of usdoes not include everybody here? We shall see Him as He is! Come, let us divide that, we, into Is. How many Is are there here who will see Him as He is?

Brother, with snow upon your head, will you see Him as He is? You have had many years of fighting, trying and troubleif you ever do see Him as He is, that will pay for all! Yes, you say, I know in whom I have believed. Well, Brother, your old dim eyes will soon need no spectacles to see Him as He is. He will give you back your youths bright beaming eyes, with all their luster and their fire! But are your gray hairs full of sin? And does lust tarry in your old cold blood? Ah, you shall see Him, but not nearyou shall be driven from His Presence! Would God this arm were strong enough to drag you to the Savior! But it is not. I leave you in His hands. God save you!

And you, dear Brother. And you, dear Sisterwho have come to middle agestruggling with the toils of life, mixed up with all its battles, enduring its ills. You are asking, it may be, shall you see Him. The text says, We shall. And can you and I put our hands on our hearts and know our union with Jesus? If so, We shall see Him as He is. Brothers and Sisters! Fight on! Up at the devil! Strike hard at him! Fear not! That sight of Christ will pay you. Soldier of the Cross, whet your sword, again, and let it cut deep. Laborer! Toil again. Delve deeper. Lift the axe higher with a brawnier and stouter arm. For the sight of your Master at last will please you well! Up, warrior! Up the rampart, for victory sits smiling on the top and you shall meet your Captain there! When your sword is reeking with the blood of your sins, it will be a Glory, indeed, to meet your Master, when you are clothed with triumph and then to see Him as He is.

Young man, my Brother in age, the text says, We shall see Him as He is. Does, we, mean that young man there in the aisle? Does it mean you, my Brother, up there? Shall we see Him as He is? We are not ashamed to call each other Brothers and Sisters in this House of Prayer. Young man, you have got a mother and her soul dotes upon you. Could your mother come to you, this morning, she might take hold of your arm and say to you, John, we shall see Him as He is. It is not I, John, that shall see Him for myself, alone, but you and I shall see Him together!

We shall see Him as He is. Oh, bitter, bitter thought that just now crossed my soul! O heavens! If we ever should be separated from those we love so dearly when the Last Day of account shall come! Oh, if we should not see Him as He is! I think to a sons soul there can be nothing more harrowing than the thought that it possibly may happen that some of his mothers children shall see God and he shall not! I had a letter, just now, from a person who thanks God that he read the Sermon, Many Shall Come from the East and from the West. And he hopes it has brought him to God. He says, I am one out of a large family and all of them love God except myself. I dont know that I should have thought of it, but I took up this sermon of yours and it has brought me to the Savior. Oh, Beloved, think of bringing the last out of nine children to the Savior! Have not I made a mothers heart leap for joy? But oh, if that young man had been lost out of the nine and had seen his eight brothers and sisters in Heaven, while he himself was cast out, I think he would have had nine Hells! He would be nine times more miserable in Hell as he saw each of them and his mother and his father, too, accepted and himself cast out! It would not have been, we, there with the whole family.

What a pleasant thought it is, that we can assemble today, some of us, and can put our hands round those we love and stand an unbroken familyfather, mother, sister, brother and all else who are dearand can say by humble faith, We shall see Him as He isall of us, not one left out! Oh, my Friends, we feel like a family at Park Street! I feel, when I am away from you, that there is nothing like this place, that there is nothing on earth which can recompense the pain of absence from this hallowed spot! Somehow or other, we feel knit together by such ties of love! Last Sabbath I went into a place where the minister gave us the vilest stuff that ever was brewed. I am sure I wished I was back here, that I might preach a little godliness, or else hear it. Poor Wesleyan thing! He preached works from beginning to end, from that very beautiful text They that sow in tears shall reap in joy!telling us that whatever we do, that we should reap. He never mentioned salvation for sinners or pardon required even by saints! It was something like thisBe good men and women and you shall have Heaven for it. Whatever you sow, you are sure to reap. And if you are very good people and do the best you can, you will all go to Heaven. But if you are very bad and wicked, then you will have to go to Hell. I am sorry to tell you so, but whatever you sow, that shall you reap. Not a morsel about Jesus Christ, from beginning to end! Not a scrap. Well, I thought, they say Im rather hard upon these Arminian fellows. But if I do not drive my old sword into them worse than ever, now that I have heard them, again, then I am not a living man! I thought they might have altered a little and not preach works so much, but I am sure there never was a sermon more full of salvation by works preached by the Pope, himself, than that was! They believe in salvation by works, whatever they may say and however they may deny it when you come to close quarters with them! They are so everlastingly telling you to be good, upright, godlynever directing you first to look to the bleeding wounds of a dying Saviornever telling you about Gods Free Grace, which has brought you out of enormous sins. But they are always talking about that goodness, goodness, goodnesswhich will never be found in the creature!

Well, Beloved, somehow or other, wherever we go, we seem that we must come back here   
*Here our best friends, our kindred dwell! Here God our Savior reigns!*

And the thought of losing one of you grieves me almost as much as the thought of losing any of my relatives. How often have we looked at one another with pleasure! How often have we met together, to sing the same old songs to the same old tunes! How often have we prayed together. And how dearly we, all of us, love the sound of the word, Grace, Grace, Grace! And yet there are some of you who I know in my heartand you know, yourselveswill not see Him unless you have a changeunless you have a new heart and a right spirit! Well, would you like to meet your pastor at the Day of Judgment and feel that you must be parted from him because his warnings were unheeded and his invitations cast to the wind? Do you think, young man, that you would like to meet me at the Day of Judgmentthere to remember what you have heardand what you have disregarded? And do you think that you would like to stand before your God and remember how the way of salvation was preached to youBelieve on the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized, and you shall be savedand that you disregarded the message? That were sad, indeed! But we leave the thought with you. And lest you should think that if you are not worthy, you will not see Himif you are not good you will not see Himif you do not do such-and-such good things, you will not see Him let me just tell youwhoever, though he is the greatest sinner under Heavenwhoever, though his life is the most filthy and the most corruptWHOEVER he or she is, though he has up till now been the most abandoned and profligatewhoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ shall have everlasting life! For God will blot out his sins, will give him righteousness through Jesus, accept him in the Beloved, save him by His mercy, keep him by His Grace and, at last, present him spotless and faultless before His Presence with exceedingly great joy!

My dear Friends, it is a sweet thought to close withthat with a very large part of you I can say, We shall see Him as He is. For you know when we sit down at the Lords Table, we occupy the whole ground floor of this Chapel and I believe that half of us are people of God, here, for I know that many members cannot get to the Lords Table in the evening. Brothers and Sisters, we have one heart, one soulOne Lord, one faith, one Baptism. We may be sundered here below a little while. Some may die before us, as our dear brother Mitchell has died. Some may cross the stream before the time comes for us. But we shall meet again on the other side of the river. We shall see Him as He is.

EXPOSITION   
**1 John 3:1-10**

1. Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. therefore the world knows us not, because it knew Him not.

2. Beloved, Now are we the sons of God and it does not yet appear what we shall be. but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like He is, for we shall see Him as He is. As dear Dr. Hawker said concerning this, here is a Chapter in every word and a sermon in every letter. How it opens with a. Behold! because it is such a striking portion of sacred Scripture that the Holy Spirit would have us pay particular attention to it. Behold, He says, read other Scriptures if you like, with a glance, but stop here! I have put up a way-mark to tell you there is something eminently worthy of attention buried beneath these words. Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us. Consider who we were and who we are now. Yes, and what we feel ourselves to be even when Divine Grace is powerful in us. And yet, Beloved, we are called the sons of God. It is said that when one of the learned heathens was translating this, he stopped and said, No. It cannot be! Let it be written, Subjects, not, Sons, for it is impossible we should be called the sons of God. What a high relationship is that of a son to his father! What privileges a son has from his father! What liberties a son may take with his father! And oh, what obedience the son owes to his father and what love the father feels towards the son! And all that and more than that, we now have through Christ! Behold! You angels! Stop, you seraphs! Here is a thing more wonderful than Heaven with its walls of jasper! Behold, universe! Open your eyes, O world. Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. Therefore the world knows us not, because it knew Him not. Well, we are content to go with Him in His humiliation, for we are to be exalted with Him.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God. That is easy to read. But it is not so easy to feel. Now are we the sons of God. How is it with your heart, this morning? Are you in the lowest depths of sorrow and suffering? Now are you a son of God. Does corruption rise within your spirit and Grace seem like a poor spark trampled under foot? Beloved, now are you a son of God. Does your faith almost fail you? And are your Graces like a candle well near blown out by the wind? Fear not, Beloved. It is not your Graces, it is not your attitude, it is not your feelings, on which you are to liveyou must live simply by naked faith on Christ. Beloved, now are we the sons of God. With all these things against us, with the foot of the devil on our neck and the sword in his hand ready to slay usBeloved, now in the very depths of our sorrow, wherever we may benow! As much in the valley, as on the mountain! As much in the dungeon as in the palace, as much when broken on the wheel of suffering as when exalted on the wings of triumphBeloved, now are we the sons of God. Ah, but, you say, look how I am arrayed! My Graces are not bright. My righteousness does not shine with apparent glory. But read the nextIt does not yet appear what we shall be. But we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like He is. We are not so much like He is, now, for we have some more refining process to undergo and death, itself, that best of all friends, is yet to wash us clean. We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like He is. For we shall see Him as He is.

3. And every man that has this hope in him, purifies himself, even as He is pure.  
4. Whoever commits sin, transgresses, also, the Law, for sin is the transgression of the Law.   
5. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins. And in Him is no sin. Believer, read these words in two senses. He was manifested to take away your sins that you have committed. And that He accomplished when, the Just for the unjust, He sustained the penalties of them. And He was manifested to take away the

power of your sins. That is to say, to conquer your reigning lusts, to take away your evil imaginations, to purify you and make you like He is! Well, Beloved, what a mercy it is that someone was manifested to take away our sins from us! For some of us have been striving a long, long while to conquer our sins and we cannot do it! We thought we had driven them out, but they had chariots of iron and we could not overcome them. They lived in the hill country and we could not get near them. As often as we beat them in one battle, they came upon us thick and strong, like an army of locusts. When heaps and heaps had been destroyed, they seemed as thick as ever. Ah, but here is a thoughtthey shall all be taken away. You know that He was manifested to take away our sins. And so He will! The time will come when you and I shall stand without spot or blemish before the Throne of Godfor they are without fault before the Throne of God at this moment and so shall we be before long!   
6. Whoever abides in Him sins notwhoever sins has not seen Him, neither known Him. This plain, simple verse has been twisted by some who believe in the doctrine of sinless perfection and they have made it declare that it is possible for some to abide in Christ and therefore not to sin. But you will remark that it does not say, that some that abide in Christ do not sin. But it says that none who abide in Christ, sin. Whoever abides in Him sins not. Therefore this passage is not to be applied to a few who attain to what is called by our Arminian friends, the fourth degreeperfection. But it appertains to all Believers. And of every soul in Christ it may be said that he sins not. In reading the Bible, we should read it simply as we would read any other book. We ought not to read it as a preacher reads his text, with the intention of making something out of every word. But we should read it as we find it writtenWhoever abides in Christ sins not. Now we are sure that cannot mean that he does not sin at all, but it means that he sins not habitually, he sins not designedly, he sins not finally, so as to perish. The Bible often calls a man righteous. But that does not mean that he is perfectly righteous. It calls a man a sinner, but it does not imply that he may not have done some good deeds in his life. It means that that is the mans general character. So with the man who abides in Christhis general character is not that he is a sinner, but that he is a sainthe sins not openly, willfully, before men. In his own heart, he has much to confess but his life before his fellow creatures is such a one that it can be said of himWhoever abides in Him sins not. But whoever sins [the sins of this world in which the multitude indulge] has not seen Him, neither known Him.   
7. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that does righteousness is righteous. Even as He is righteous. That is the sign of it. Works are the fruits of Grace. He is righteousnot in himself. For mark how Graces come in herehe is righteous, even as HE is righteous. It will not allow our righteousness to be our own, but it brings us again to Christ. He that does righteousness is righteous, not according to his own works, but even as HE is righteous. Good works prove that perfect righteousness in Christ. They do not help the righteousness of Christ, nor yet in any way make me righteous! Good works are of no use whatever in the matter of justificationthe only use they are is for our comfort, for the benefit of others and for the glory of God. He that does righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that commits sin is of the devil.  
8. He that commits sin is of the devil. For the devil sins from the beginning. For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.  
9. Whoever is born of God does not commit sin, for His seed remains in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.   
10. In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil; whoever does not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loves not his brother. It were well if we always remembered that practical godliness is the sort of godliness that is not talking religion, but walking religion, which proves a man to be sincere. It is not having a religious tongue, but a religious heart. It is not a religious mouth, but a religious foot. The best evidence is the salvation of the soul. Be gone, Talker! Go your way, you mere professing Formalist! Your ways lead down to Hell and your end shall be destruction, for, he that does righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that commits sin is of the devil. For the devil sins from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3235 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE HOPE THAT PURIFIES   
NO. 3235

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1911.   
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.   
And every man that has this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure. 1 John 3:3.

THE Christian is a man of much present enjoyment. Beloved, now are we the sons of God and, being Gods sons, we cannot be altogether unhappy. Relationship to the ever-blessed God must bring with it a measure of joy. Happy are you, O Israel, sang Moses, who is like unto you, O people saved by the Lord? The men who can be truly called the sons of God are a blessed people! Still, the main portion of the Believers inheritance lies in the future. It is not so much what I have as what I shall have that makes me joyful. It does not yet appear what we shall be. To the unbeliever, all that is to come is in darkness. He may expect to go from the shades of evening to the blackness of a midnight that shall never end. But for the Christian, light is sown. He is now in darknessthe only darkness he shall ever knowand from the twilight of the morning he shall go on unto the perfect day, a day whose sun shall never set! We have the eyes of hope given to us and, looking across the narrow stream of death and beyondthat place where to carnal eyes hangs the curtain that shuts out the unseenwe, with these far-seeing eyes, behold the Glory which is yet to be revealed and we are blessed with the joys of hope! Let every Christian, therefore, when at any time he is downcast about the things of the present, refresh his soul with the thoughts of the future!

We have often discoursed concerning the past and I know that some of us have frequently been cheered and comforted by seeing how kindly God has dealt with us in bringing us up out of the hole of the pit from which we have been dug. Now we shall get further consolation by seeing what is to become of us in the future yet to be revealed. But still, my objective at this time will not be to impart consolation so much as to excite to holiness! Our text is a very practical onewhile it deals with hopeit has more to do with the result of that hope in the purity of the Believers life.

Let us go at once to our work. We shall note, first, the Believers hope. Secondly, the operation of that hope and, thirdly, the use of the operation as a test of the hope.

I. To begin, then, let us look at THE BELIEVERS HOPE. The text speaks of men that have hopehope in Himwhich I understand to mean hope in Jesus Christ.

The Christian has a hope peculiar to himself . As for its objective, it is the hope of being like Jesus Christ. We shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is. Now, some would not put it in that shapethey would say that their hope, as Christians, is to pass within the pearly gates, to tread the golden streets, to listen to the harpers harping with their harps and, standing upon the sea of glass, to be forever free from sorrow, toil and pain. But those are only the lower joys of Heaven, except so far as they indicate spiritual bliss. I believe that there are some professing Christians who would like Mohammeds heavenand be perfectly satisfied if they could sit forever on a green and flowery mountain and could drink from rivers of milk and eat from hives of honeyand so on, and so on!

But, after all, the real Truth of God, the Truth that is contained in these metaphors and figures and underlies them allthe Truth is that the Heaven a true Christian seeks after is a spiritual oneit is the Heaven of being like his Lord! I take it that while it will consist in our sharing in the Redeemers power, the Redeemers joy and the Redeemers honor, yet from the connection of the text, it lies mainly in our being spiritually and morally like Hebeing purified, even as He is pure. I must frankly confess that of all my expectations of Heaven, I will cheerfully renounce ten thousand things if I can but know that I shall have perfect holiness, for if I may become like Jesus Christ as to His Characterpure and perfectI cannot understand how any other joy can be denied me! If we shall have that, surely we shall have everything! This, then, is our hope that we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is.

Every man sees morally what he himself is. A man who is bad sees evilhe is blind to good. The man who is partially like Christ has only a partial view of Christ. You might almost know your own character by your view of Jesus. If your eye sees not inexpressible beauty in Him, it is your eyes that are to blame, for He is altogether lovely. And when the eyes of our inward nature shall come to see Jesus as He is, then we may depend upon it that we are like He is! It is the pure in heart that see God, because God, the inexpressibly Pure One, can only be seen by those who are, themselves, pure. When we shall be perfectly pure we shall be able to understand Christand when we understand Christ, or see Him as He is, as we shall do at His appearing, then we shall be like Helike He, free from sin! Like He, full of consecration to God! Like He, pure and perfect! Today He is Conqueror over sin, death and Hell. He is superlative in His virtue and His holiness, He has conquered all the powers of evil and one day we, too, shall put our foot on the old dragons head! We, too, shall see sin bruised beneath us and shall come off more than conquerors through Him that loved us. This, then, is our hopethat we shall be like our Head when we shall see Him as He is!

But why do we expect this? What is the ground of our hope? The context shows us that we do not expect to be like Christ because of anything that is in us by nature, or any efforts that we ourselves can make. The basis of all is Divine Lovefor observe, the chapter beginsBehold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. We expect to be like Christ, the Beloved of God, because we also are Beloved of God! It is according to the Nature and purpose of the love of God to make its object like God. We, therefore, expect that Divine Love will work with Divine Light and Divine Purity and make us into light and purity, too!

The Apostle goes on to say that we have been called the sons of God   
and that we really are Gods sons. [See Sermon #1934, Volume 32AND WE AREA JEWEL FROM THE REVISED VERSIONRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Well, that is another ground of our hopewe hope to be like Christ because the sons of God are like each other! It is the Lords purpose that Jesus Christ shall be the first-born among many brethren. Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Very well, then, since we are adopted into the Divine Family and are to be made like our Elder Brother, we, therefore, believe that we shall one day be like the Lord Jesus Christ in the perfection of His excellence!

Then we have this further buttress for our hope, if it is not a main pillar of itthat we are now one with Jesus Christ and, therefore, when He shall appear, we shall be like He is. There is an intimate connection between our souls and Christ. He was hidden from the world and the world knew Him not and, therefore, we are hidden and the world knows us not. He is to be revealedthere is to be a day of His manifestation to angels and to men! And when He is manifested, we shall be manifested, too! Knowing that we are united to Christ by sacred, mysterious bonds, we, therefore, expect that when we shall see Him as He is, we shall be like He!

Still, for simplicitys sake, it is well to say that the basis of our hope lies altogether in Him. Every man that has this hope in Him purifies himself. Beloved, all true hope is the hope in Christ. If your hope lies in yourself, it is a delusion. If your hope rests upon any earthly priest and not upon this one great Apostle and High Priest of our profession, your hope is a lie! If your hope stands with one foot upon the work of Christ and the other foot upon your own resolutions or merits, your hope will fail you! Hope in Him is the only hope which can be acceptable to God, the only hope which will bear the stress of your weight, the only hope which will stand the test of your dying hour and of the Day of Judgment! Our hope, then, of being like Christ is a hope in Christ. We are trusting Him. We are depending upon Him. If He does not make us like Himself, our hope is gone. If ever we are to get to Heaven, it will be through Him, and through Him alone! Our hope is in Him from top to bottom. He is our Alpha and our Omega, the beginning and the end. There our hope begins and there our hope ends! You, O Christ, are all our confidence! We know of none other. This, then, is the Believers hopea hope to be made like Christ, a hope based upon Christ!

II. But, now, coming to the practical business of the sermon, our text speaks of THE OPERATION WHICH HOPE HAS UPON THE SOUL. Every man that has this hope in Him purifies himself.

It does not puff him upit purifies him . I know there are some who will say, Well, if I had a hope, a sure hope, a full assurance and confident expectation that I would go to Heaven, I think I would feel myself to be someone very great. Yes, very likely you would. But then you do not possess such a hope and God does not intend to give it to you while you are in your present condition. But when the Lord makes a man His childthen He takes away the evil heart out of his flesh. When He shows a man His great love to him, He humbles him, He lays him lowand so the expectation of Heaven and of absolute perfection never exalts a man! If any man can say, I am sure of Heaven, and I am proud of it, he may take my word for it that he is sure of Hell! If your religion puffs you up, puff your religion away, for it is not worth a puff! He who grows great in self-esteem through the love of God knows not the love of God in truth, for the love of God is like the fish that the Lord put into Peters boatthe more full the boat became, the more quickly it began to sink! O Lord, the more the glories of Your love shall strike my eyes, the humbler I shall lie!

Again, a man who has this hope of Heaven in himselflet me correct myselfa man who has this hope of perfection in himself finds that it does not give him license to sin. I have heard a thoughtful person say, If I had a good hope of being saved and knew that I would go to Heaven, I would live as I liked. Perhaps you would, but then you have not that hopeand God will not give it to you while you are in such a state that you would like to live in sin. If a Christian could live as he liked, how would he live? Why, he would live absolutely without sin! If the Lord would indulge the newborn nature of His own children with unrestricted liberty, in that unrestricted liberty they would run after happiness! The unrenewed heart would like to sin, but the renewed heart quite as eagerly loves to obey the Lord. When the Lord has changed you, He can give you not only a hope but a full assurance that that hope shall come trueand yet you will walk all the more carefully with your God, for, every man that has this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure.

This hope, then, does not puff up and does not lead to licentiousness. You can see why it is so. Gratitude leads to holiness. Any man who feels, God has saved me and I am on the way to being made like Christif he is a man at all, (and he must be to feel that), will say, Now that I owe all this to God, how can I show forth my gratitude to Him? He would be a brute, he would be a devil, he would be 7,000 devils in one who would say, God is doing all this for me and, therefore, I will continue in sin. Well did the Apostle say of such men that their damnation is just! But where there is the good hope of Heaven, the man naturally says, O my Lord, have You loved me so much and have You provided such a glorious portion for me hereafter? Then I will obey You in everything! I will serve You with my whole heart and soul. Help me to run in the way of Your commandments.

Such a man, when led of the Spirit, also feels that holiness is congruous to his expectations. He expects to be like Christ. Very well, then, he says, I will try to be like Christ. If I am to be the possessor of a perfect nature, the most natural thing is that I should begin to seek after it now. If the Lord intends to make you heirs of immortality to dwell at His right hand, does it seem right that you should now live as others do? Suppose you know tonight (and I hope many of you do) that, before long, you will be at Gods right handdoes it not seem a shameful thing that you should go and become a drunk, or that you should be dishonest? King Lemuels mother said to him, It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink. And surely it is not for children of God to drink the wines of sin and go after the sweets of iniquity! It is not for princes of the blood imperial, descended from the King of kings, to play with the filthy lewdnesses of this time and with the sins of earth. Surely an angel would not stoop to become a carrion crow neither can we suppose it congruous, nor does it appear seemly, that he who is brother to the Lord Jesus Christ and who is to dwell forever where Jesus is, should be found in the haunts of sin! The very natural fitness of things, under the blessing of Gods Spirit, leads the child of God to purify himself, since he expects to be completely like Christ before long.

Now, without tarrying longer upon that part of the subject, let me notice that the Believer is here said to purify himself. If we are very orthodox, we can afford to use language that does not look so, but people who are heterodox usually have to be extremely guarded in their expressions. Now we do not believe that any man actually purifies himself, yet the text says that, every man that has this hope in Him purifies himself. We believe that the Holy Spirit purifies sinners by applying to them the precious blood of Jesus. We sing

*Let the water and the blood   
From Your riven side which flowed,   
Be of sin the double cure,   
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.*

We look to God for all purity, believing that He is the Creator of it. Still, the text says that every man that has this hope in Him purifies himselfthat is to say, God the Holy Spirit so works in every man who has a true hope, that he labors to become purified and uses all possible means to overcome sin and to walk in righteousness. While I am speaking upon this point, may each one of us be examining himself! When a man has a true hope in Christ, he begins to purify himself by the power of the Holy Spirit!

First, he puts away all the grosser sins. Perhaps before conversion, he had been unchaste. He had been lewd in language and in act, or he had been dishonest, or he had been a blasphemer. Conversion does away with all that. I have sometimes been astonished and delighted when I have seen how readily these sins are put to death. They are taken out to the block and executed! Many a man who had never lived a day without swearing, has never had a temptation to it from the moment of his conversion. So thoroughly does God renew the heart that these grosser sins go at once!

But there are sins of the flesh which, though we are purged from them, will endeavor to returnand hence the man who has a hope of Heaven will purify himself every day from them. He will hate the very thought of those sins and any expressions or actions that might tend towards them. He abhors them. He flees from them, for he knows that if he begins to dally with them, he will soon go from bad to worse. He understands that in this warfare to flee is the truest courage and, therefore, from such sins of the flesh he daily flees, like Joseph fled from Potiphars wife, even though he would leave his garment behind him, that he may get away from them. So he purifies himself.

Then he purifies himself from all evil company. Those spirits that he once thought choice, he now avoids. If they will go with him to Heaven, he will be glad that they should join his company. But if they will neither repent of sin nor believe in Jesus, he says to them, You can be of no service to me. If he can help them to Heaven, he seeks them out and tries to win thembut when they ridicule him, he is afraid lest their example may be injurious to him and he shuns them and seeks better company. So he purifies himself.

Then he begins from that day forth and till he dies, to purify himself. Perhaps, first, he does not know some things to be sin which he afterwards finds out to be so. As the Light of God gradually shines into his soul, he puts away this and that, and the other with a strong and resolute handand if there was some sin that pleased him muchwhich was to him like a right hand or a right eye, he cuts it off, or tears it out, for having a hope of Heaven in him, he knows he cannot take any sin to Heavenand he does not want to do so. He puts it away. He knows that he must put it away before he can enter into eternal life!

Soon, he finds out that there are certain sins in his nature which more readily overcome him than any others do. Against these he sets a double watch. Possibly he has a quick temper. Over this he grieves very much and he earnestly prays to God, O Lord, subdue my evil temper! Guard my tongue, lest I say bitter words, and my heart, lest I indulge in unkind feelings. He finds himself in a certain trade and if in such a trade there is sin, (and most trades have some peculiar sin), he feels, Then I will have nothing to do with it! If I cannot make money without sin, I will lose money, or change my business, but I will not do what is wrong. He observes some sin that runs in his familyhe knows that his household has some peculiar fault. Here, again, he cries to God, Lord, purify me and purify my house from this evil thing! He observes that there are certain sins in the district where he lives. Against these he cries aloud. He knows that there are sins peculiar to his position. If he a is rich man, he is afraid of growing worldly. Is he a poor man? He is afraid of becoming envious. He looks at his position and he observes what the peculiar sins of that position are and then, in the power of the Eternal Spirit, he seeks to purify himself from all these sins!

Perhaps he is travelling for his health and he knows that many travelers, though they profess to be Christians, never observe the Sabbath and forget, to a large extent, the regular habits of devotion which they had at home. So he sets a double watch over himself in that respect. Is he in great trial? Then he knows the temptation to impatience and murmuring will come and he tries to purify himself from that. Has he great pleasure? Then he knows the temptation will be to make this world his home and so he tries to purify himself from that. You see, Brothers and Sisters, under the power of Gods Spirit, this purifying of the life is a great work to be done, but it is a work that every man that has this hope in Christ will do! If he is, indeed, hoping in the Lord Jesus, this will be the great struggle and warfare of his lifeto get rid first of this sin, and then of that other, that he may be wholly sanctified unto the Lorda holy man, fitted for a holy Heaven!

Now, then, how does he purify himself? I have shown you what he does, but by what means does he do it? He does it, first, by noting the example of Christ. The hoping man reads Christs life and he says, Here is my Model, but I am far short of it. O God, give me all that there was in Christ! Take off from my character all the outgrowths, for these must be outgrowths if they were not in Christ! Familiarizing himself with the life of his Savior and getting to commune with Christ, he is thus helped to see what sin is and where sin isand to hate it!

Then he prays God to give him a tender conscience. Oh, I wish that all Christians had tender consciences! I have heard of persons who are blind beginning to read with their fingers, but beginning late in life they have had some manual labors to perform which have hardened their fingers, so they could not read. I am afraid that some of you have hard consciences, with two or three thicknesses or skin over them. You need to have the knife used to make your conscience tender again. It is a blessed thing to have a conscience that will shiver when the very shadow of sin goes bya conscience that is not like our great steamships at sea that do not yield to every wave, but like a cork on the water, that goes up and down with every ripple, sensitive in a moment to the very approach of sin! May God the Holy Spirit make us so! This sensitiveness the Christian endeavors to have, for he knows that if he has it not, he will never be purified from his sin. He prays

*Quick as the apple of an eye,   
O God, my conscience make!   
Awake my soul, when sin is near,   
And keep it still awake.   
Oh may the least omission pain   
My well-instructed soul   
And drive me to the blood again,   
Which makes the wounded whole!*

He always tries to keep an eye to God and not to men . That is a great point in purity of life. I know many persons whose main thought is earning other peoples esteem. Their question is, What will So-and-So say? What will the neighbors say? What will Mrs. Grundy say? What will be commonly thought of it? You will never be a holy man till you do not care a fig what anybody says except your Godfor a thing that is right is right anywhere! If it is right before the Lord, it is right although all the world should hiss it down! Oh, that we had more moral courage, for moral courage is essential to true holiness! The man who has this hope in him will not say, If the door is shut and nobody hears of it, I may feel free to do evil. Or, I am in a foreign country where the customs differ from those at home, therefore I will do as others do. Nosuch hypocrisy shows a rotten heart! The man of God will say, This is right before the Lord and though no eyes see me to commend me, and though every tongue should speak against me to blame me, I will do the right and I will shun the evil. This is one way in which the Christian purifies himself.

And then he notes the lives of others and makes them his beacons. If you were sailing down the Thames, and saw a boat ahead of you that had run upon a shoal, there would be no necessity for you to go there to find out where the true channel wasyou would let other shipwrecks be your beacons! So the Christian, when he observes a fault in another, does not stand and say, Ah, see how faulty that man is! Rather he says, Let me shun that fault. And when he sees the virtue of another, if his heart is right, he does not begin to pick holes in it and say, he is not as good as he looks, but he says, Lord, there is a sweet flower in that mans gardengive me some of the seed of itlet it grow in my soul. So other men become both his beacon and his example!

A wise Christian tries to purify himself by hearing a heart-searching ministry. If the ministry never cuts you, it is no use to you. If it does not make you feel ashamed of yourselfyes, and sometimes half-angry with the preacherit is not good for much. If it is all smoothing you the way the feathers go and making you feel happy and comfortable, be afraid of it! Be afraid of it! But if, on the other hand, it seems to open up old wounds and make the sores fester and the soul bleed before the living God, then you may hope it is a ministry which God is using for your lasting good! The true Christian not only wishes the preacher to search him, but his prayer is, Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts. He does not want to live in sin, thinking it not to be sinhe wants to get away from it! I am afraid some Christians do not want to know too much of Christs commands. There might be some very awkward ones and they do not want to attend to some of them. They are very pleased if they can get some minister to say that some of Christs commands are non-essential and unimportant! Ah, dear Friends, he is a traitor to his Master if he dares to say that anything that Christ says is unimportant! It is always important for a servant to do as his master tells himand it is essential to comfort and to obedience that whatever the Lord has spoken, we should endeavor to perform in His strength.

I might continue thus to show you the way by which the Christian who has a good hope endeavors to purify himself, but I must just notice this one thing, that he sets before himself Christ as his Standard. He purifies himself, even as Christ is pure. My dear Friends, we shall make a mistake if we make anyone our model but the Lord Jesus Christ, for in any other life but His there will be sure to be something in excess! I am sure it will be best for us, if we are Wesleyans, not always to try and do everything as John Wesley would do it. And if we are Calvinists, as much as we honor John Calvin, we must remember that we shall go wrong if we try to season everything with the spirit of John Calvin. No man is fit to be a model for all men except the Savior who redeemed men!

*Lord, as to Your dear Cross we flee,   
And plead to be forgiven,   
So let Your life our pattern be,   
And form our souls for Heaven.   
Help us, through good report and ill,   
Our daily Cross to bear;   
Like You, to do our Fathers will,   
Our brethrens griefs to share.*

In white, all the colors are blended. A perfectly white substance combines all the colors of the rainbow merged in true proportion. But green and indigo and red are only the reflections of a part of the solar rays. So John, Peter and Paul are parts of the light of Heaven. They are differing colors and there is a beauty in each one of them. But if you want to get the whole of the rays of light, you must get to Christ, for all light is in Him! In Him is not simply the red or the blue, but in Him is lightthe blue light, the whole of light! You are sure to get a lopsided character if any man shall be the copy after which you write. If we copy Christ, we shall, through the power of His Spirit, attain to a perfect manhood! O Brothers and Sisters, what a life-task is here for you! Every man that has this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure. We shall never be able, Beloved, to throw down our weapons and say, Now I have no more sin to fight with, no more evil to overcome. I have heard of some Brethren who say that, but I think it must be a mistake. If there is a possibility of getting to that condition, I mean to get to itand I would recommend you all to try after it! But I think that till you die, you will have some evil to struggle with. As long as you are in this body, there will be enough tinder for one of the devils sparks to set it alight! You will have need to keep on dousing it and every moment be on the watchtower, even till you cross the Jordan! This is our lifes business and, Brothers and Sisters, I do not know that you can have a better business, for while you are contending against sinpurifying yourselves by the precious blood of Jesusyou will be bringing honor and Glory to God! Your heart will become a field in which the power and Grace of God will be displayed, for He will come and purify you! He will be the real Purifier while He is using you to purify yourself!

III. I must stay no longer. But in the last place, USE THE TEXT AS A TEST. Every man that has this hope in Him purifies himself. Dear Hearers, the question is, have we a true hope in Christ? If we have, we purify ourselveswe labor to purify ourselves even as Christ is pure!

There are some professors of religion who do the opposite to this they defile themselves. I repeat itthey defile themselves! It is a shame that I should have to say it. They were baptized on profession of their faith, but they were never cleansed from their old sins. I have heard of persons who come to the Communion Table yet go to the table of the drunk, too, but he that has the true hope in Christ purifies himself! How can you be said to have that hope if you love such sin? I have heard of professed Christians and my cheek has blushed when I have heard it of them, who could sing wanton songs and do wanton actsand yet say they had a hope of Heaven! O Sirs, do not deceive yourselves! You lie! If you are not pure and chaste, you are none of Gods children! You may fall into sin by surprise, but if you calmly and deliberately go to that which is unclean, how can the love of God dwell in you? I have known a man who liked to hear a good sermon, and also liked to mingle with those who frequent the alehouse and liked to sing a jolly good song. He was a good companion of the wicked. Well, labor under no mistake, Sir, He that commits sin is of the devil. It is no use making excuses and apologiesif you are a lover of sin, you shall go where sinners go! If you who live after this fashion say that you have believed in the precious blood of Christ, I do not believe you, Sir! If you had a true faith in that precious blood, you would hate sin! If you dare to say you are trusting in the Atonement while you live in sin, you lie, Sir! You do not trust in the Atonementfor where there is a real faith in the atoning Sacrifice, it purifies the man and makes him hate the sin which shed the Redeemers blood!

After all, holiness is the test. So let the great fan throw up the chaff and the wheat togetherand let the wind go through it, and blow the chaff away. You come here and sit as Gods people sit, and sing as Gods people sing, but ah, some of you are a disgrace to the profession you makeI know you are! May God forgive you and give you Grace to repent of this, your sin, and come to Jesus Christ and find pardon in His precious blood! This is, after all, the test, Every man that has this hope in Him purifies himself. How can he have that hope in Him if he defiles himself?

But there are some others who, while they do not actually defile themselves, yet they let things go very much as a matter of course. They do not purify themselves, certainly, but they float down the stream. If there is a good song at home, they do not object to itif there is an evil one, they do not rebuke it. If they are in the shop and someone speaks upon religion, they chime in. If anybody ridiculed it, perhaps they would not join in it, but they would get up in a corner and say nothing. They never take sides with Christ, except when everybody else is on His side. True, they do not take sides with the devil, but they mean to be betweenites, neutrals and slippers-in. Well, you will slip, one of these days, into your appointed place and shall, I think, ought to be a particularly low place in Hell! A sinner who sins openly and honestly is a respectable sort of a fellow, but those mean creatures who try to get enough religion to cheat the devil with, but never come straight out and acknowledge Christwhy, I think they deserve a double perdition! They know better! They prove their knowledge by a little sneaking affection to the right and yet they cleave to the evil! The dead fish that float down this stream have only one fault, but down the stream it goes for that one fault! And the man who gives himself up to the current in which he is, proves himself to be spiritually dead. What, Sir? Did you never say, No? Did you never put your foot down and say, I will not do this? Others have to fight to win the crown and you expect to get it by lying in bed? Do you think there are crowns in Heaven for those who never fight their sins? Do you believe that there are rewards in Heaven for those who never followed Christ and never endured hardship for His sake? No, make no mistakeyou know not what the Truth of God is.

The truth is in that famous picture of John Bunyans. While I tell it to you again in my own words, may some of you be moved to make that picture true! He tells us that the Pilgrim saw, in the Interpreters house, a beautiful palace. And on the top thereof there walked many persons clothed in gold. And from the roof there came the sweetest music that mortal ear had ever heard. He felt that he would gladly be on the top of that palace with those that there so happily basked in the sun. So he went to see the way there and saw at the door that there stood a number of armed men who pushed back every person who sought to enter! Then he stood back in amazement. But he noted that there sat one at a table having a writers ink-horn, and a brave man from the crowd, of stout countenance, came up and said, Set down my name, Sir! And when his name was set down on the roll, he at once drew his sword and began to cut his way through the armed men! The fight was long and cruel and he was wounded, but he gave not up the conflict till he had cut his way through, making a living lane through those that had opposed him. So he pressed his way in and the singers at the top of the palace welcomed him with sweet music, singing

*Come in, come in!   
Eternal Glory you shall win.*

Now, Sir, if you would go to Heaven, it is all of Grace and through the precious blood of Christ! It is all by simple faith in Christ, yet every man who gets there must fight for it. There is no crown except for warriors! There are no rewards except for those who contend for the mastery against flesh and blood, against Satan and against sin! Whose name shall we set down tonight? Is there a man of stout countenance whom God has made resolute against sin? Let us set his name down! Only, when you put down your name, remember that he that puts on his harness must not boast as though he were taking it off! There is much that you will never perform unless the Eternal God is at your back. Nevertheless, if you have this hope in you. If you have received this hope from God. If it is a hope based upon Divine Sonship, upon Divine Lovea hope in Him, even in Christ, you shall win the dayyou shall purify yourselves, even as He is pure! And when He shall appear, you shall be like He, for you shall see Him as He is!

I pray the Lord to bless this sermon to the preacher, and bless it to every one of his hearers, and He shall have the Glory! Amen and Amen.   
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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2509 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE SINFUL MADE SINLESS   
NO. 2509

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, MARCH 21, 1897. DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, JULY 12, 1886.

Whoever commits sin transgresses also the Law: for sin is the transgression of the Law. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.   
1 John 3:4, 5.

NOTE, beloved, the special character of Believerstheir Divine relationship, their heavenly privilegethey are called, the children of God. There is a foolish dream about the Divine Fatherhood toward all men, but it is a figment, a fiction, a delusion, a deception. The Fatherhood of God is toward as many as He has begotten again unto a lively hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the deadthese are His children. As for the rest of mankind, they are heirs of wrath, even as others. It is the special manner of Gods love that we are bidden in this chapter to behold as a wonder, because He has bestowed this manner of love upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. And that He has not bestowed this love upon all men is evident, for it is added, therefore the world knows us not because it knew Him not.

So, you see, out of the special privilege of Gods children there grows a special position which they are called to occupy. They are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world. They become a holy people, separated unto God. I say not that all who profess the Christian name are sothat is what they ought to be, but it is to be feared that many of them have not yet reached this standard. But true Believers, the twiceborn, have been regenerated by the Spirit of God. These are not of the world and the world does not understand them. They are aliens and foreignerstheir manners and customs, their modes of thought and their motives are all contrary to those of the ordinary sons of menand they have to force their way through the would as pilgrims through a Vanity Fair where there is nothing for them to purchase and nothing worthy of their attention. May God keep you, dear Brothers and Sisters, a separated people! May you obey that voice, Come out from among them and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.

Observe also, dear Friends, as you read this chapter, what is the blessed hope of the children of Godthey are looking for the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ from Heaven! As they look back by faith, they see their Lord upon the Cross and then they see Him in the tomband then they behold Him risen from the grave. The last glimpse they catch of Him is as a cloud receives Him out of their sight. He has gone into Glory, but Believers have not forgotten those angelic words to the disciples, This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven. So we expect Him to come. And when He comes, then is to be the time of our highest joy! Even though we are now called the sons of God, it does not yet appear what we shall be. Our glory, our full bliss, is as yet concealed, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is. So, Brothers and Sisters, our hope is that when Christ shall come, we shall be perfectedthat then we shall be rid of every sin and shall become holy even as He is holy, pure even as He is pure!

What is our occupation while we are waiting for our Lords return? Standing on the doorstep of the better dispensation, what are we doing? The third verse of this chapter tells us that every man that has this hope in him purifies himself even as He is pure. Casting off every sin, mourning that it should be within us, resolving that it shall not master us, determining to go from strength to strength in holiness and true righteousness, endeavoring to perfect holiness in the fear of Godthis is the present occupation of the sons of God who expect that, by-and-by, they shall be made like unto their risen and ascended Lord!

Now, in order that we may carry on this blessed work of purifying ourselves, I want you to think with me upon three matters suggested by our text. The first is, the Christians view of sin Sin is the transgression of the Law. The second is, the Christians hope of rescue from sin. Where does that lie? You know that He was manifested to take away our sins. And the third is, the Christians model, to which he hopes before long to be conformedIn Him is no sin and, as we shall be like He when we shall see Him as He is, so in us there shall be no sin

*O glorious hope! O blest abode!   
I shall be near and like my God   
And flesh and sin no more control,   
The sacred pleasures of my soul.*

I. First, then, I want you to consider for a few minutes, for I cannot go fully into such a great subject, what is THE CHRISTIANS VIEW OF SIN.  
I know that there are some persons who understand, by the word, sin, some offense against their fellow men, or the outward neglect of religion. They regard sin as if it were the same thing as crimean offense against the prosperity of the nation or the welfare of their fellow men. I am inclined to think that even some of my Brothers and Sisters in Christ do not really understand what sin is when they say that they live without it. I fancy that they mean by sin, something very different from what the Scripture means by that word, otherwise they would hardly talk as they do!   
Sin is any lack of conformity to the perfect mind of God, or, according to our text, sin is the transgression of the Law, and every transgression of the Law is sin. Therefore, we say that, first, every sin breaks Gods Law. It does not matter what sin is committed, it breaks the Law at some point. There are ten great Commandments of God and it may be that you think you have never broken Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6, but if you have broken Nos. 7, 8, 9, or 10, you have snapped the chain asunder as really as if you had broken all its links! It little matters to miners in a pit, if the chain is broken, at what particular link it came asunder. So, any offense against the Law of God breaks the whole Law and spoils any hope of the sinner being saved by keeping it. Every sin is an offense against the Law, as you will see if you look at the Law in another aspect. You remember that great Commandment, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself? Now, if in anything we come short of that Commandment, or if we do anything contrary to it, we have violated the Law. This is what every kind of sin doeseither by falling short of the command of God, or going beyond it, the Law is broken. This being the case, is there one among us who has not broken the Law of God?   
Then take the other side of this Truth of God. Every breach of the Law is a sin. If you do not do what God commands you, fully, heartily, always, without failyou have sinned. And if you do at any moment that which God commands you not to do, you have therein sinned against Him. And let it never be forgotten that what I am now saying about actions applies also to wordsour Lord told His disciples that for every idle word anyone utters he must give an account in the Day of Judgment. And remember, too, that this rule applies to thoughts and imaginations and desires, and to those secret motives which hide away within the soul and never actually come into deeds. God shall bring these hidden things to judgment and every thought, or word, or deed that is not in perfect conformity with the Law of God and will of God, is a sin. Who among us can stand before the Lord in his own righteousness if this is true? If God shall lay judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet, who among us shall not be overwhelmed when the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies and the waters shall overflow the hiding place?   
Let me further say that sin is mainly sin became it is a transgression of the Law. Many a person will say, I did no harm to anyone. That is not the pointif you break the Law of God, you thereby sin! We must never judge sin merely by its consequences, or we may make great mistakes. A points man on the railway does not turn the switch aright and one train crashes into another and a hundred lives are lost. He may say to himself, What a crime I committed by my carelessness, and everybody denounces him for it. But suppose he forgot to turn the switch and, by a sort of miracle the two trains escaped coming into collision? If by some extraordinary coincidence the two mighty masses of matter rushing onward were stopped in their progress and no hurt came of it, the points man would be just as guilty in that case as in the other! It is not the amount of damage that results from it that makes the sinit is the thing itself. If you are doing wrong, even though you should feed a nation by your wrongdoing, I say that you would still be committing sin! If you get rich by an unholy trick, it is none the less trickery and deceptionand there is a curse upon your wealth!   
Some sins men can see at once are sins because they bring upon the one who commits them disease of body, or they leave him in rags, or cover him with shame. Then men say, This course of conduct is wrong, for look what comes of it. But that is a very imperfect way of looking at the matterthe wrong of a thing consists in this, that it is a breach of Gods Lawyet how few ever think of this! To break the Queens Law is bad, but to break Gods Law is far worse! I would like to look every unconverted man in the face and say to him, I do not accuse you of this or that particular sin, but I lay the axe nearer the root than that and tell you that your great sin is that you do not serve God, you do not give to your Maker the homage which is His due. Your heart never bows itself in obedience to Him, you are a born rebel, you are at enmity against the Most High and you will not yield to Him, your Lord and Sovereign. This is the very essence and virus of the worst possible sin. I know that some will not think much of this view of the matter, but that is because they do not think much of Godand herein is a clear proof of mans enmity against Godin that he does not think it any great evil that he should trifle with the Law of God and live according to his own will and way.   
Now let me show you that it is a great sin to break the Law of God, for the man who habitually breaks the Law of God is a traitor to his Sovereignhe impugns Gods right to reign. He practically says, Who is Jehovah, that I should obey Him? As far as he can, he dashes the scepter out of Gods hand, takes the crown from His head and makes himself to be his own king and his own lord. Is this, think you, a little evil?   
Again, the man who prefers sin to holiness practically contradicts Gods Word. He says, It is better not to do Gods will. God commands me to do this or that, but I prefer to do the other, judging it to be to my advantage to do so. I say to you, Sinner, that you make out that God is a fool and that you are a wise man! You say, My course of worldliness, my course of sinful pleasure is the better way, and God does not know what is best for me. Do you think that your Maker will permit you thus, as it were, to give a slap in the face to His Infinite Wisdom?   
The breaking of Gods Law is also a questioning of His goodness. The man seems to think that God has denied him something which it would be for his gain to have. If he did not think so, he would not desire the forbidden thing. It is the case with all of us as with mother Evewe come to think that there is some mysterious gain to be gotten by plucking the forbidden fruitand the dragon whispers, God knows that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And so, preferring our own folly to the wisdom and goodness of the great and glorious God, we conclude that He does not wish our highest good and that our highest good is to be found in going contrary to His will! What is this but a direct insult in the face of Infinite Love and saying to God, You do not love me, after all?   
And, once more, he who dares to break Gods Law, seeing that he cannot do it except in the immediate Presence of God, for God is everywherehe that acts contrary to Gods Law before Gods own face does, as it were, fling down the gauntlet to his God and defy His power! By such action as that, he either means to declare that God is not almighty, or that Jehovah will not exercise His Omnipotence to defend His honor, or that he, himself, does not care what God does, so he will leave Him to do His worst. Every sin has this venom within its bowelsit is a defiance of the mighty Majesty of God and, O my unpardoned Hearer, this is how you have acted thousands of times, yet the Lord has forborne to strike, and in mercy has borne with you, even to this day!   
So, in the first place, that is what the Christian thinks sin to beit is a breach of the Law of God, and that breach of the Law is full of unnumbered evil, mischief and sins against God.   
II. Now, secondly, let us consider what is THE CHRISTIANS HOPE OF RESCUE FROM SIN. It is revealed in this portion of our textWe know that He was manifested to take away our sins.   
When I have been pondering upon the sin of menand who among us has not that painful matter continually thrust before us for our consideration?I have found no comfort except in this glorious fact, that Christ Jesus was manifested to take away our sins! This is the source of the Christians hope,

Gods appearance in human form! If it is so that the great God Himself deigned to come to earth, and to take upon Him the form of manif it is so that the ever-blessed Second Person of the Divine Trinity was actually born of a Virgin that He might become Man like ourselvesif it is so that He came here to fight the evil and that He has put His foot down against the advance of the enemy, then I have hope for mankind! I have hope for myself, I have hope that sin may be overcome and, as we know and are sure that God has come down among us and has taken upon Himself our nature, since this is the very fundamental Truth of our holy faith, therefore we see how sin can be put away! If You, great God, do undertake to put it away, it can be done! But it can be done by none else. If all the angels in Heaven had promised to cleanse this Augean stable, it would have remained as foul as ever! And if all the sons of men had resolved to purify with fire this foul and loathsome world, it would have still remained a very Gehenna. But if You undertake it, O You blessed Son of Godwithout whom was not anything made that was made, and by whom all things consist, upholding all things as You do, by the word of Your powerif You undertake the tremendous work, then it will be done!   
So, next, our hope lies in Christs death. Our sin needed to be removed in two ways. First, as to the guilt of sin. We have already sinned and, by reason of our sin, we have incurred the righteous anger of God and His just displeasure. God must punish sin. If a man stands in the track of an avalanche, he must be buried beneath it. And if a man stands in the way of the Laws of God, those laws must crush him! There was but one way of deliverance from the guilt of sin and that was for God, Himself, in human form, to take the consequences of human sin upon Himself. Would He ever think of doing such a thing? Could He ever condescend to do it? He has done it! In infinite compassion, He that possessed the royalties of Heaven has doffed His kingly mantle, laid aside His crown and He has come down here to dwell among us in human clay! And being here, He has suffered, He has bled, He has died, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. Brothers and Sisters, if He that died on Calvarys Cross was, indeed, the Son of God. If He died there to make an expiation for sin, then I can see how human guilt can be put away. Think of some of the crimes of which it is scarcely lawful for us to speakhow could such crimson stains ever be washed out except with the blood of the Son of God? Think of your own sins, dear Friend. Even if they have not been so glaring as those of others, yet their turpitude is great. How could they ever be washed away except by the blood of the Son of God? But if You, O Christ, have bowed Your head and given up the ghostif Your dear body has been laid in the silent tomb, bearing in it the marks of Your anguishif You have said, It is finished, who shall contradict You? It is finished. The great Sacrifice is accomplished and You have, by Your one offering, forever put away the sin of Your people. We know that He was manifested to take away our sins. Do you know it, dear Hearer? If you do not, I am very sorry for you and I pray the Lord to teach you to believe it even now, that you may see your sin put away by Christs death.   
But then, we need Christs life in us by the gift of the Spirit. Even if sin is pardoned, that is not enough for us. We need to have sin put right away from us, from the heart of us and from the life of us. Do you not, my Brothers and Sisters, all agree that this is what you need? I think that if we could be forgiven, and yet not wholly sanctified, we could never be happy while sin was still creeping and crawling over us. O you venomous reptile, if you coil yourself around my arm, or about my body anywhere, even if your deadly poison shall be taken from you, yet you do sicken me almost to death by your loathsome touch! How is this foul thing, sin, to be taken away from us? Well, our Lord Jesus Christ was manifested in order that, after His death, when He had ascended up to Heaven, the Holy Spirit might descend and come and dwell in us, to conquer every evil passion and to work in us all manner of holy desires, and so abide in us as to speak out of our mouths, to act through our lives and to make us to live after Gods manner of living, and not according to the way of the flesh as once we did! Christ was manifested in order that by His rising again from the dead and going back into Heaven, the Holy Spirit might come and dwell among the believing sons and daughters of men, that He might fashion us into newness of life!   
And now, this day, the Christ who trod the soil of this poor earth, the Christ who on it died, the Christ who in it was buried, the Christ who from it ascended into GloryI say that He, by a mighty, secret and invisible power, is this day working among the guilty children of men, creating them anew, making them new creatures in Christ Jesus! A hoaryheaded sinner once said, I wish I was like that little child, so that I could begin life again. It is this that Jesus does for you, my aged Friend! He makes you to become a babe in Grace. Do you ask, Can a man be born when he is old? It is even so, for Christ can make you to be born again and to begin to live quite a new life! For this purpose was He manifested, that He might thus take away our sins and, every day, in those who believe in Him, Christ is crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts! Every day He is making the old man to die. Every day Christ is being formed in us, the hope of Glory. Every day His resurrection-life is giving us the power to rise above the old dead world and its lusts. Every day our ascended Lord is causing us also to ascend, that we may sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Every day He is working in us by His blessed Spirit, that He may make us to be perfectly free from every sin and so to be like Himself! This, then, is our hopeis it not a blessed one? We know that He was manifested to take away our sins.   
Oh, I wish, my dear Friends, you who have never seriously thought about this matter, that you really would turn your whole attention to it! It is your only hope. But, perhaps, you have got entangled in some vice or, if not that, a cold lethargy of carelessness is upon you, or else you have grown very worldly. There is no getting out of this condition except through one Powerand that Power is in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ! There is but one way to something better, and safer, and more Divineand that way is Christ. Why do you not seek Him? Surely, you cannot think that it would make you wretched if you became pure and holy! If you imagine such a thing, I bear my willing testimony that, albeit I have tried to serve my Master with all my might, I have never found His service to be a servitude. There is no bondage connected with endeavoring to be like Christ! In fact, there is no joy that always sparkles in the eyes like the joy of a reconciled soul. If sin is pardonedif evil is conqueredthen what is there for me to fear?   
Death has no sting for the Believer in Jesus! And life with its burdens cannot overweight uswe are fit to live and we are fit to die if our sin is taken away. Grace has prepared us to suffer, or prepared us for enjoyment. Grace has made us ready for riches, or ready for poverty. Grace makes us ready for the silent chamber of sickness, or for the grave of bereavement, or for the social joy of the little children that clamber about our knee. He is fit for anything who is made like his Lord. If sin is but put away through the manifestation of Christ, it brings nothing that can unfit us for this life or the next, but everything that shall make us fit here and fit hereafter! If I were a secularist, I would wish to be a Christian. If there were no hereafter, yet were it better to have sin forgiven, even as a mortal man, so as to live at peace with the Eternal and to feel a glow of gratitude to Him impelling to self-sacrifice and moving to intense love toward my guilty fellow men. I am sure that it is so! Christianity is the noblest of all ethics, even for the present day, and much more for the eternal world where we are hastening!   
III. Now I conclude with just a few brief remarks upon the third pointTHE CHRISTIANS MODEL TO WHICH HE IS TO BE CONFORMED. You see what his hope isthat the manifestation of Christ will take away his sin. What is his model?   
First, it is, Christ ever perfect. My lips are unable to fully tell about my perfect Master, Christ Jesus, my Lord, but I may say this, His enemies have looked at Him from every side and they have never yet been able to find a joint in His harness through which to shoot their poisoned darts. Men who have flung aside the great Truth of the Inspiration of the Scriptures and have been prepared, even, to make light of Heaven and Hell, have, nevertheless, gazed with astonishment upon the Character of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is unrivalled among the sons of menit is absolutely perfect! As one snow-white peak rises above its brother Alps, a crowned monarch, more than peer of all the highest of them, so does the life of Christ rise above that of all philanthropists and all teachers and the loftiest purity that is merely of earth. There is none like He isthere is no defect in Christ and there is no excess! He is the joy of Gods own heart! He is the delight of all the saints above! He is your joy and mine, Belovedto us He is the Altogether-Lovely.   
Mark, next, that every saint as far as he is in Christ is perfect, too. That part of me that is still my own, oh, how imperfect it is! That part of me that does not yet abide in Himthat old nature that struggles and sometimes breaks looseoh, how much I grieve over it! But in so far as Christ comes into contact with us and we yield ourselves to Him, we are affected by His Divine purity so that we become pure even as He is pure! They say, sometimes, of a Christian man who does something that is not right, He did such-and-such! That is your religion! No, it is not! That is the point where, as yet, his religion has not thoroughly saturated him. That is

his defect and his failing. Pray God that he may be forgiven for the wrong-doing and ask that the Grace of God may sanctify him whollyspirit, soul, and body.   
With this point I close. This is the resolve, the intent, the prayer, the hope, the assurance of every Believerthat one day he shall be perfectly in Christand then he will be perfect as Christ. O blessed, blessed hope! There is not a sin within us but must die. Out with you, Sin, out with you! You must die. There is not a Canaanite in the land, though he is a prince, but must be hanged up before the face of the sun! You know how these iniquities try to hide themselves away within our souls, as the five kings hid in the cave at Makkedah and we have, like Joshua, to roll great stones before the mouth of the cavesome self-denials that cost us a great effortso as to keep them from coming out! But that is not enough, we cannot be satisfied with having sins hidden away as in a cavewe need to slay them as Joshua slew the five kings.   
So, before the sun goes down, we cry, Come out with you! Come out with you! You must die, every one of you. There is not to be any wrong thought, or wrong desire, or wrong action spared! We must put all to death if we would become as perfect and pure as Christ is. That is a hard lesson, you say. It is a blessed hope, I say. It is very difficult, you say. I confess that it is impossible to us, but it is not impossible to Him who undertakes it for us! He was manifested to take away our sins and since the manifestation included the Incarnation, the bloody sweat and the death upon the Cross, what is there that it cannot accomplish? Believe, dear Friend, that every sin in you will yet be slain and that you shall stand before God, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. This would be my Heaven, you say. Indeed, you cannot have a better Heaven than that! Washed completely from all defilement, delivered from every trace of past sin and from every tendency to future sin, perfectly in Christ Jesus and perfect in Christ Jesusoh, this is Heaven, indeed! Believing this, let us struggle and fight to attain it, and let us never rest satisfied till we get it!   
Then, says one, we shall never rest satisfied this side of Heaven. Of course you will not! As long as you are here, you will have to fight. As long as you are here, you will have to strive and struggle. If you have already gained the victory to a large degree, go on and get more and more of it. Sometime ago I heard a man ask, Can we be perfect in this life? I smelt that he had been drinking, and I thought to myself, Well now, you are something like a man who is covered with rags, and has not a penny in his pocket, who asks, Do you think it is possible that every working man can be a millionaire? Had he not better ask, first, whether he could save five shillings? So, when a man says, Can I be perfect? I say, My dear Fellow, you need not bother your head about that matter at present. You are such a long way from it yet that you had better find out how you can even become moral, first. There are some overt sins that you can get rid of, and ought to get rid of, but there is a long, long way between a soul that has just begun to perceive the guilt of sin and to break off outward evil habits and vicesand that same soul being absolutely perfect like unto God Himself. There is so great a distance that you must have God to carry you across it, or you will never traverse it! And you must cast yourself as a sinner at the feet of Jesus, or you may never hope for

it. Come, let all of us begin at the Cross this very moment! Let us begin

by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, and then He will purify us even as He is pure and, at the last, when He shall appear, we shall be like He is, for we shall see Him as He is. God bless you all, for Jesus sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:   
**1 JOHN 3.**

Verse 1. BeholdFor there is no greater wonder out of Heaven than thisBehold.   
1. What manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knows us not, because it knew Him not. As we are called the sons of God, we are to be made like His only-begotten Son. And here is the beginning of the likeness, that, as the world did not know Him and, therefore, crucified Him, so it does not know the other sons of God and, therefore, spends its malice upon them whenever it can! Yet what a marvelous thing is thiswhat a wonder of Divine condescensionthat we who were the slaves of Satan, the children of disobedience, the heirs of wrath, should be called the sons of God! We can well accept the consequence of such a position without any very great sorrowTherefore the world knows us not, because it knew Him not.   
2. Beloved, now are we the sons of God.Not merely in Heaven, or when we come to die, but now, in this place, in our pain, in our sorrow, yes, notwithstanding our imperfections and infirmities, Beloved, now are we the sons of God.   
2. And it does not yet appear what we shall be. We are made like unto Christ, but when He was here, it did not then appear what He should be. If you had seen the lowly Nazarene who was despised and rejected of men, could you have guessed what He will be in His glory when it shall please God to judge the world by Jesus Christ? So, in like manner, it does not yet appear what we shall be.   
2. But we know that when He shall appear, we shall He like He; for we shall see Him as He is. Every spiritual sight of Him is transforming. Our looking at Him, here, makes us what we are. Our looking at Him at the last shall make us like what He is. Oh, what joy to know that the medicine for our souls is taken in at the eyes of faith and by the sight of Christ we are healed!   
3. And every man that has this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure. The great object of the Christians hope is perfect purification. If we expect to be like Christ, we look for it in the putting away of sin and in the girding on of all manner of excellence, holiness and loveliness, for therein will lie our likeness to Christ. Oh, that God would give us more and more of this Christ-likeness!   
4, 5. Whoever commits sin transgresses also the Law: for sin is the transgression of the Law. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins. Not to let us live in them at ease, not to make sin become a pardonable matter, so that we might indulge in it and yet hope to escape from its consequences. Oh, no! He was manifested to take away our sins.  
5. And in Him is no sin. Whatever He does, it does not contribute to sin, but is the deadly antagonist of sin.   
6. Whoever abides in Him sins not: whoever sins has not seen Him, neither known Him. The man who dwells in Christ is the holy man, but the man who lives in sin is no child of God, for he proves by his evil conduct that he has no vital union with Christ. The fruit of Christianity is holiness and if your life is a sinful oneif that is the main run and tenor of your lifeyou are none of His.   
7. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that does righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He is practically righteous, he is truly righteous. But let no man talk about being righteous before God while he is willfully indulging in sin. This cannot be! You must be divorced from sin, or you cannot be married to Christ. The Gospel demands and also creates holiness of character. And wherever it works effectively upon the heart and conscience, it produces purity in the life.   
8. He that commits sin is of the devil, for the devil sins from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. He did not come to make us easy while under the devils sway, but to fetch us out from the tyrants dominion and lead us to live a godly, sober, righteous, pure life unto His praise and glory.   
9. Whoever is born of God does not commit sin. That is to say, he does not live in it, it is not the tenor of his life. He is not outwardly so that others could convict him of it, or inwardly so that his own conscience could chide him with it, a man who loves sin.   
9. For His seed remains in him: and he cannot sin because he is born of God. Immortal principles forbid the child of God to sin. The new-born life within us keeps us holy. We have our imperfections and infirmities over which we mourn, but no child of God can live in sin and love it. He hates it! He is like a sheep that may fall into the mire, but he will not wallow in it, as the swine do. As soon as possible, he is up again out of the mud and the filth. He goes sorrowing, with broken bones, when he perceives that he has grieved his God. His life as a whole is a holy life.

10. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whoever does not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loves not his brother. An unlovely spirit is also self-condemnatory as being an unholy spirit. In fact, lack of love is lack of righteousness. There are some who profess to be so righteous that they condemn everybody else and they have no heart of compassion for those who are suffering in consequence of their faults. But oh, Beloved, it is one thing to hate sin and it is another thing to hate the sinner! Let your indignation burn against everything that is evil, but still, towards him who has done the wrong always have the gentle thought of pity and for him present the prayer that he may leave his sin and turn unto his gracious God. It may be difficult to reach this point, but there should always be just that happy mixture in the mind and heart of the child of Godlove to the sinner and hatred of his sin.

11, 12. For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that Wicked One and slew his brother. And why did he slay him? Because his own works were evil and his brother s righteous. And there is no hate like thatthe hate of a bad man towards a good onenot for doing him any wrong, but simply for rebuking him by the silent eloquence of his holy life. Men who love sin cannot endure the sight of virtue and if they cannot kill the good man, they will try to kill his reputation. They sneer and say, Ah, he is as bad as others, no doubt, if you could only find him out! That is exactly the spirit of Cain, who was of that Wicked One and slew his brother.

13-17. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loves not his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer: and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this worlds goods and sees his brother has need, and shuts up his heart of compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him? Perhaps he will do it on what he calls, principle. He thinks it is wrong to help his needy brother, so he says. But however he may put it, the Holy Spirit asks this searching question, Whoever has this worlds goods and sees his brother has need, and shuts up his heart of compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him?

18, 19. My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. Full assurance comes very much this way, by a practical carrying out of the Law of love.

20. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Which we do not and, therefore, our condemnation can never be so heavy as the condemnation which God will bring upon us. Let the man whose own conscience accuses him, question himself as to how he will stand in the Presence of the all-seeing God.

21. Beloved, if our heart condemns us not, then have we confidence toward God. If we can feel in our own bosoms that, by Divine Grace, we have been led to be honest, upright and true before the Lord, then have we confidence toward God.

22. And whatever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His Commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. Notice those conditions of answered prayer. We cannot expect God to grant us our wishes if we do not conform to His will. Holiness has a great deal to do with power in prayer. It is not every man who prays who shall have whatever he asks for, but it is put so here, and it is notable that it is so put, Whatever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His Commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. This is not mere legalitythis is not a matter of work-mongering. When we become Gods children, He treats us as a father treats his child. You know what you do with a boy who is disobedient. He asks you for something that he wants and you say, No, I cannot grant you that. Your conduct is such that I cannot let you have the pleasures that otherwise I would be pleased to give you. But you have another boy who is very careful in all things to do his fathers willand you have marked the anxiety of his heart to be obedient to you, and you say, Yes, my dear Child, you may have whatever you want. I know that you would not have asked for it if you had not thought that it would be agreeable to my mind. And as you have asked that which is suitable for me to give, you may have it, and I am glad to give it to you. So is it in the fatherly discipline of the house of Godif we do those things which are pleasing in His sight, we shall have power to prevail with Him in prayer.

23, 24. And this is His Commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment. And he that keeps his Commandments dwells in Him, and He in him. That is a great mystery, for us to dwell in God, and for God to dwell in us! It is even so, but only he who knows it can understand it. Experience, alone, can explain our dwelling in God and God dwelling in us.   
24. And hereby we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He has given us. Holy Spirit, dwell in me and teach me the meaning of this precious Word, for Christs sake! Amen.

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THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL DESTROYED   
NO. 1728

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, JULY 1, 1883, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.   
1 John 3:8.

IN this chapter John makes a sharp and clear division of mankind into two classeshe gives not even the slightest hint that there is, or ever was, or ever can be a third class. He describes men as being the children of God or else the children of the devil and tells us how the two classes are made manifest (see verse 10). Now, this distinction would not have been drawn by John so sharply if it had not existed, for he was a man of a most loving heart and gentle spirit, and if he could, somewhere or other, have found a space for neutrals, or what I call, betweenites, or people who come in midway between saints and sinners, I am sure he would have done it. No one could suspect John of lack of charity and, therefore, as he was convinced that no middle position was possible, we may be quite clear upon that point and at once dismiss every theory which is meant to flatter the undecided.

At this day the world is still divided into children of God and children of the Evil One. This distinction ought never to be forgotten and yet thousands of sermons are preached in which it is quite ignoredand congregations are commonly addressed as if they were all the people of God! How shall we preach the Truth of God if we begin by assuming a lie? Yet to assume that all our Hearers are Christians is to begin with an error! Is it not highly probable that men will be built up in falsehood if the very Truth which is addressed to them is stated in a false way? No, my Hearers, we cannot talk to you as all the people of God, for you are not! Some of you are the children of the Wicked One and though it may not be pleasant to be told so, yet it is no business of ours to please you! Our duty is to preach so as to please God and benefit the souls of menand that can only be effected by an honest enunciation of matters of fact.

There is a definite and fixed line, in the sight of God, between the living and the dead, between those who are born-again and those who abide in their fallen estatebetween the spiritual and the carnal, between the believing and the unbelieving! There is a gulf fixed between the two orders of men, which, blessed be God, can be passed, but which, nevertheless, divides the whole race as though a vast chasm had opened up in the in midst of them and set them apart from each other, separating them into two camps. This important distinction ought to be observed in public prayer. And this is a point in which we are dissatisfied with most liturgies, because they are necessarily composed with the view of suiting both saints and sinners and, as a necessary result, they are not suitable for either!

The joyous notes of confidence which are becoming in the children of God are left out because the ungodly could not use such expressions of exultant faith while, on the other hand, the wailing notes which are most suitable to anxious souls are put into the mouths of men who, by the Grace of God, have long ago found their Savior. Men walking in full fellowship with the Lord are not correctly described as miserable sinners neither is it theirs to pray as if they had never found pardon and life in Christ Jesus! It is impossible that public prayer should be suitable for a mixed congregation unless a portion of it is evidently for such as fear the Lord and another portion for such as do not fear Him. I suppose it would be difficult, if not impossible, to compose a liturgy for common use upon strictly truthful principlesand yet that order of public prayer which ignores the distinction between the regenerate and the unregenerate must inevitably be mischievous to the souls of men! In this matter the servant of the Lord must discern between the precious and the vile, or he cannot be as Gods mouth.

If this distinction is to be thought of in preaching and in public prayer, it should be especially considered in our personal religion. We ought to know whose we are and whom we serve. We ought to know the differences, which the Lord has made by Grace, and whether or not He has made us to differ from the unrenewed. Every man in trade wishes to be sure of his position, whether he is prospering or not. And surely we ought, each one, to know our position in that one great enterprise of life which, if it finds us bankrupt at the last, must leave us so forever! It is of the utmost importance for a man to know whether he has been enlightened or abides in darkness; whether he is the slave of sin or the Lords free man. Each man should know that he is either saved or lost, pardoned or condemnedhe may not sit down in peace in the deceitful hope that though he may not be a child of God, he is, nevertheless, no heir of wrath, for it cannot behe is one thing or the other at this moment!

Everyone is under the wrath of God unless he has believed in Jesus and so has become accepted in the Beloved. There are two seeds and only twothe seed of the woman and the seed of the serpentand you, my Friend, belong to one or the other! John sums up the vital distinction when he writes, He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son has not life. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in wickedness. Let this stand as the preface of the sermon, for the spirit of it will run through my whole discourse. And now I come to the words of the text itselfFor this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

We shall speak of four thingsthe works of the devil. The purpose of God. The manifestation of the Son of God. And the experience within ourselves of the meaning of this text. Oh, for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may think aright and speak with power!

I. First, then, let us say a little upon THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL. This very strong expression is descriptive of sin, for the preceding sentence so interprets it. I will read the whole verseHe that commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devilthat is, that He might destroy sin. This name for sin is, first of all, a word of detestation. Sin is so abominable in the sight of God and of good men that its various forms are said to be the works of the devil. Men do not like the idea of having any connection with the devil and yet they have a most intimate connection with him until they are made anew by the Spirit of God.

When it was supposed in a superstitious age that a man had commerce with the devil, he was abhorred or feared and, most properly sohe that is in league with Beelzebub has forfeited all right to honor. Yet let every man know that if he lives in sin, his actions are called by the Holy Spirit, the works of the devil. Satan is the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience. Think of that, you ungodly ones! The devil is at work in youas a smith at his forge! Is it not a shocking thought that if I am living in sin, I am the bond slave of Satan and I am doing his work for him? If the devil is in the heart, the whole life will be, more or less, tainted by the presence of that arch-enemy of God and man! Do not laugh at sin, then! Do not dare to trifle with it! It is dangerous and deadly because it is of the devil, from whom no good thing can ever come. Oh, if men could but see the slime of the serpent upon their pleasurable sins; the venom of asps upon their dainty lusts and the smoke of Hell upon their proud and boastful thoughts, surely they would loathe that which they now delight in! If sin connects us with the devil, himself, let us flee from it as from a devouring lion. The expression is a word of detestationmay it enter into our hearts and make sin horrible to us!

Next, it is a word of distinctionit distinguishes the course of the ungodly man from the life of the man who believes in the Lord Jesus. He that is of God does the works of Godhis life is the work of Godit is a life which has much that is God-like about it and he is upheld by the power of God, the ever blessed Spirit. But the ungodly mans life is very different he lives for himself, he seeks his own pleasurehe hates all that oppose him, he is up in arms against the Lord and His Truthand all that is pure and good. His spirit is not the spirit of God, but of the Evil One. There is a radical distinction between the gracious and the gracelessand this comes out in their worksthe one works the works of God and the other the works of the devil. I know that this doctrine is not pleasant, but it is true and, therefore, it must be plainly stated.

I hear one say, Look at me! Am I a child of the devil? I may not be much of a saint, but I am no worse than many of your professing Christians. I answer that may be the case, for professing Christians are sometimes horrible hypocrites! But what has that to do with you? Ah, my Friend, their perishing will not help your salvation! If you are not trusting in Christ and living under the power of His love, you may be as good as any hypocrite, or even better, and yet you may be widely different from a real Christian! If you have not the life of God in you, you cannot do the works of God! The mineral cannot rise into a vegetable by itselfit requires another touch from the creative hand! The vegetable cannot rise into an animal unless the Creator shall work a miracle and, even so, you, as a carnal man, cannot become a spiritual man by any spontaneous generationthe new life must be imparted to you by the quickening Spirit!

The distinction of your works from those of the real Believer in Christ is as great as that between the works of the devil and the works of Godand this may show you how great the distinction of the natures must be by which these different fruits are produced! The language before us is, next, a word of descent. Sin is of the devil. It came from him. He is its parent and patron. Sin is not so of the devil that we can lay the blame of our sins upon him, for that is our own. You must not blame the Tempter for tempting you to do that which, without your will, he could not make you do. He may tempt you, but that would be no sin of yours if your will did not yield to the temptation. The responsibility lies with your will. The devil has plenty of sin of his own to answer for and yet he is often made a packhorse to carry loads of evil which are none of his!

Mother Eve taught us that art when she said, The serpent beguiled me and I did eat. And since then men have become wonderfully proficient in the science of excuse-making, frequently imputing their own guilt to the devils guile! Yet sin, in a sadly true sense, does come of the devil. He first introduced it into the world. How or when he, himself, first sinned and fell from being an angel of light to become the Apostle of Darkness we will not conjecture. Many have thought that the pride of his lofty station, or envy of the foreseen glories of the Son of Man, may have overthrown Him. But, at any rate, he kept not his first estate, but became a rebel against his Lord and the active promoter of all evil. Being expelled from Heaven for his wickedness, he desired to wreak his revenge upon God by alienating the human race from its obedience.

He saw what an interest the Creator had taken in man and, therefore, judged that he could grieve Him greatly by seducing man from obedience. He perceived that the Maker, when He formed the earth, did not rest. When He had made the birds and fishes, He did not rest. When He had made the sun, moon and stars, He did not rest. But when He had fashioned man, He was so well content that He then took a day of rest and consecrated it forever to be a Sabbath. Thus was Gods unresting care for man made manifest. Surely, said the Evil One, if I can turn this favored being into an enemy of God, then I shall bring dishonor upon the name of the Most High and have my revenge. Therefore he alighted in the garden and tempted our first parents, thus opening the gate by which sin entered into the world with all its train of woe.

In that sense sin is truthfully described as being the work of the devil. He brought the flame which has caused so great a burning. Since then he has been, in some degree, the author of sin by often tempting men. I doubt not that he suggests to many a sinner the delights of the flesh and the pleasures of selfand that he shuts the eyes of conscience to the Truth of God and hardens the heart against the threats of God. Under these influences men doubtless rush into wild extravagances of evil, willingly yielding themselves to be led captive at his will. Doubtless, Satan not only suggests sin to men, but as one spirit influences another spirit, he influences men strongly towards that which is evil and blinds them against that which is good. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One, is a prayer which plainly connects the Evil One with temptation, as we know as a matter of fact that he is connected with it. This is his constant employment, to be tempting, one way or another, the sons of men. Hence sin is the work of the devil, but not so that it excuses usit is our work because we willingly yieldlet us be thoroughly ashamed of such work when we find that the devil has a hand in it. May Almighty God deliver us from the mighty spirit of Evil!

Consider, next, that we have here a word of description. The work of sin is the work of the devil because it is such work as he delights in. What are the works of the devil? They are such actions as are like he and exhibit his nature and spirit. Open your eyes and you will surely see the works of the devilthey are everywhere in this poor world. The earth is defiled with his horrible productions. How delightful it is to take a survey of the works of God. The wise men say, The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. I heard of a good man who went down the Rhine but took care to read a book all the way, for fear he should have his mind taken off from heavenly topics by the beauties of nature. I confess I do not understand such a spiritI do not want to do so. If I go into an artists home, I do that artist a displeasure if I take no notice of his works under the pretext that I am quite absorbed in him!

Why not enjoy the objects in which our heavenly Father has set forth His wisdom and power? There is nothing in any of the works of God to defile, debase, or carnalize the soul. Delight yourself in all your heavenly Fathers handiwork and make it to be a ladder by which you climb to Him! But what a very different contemplation is that which lies before us in the works of the devil! Ah, me, what a picture for a painter herethe works of the devil! Yet surely, brush and color would altogether fail. Oh, Evil One, how cunning are your worksin malice have you made them all! The earth is full of your abominable things! Look abroad in the world and you see atheismmen made by God deny His existence! They could not stand upright and speak if He did not enable them to do so, and yet they cry, There is no God!

Into what a condition must an intelligent mind be brought before it can vent such folly! Surely this must come from that arch-fiend who, above all things desires, that there should be no God! See, also, how much there is of ignorance abroad, a leaden night of ignorance of God and of His Son. Is not this the work of the Prince of Darkness? Note, also, the abounding unbelief of the Truth of God which would be believed at once if mens minds were pureof the Truth of God which is salvation to those who accept it and yet is rejected by many as if it were injurious to them! From where does all this indifference to God and His Grace come? And what is the origin of all this plague of doubting which is now upon us? Is it not of the same character as that which abode in the serpents heart when he whispered, Has God said? and, again, You shall not surely die. Here is he, who was a liar from the beginningtill producing a host of lies against God Himself!

What is this idolatry which we see everywhere abroad, not only among the heathen, but among those who call themselves Christiansthe worship of visible symbols instead of the spiritual adoration of the unseen Spirit? It must have come from Satan, who has made himself the god of this world, setting himself up to be Gods rival. Things offered to idols are offered to devils, for a mere idol is nothing in the worldits evil lies in its representing a principle which is opposed to the one true, invisible God. The superstitions which degrade humanitywhich are an insult to our manhoodall these are most pleasing to Satan and approved by him. And so they are fitly described as the works of the devil. And what, my Brothers and Sisters, is blasphemythat common profanity which pollutes our streets? Who could have taught men wantonly and for no purpose whatever, to use the foul and filthy language that is so common nowadays? This must be the speech of pandemonium, the dialect of Hell!

And what is pride, my Brethren, pride in a creature that will die? Pride in a sinful worm?the pride of dress, the pride of life, the pride of talent? What are those haughty looks? What are those presumptuous words? What are those contemptuous glanceswhat are all these things but works of the devil? He whom Milton describes as thinking it better to reign in Hell than serve in Heavenhe surely is the great fomenter of all pride among mankind! As for deceit, so current everywhere and, worst of all, religious deceit, formalism and hypocrisyfrom where come these but from the bottomless Pitfrom him who transforms himself into an angel of light? Are not all liars his dear children? My list is long enoughbut I see a numerous brood hatched beneath the wings of hateenvy, strife, wrath, bitterness, malice, revenge. These are as fiery flying serpents in this wilderness, inflaming mens blood. I see these accursed evils rousing nations into war, dividing communities with discords, embittering families that otherwise might be full of love.

Yes, making men to be the worst enemies of menthese all come from him who is a murderer from the beginning and is the aider and abettor of all hatred and strife. What a busy being he has been! How he has toiled incessantly, day and night, to set up a kingdom of hate in opposition to the empire of eternal love! With what diligence has he smothered the world with a pall of darkness so that men sit down to weep and rise up to torment one another. Ah me, what mischief this unclean spirit has worked! His works are evil, only evil and that continually! He has led the human race to become accomplices in his treason against the God of Heaven, allies in his rebellion against the sovereignty of God Most High. The works of the devil make up a black pictureit is a thick darkness over all the landeven a darkness that may be felt.

II. But now, secondly, and much more joyously, let us consider THE PURPOSE OF GODFor this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Ring out sweetly all the silver bells of earth and all the golden harps of HeavenGod has purposed that the terrible work of the devil upon the earth shall be, every atom of it, destroyed! Yes, mark that word, destroyed! Not limited, nor alleviated, nor neutralized, but destroyed! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, what could you and I do against such a power as Satanso malicious and so strongand withal so cunning and subtle and apt to deceive? Who among us can loosen his works and cast his cords from us? But if God has purposed it, verily the purpose of Jehovah shall stand! If this is the Divine decree, tremble, O Tophet, and you, Beelzebub, for there shall come an end to all your works if God has purposed to destroy them!

The work which lies in this purpose is assuredly a Divine work. The Lord who can create can certainly destroy. Destruction lies in the hand of Omnipotence and is a prerogative of the Eternal One. Destruction of forces so terrible must come only from the Lord. What could you and I do in this business? Ourselves originally under Satans power, ourselves destroyedcould we destroy the Destroyer? The image of God in us has been marred by the work of Satan! Could we restore that image? Enmity to God has been created in our hearts by Satancould we, while yet enemies, tear out that enmity? No, another hand must make us friendsa hand outside of us. That which has been done by the powers of darkness must be undone by the Eternal Light, or else it will remain forever. It is a Divine workthis destruction of the works of the deviland herein lies our hope of its being accomplished.

And there is, to my mind, about it the idea of a conquering work. When are the palaces and the fortifications of great kings destroyed? Not till the kings, themselves, have been overthrown in a fair fight. When their power is broken, then it is that the conquerors raze the castle and burn the stronghold! Glory be unto Jehovah, it is His purpose to win such a victory over the Prince of Darkness that every work of his shall be destroyed! Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He has made in the earth; He breaks the bow, and cuts the spear in sunder. He burns the chariot in the fire. Your right hand, O Lord, has dashed the enemy in pieces. Our Almighty Champion has come forth with a shout of victory to divide the spoil with the strong. The arch-enemy is vanquished and, therefore, his works are to be destroyed!

This means also a complete work. The product of evil is not to be cut down for a time and left to grow again. The tree of the forest is felled by the axe, but the root remainsand at the scent of water it will bud and send forth branches. But the purpose of God is utterly to destroy the works of the devil and destroyed they shall be! In the heart of man, when God begins His work, He does not cease till He has utterly destroyed all sin, yes, the very tendency and possibility of sin! And then He conducts the purified spirit up to His right hand, having neither spot or wrinkle, nor any such thing. In the world, also, do not doubt it, oh you soldiers of Christ who are ready to turn your backs in the day of battleHe will yet drive sin out of its entrenchmentsthe habitations of cruelty shall become the temples of adoration!

All people shall bow before the Lord and there shall be a new Heaven and a new earth in which dwells righteousness. Up from this poor planet there shall ascend, like smoke from a great golden altar of incense, the perpetual hallelujahs of a ransomed race, redeemed by blood and power from all the rule of the enemy! Glory be to God, He has purposed it and He will accomplish it! It is a complete work and a conclusive work, for the Lord Jesus will so break the head of the old dragon that he shall never again wear the crown! Christ has come, not to fight a battle with Satan which shall continue throughout all ages, but to win a victory which shall so crush the power of evil that it shall not molest the world again!

The powers of darkness upon this earth hang out their flags and ring out the clarions of victory, but they are too fast. Wait a little while and He that will come, shall come, and will not tarry! And when He comes, He shall lead captivity and the reign of captive goodness and truthand love shall be established forever and ever! Rebellion shall not rise up a second time. Oh, how glorious is the textFor this purpose the Son of God was manifest, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Sin, in every shape and form, the Lord shall destroy from off the face of the earth forever!

III. Thirdly, our text plainly tells us how this is to be doneBy THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SON OF GOD. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested. The work of the devil was so clever; the foundations of it were so deeply laid and the whole thing had such a semblance of omnipotence about it, and was, indeed, in itself so strong, that no champion was found in Heaven or on earth that could hope to destroy it. It never entered Satans thoughts that God, Himself, could deign to suffer and to die. He said within himselfIf I can make man to so offend God that He must justly be incensed against him, then I shall have done the work effectually. If I can make man a rebel, Gods infinite holiness cannot overlook his rebellion and He must punish him! And so I shall have made for God a perpetual race of enemies and He will have lost the love of myriads of His creatures.

He did not know the boundless love and wisdom of Jehovah! Even his angelic intellect could never have conceived the matchless plan of atonement by a sacrifice, propitiation by substitution! The blessed fact of the Son of God becoming manifest in human flesh and dying in human formto destroy the works of the devilentered not into a creatures mind. Yet this was always in Gods purpose, for the better display of His Divine attributes. Behind, under and over the works of the devil, the Lord had always the design that this evil should be permitted that He might baffle it with love and that the glory of His Grace might be revealed! My text has in it, to my mind, a majestic idea, first, of the difficulties of the casethat the Son of God must necessarily be manifested to destroy the works of the devil. And then, secondly, of the ease of His victory.

Have you been abroad at midnight when darkness has been all around you, dense and palpable? Not a star was visible, the moon had forgotten to shine. You could scarcely see your hand when you held it before your eyes. The blackness seemed to be not only above, beneath and around, but also within you! You were embedded in a thick, heavy, sensible ebony mass. How could all this be scattered? What power could lift up the veil and scatter the mass? Lo, in the east old Sol has lifted up his head and the black walls have vanished! Not a speck remains! The works of darkness are destroyed by the manifestation of the light! That is the thought of the textFor this purpose the Son of God was manifested. Rising up from His Divine retreat in the silences of eternity, Christ appeared in human form and scattered and utterly destroyed the works of darkness!

Let us see how this was done. First, Christs manifestation, even in His Incarnation, was a fatal blow to the works of Satan. Did God come down to men? Was He Incarnate in the Infant that slept in Bethlehems manger? Then the Almighty has not given up our nature to be the prey of sin! Despair may not be! If one is born on earth who is Divine as well as human, then peace be unto you, O race of Adam! Hear you not the song, Glory, joy to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men? It cannot be that the race is given up to perpetual night if the Son of God is manifested in such fashion as this!

Next, look to the life of Christ on earth and see how He there destroyed the works of the devil. It was a glorious duel in the wilderness when they stood feet to feetthe champions of good and evil! How dexterously the Evil One played his weapons! How cunningly he tempted the Christ of God! But the Lord Jesus used the sword of the Spirit and, It is written! It is written! It is written! struck home till the Evil One spread his dragon wings and fled away, for he had found his victor. Evil spirits had taken possession of human forms! Legions of devils were established in men! But the Lord Jesus Christ had only to speak and away they fled, glad to leap into swine and rush into the sea to escape from His Presence! They knew that He had come who was ordained to destroy the works of the devil.

All our Lords preaching, all His teaching, all His labor here below was in order to the pulling away the cornerstone from the great house of darkness which Satan had built up. But oh, dear Friends, it was in His death that Jesus chiefly overthrew Satan and destroyed his works! Satan built upon thisthat man had become offensive to God and God must punish himthat punishment was his hope for the continuance of alienation. Behold, the august Son of God takes the offenders place! Marvel of marvels, the Judge stands where the criminal should have stood and is numbered with the transgressors! Behold, the wrath of God falls upon His Well-Beloved and Jesus suffers, that He may reconcile man to his God and heal the breach which sin had caused!

The deed was done! Man is no more offensive to Heaven, for one glorious Mans boundless merit has put away the demerit of the race! Jesus has, by His unutterable beauties, removed the deformities of all who are in Him. By His obedience unto death the Law is vindicated, justice is honored, Grace is glorified! Man, accepting this great Sacrifice, loves and adores the Father who ordained itand so the works of the devil in his heart are destroyed! Our Lords rising again; His ascension into Glory; His sitting at the right hand of the Father; His coming again in the latter daysall these are parts of the manifestation of the Son of God by which the works of the devil shall be destroyed! So, also, is the preaching of the Gospel.   
If we want to destroy the works of the devil, our best method is to manifest more and more the Son of God! Preach up Christ and you preach down the devil! All kinds of reforms are good and we are on the side of everything that is pure, honest, temperate and righteous. Still, the best Reformer is the Christ of God! The one medicine for mans moral sickness is the Cross and nothing but the Cross. Preach the Crucified Savior! Preach the Incarnate God! Preach Christ full of forgiveness and love, reconciling the world unto Himself and you have applied the best remedy to the sore! Only let it never be forgotten that Jesus destroys the works of darkness by His Spirit. It is the Spirit of God who puts Divine energy into the sacred Word of God. When the Spirit manifests Christ in a manthe works of darkness are destroyed in that man! When Christ is manifested in a nationthe works of Satan begin to fall in that nation! And in proportion as the Holy Spirit shall more and more reveal Christ to hearts and consciences, bringing them into obedience to the faithin that degree shall the works of Satan be destroyed!

Lastly, on this point, our blessed Lord is manifested in His eternal power and kingdom as enthroned in order to destroy the works of the devil, for the government shall be upon His shoulders, and His name shall be called Wonderful, The Mighty God, The Father of the Ages. He is such a Father and the age is made to feel His forming hand. Kings, presidents, parliaments, poets, leaders and such like these are visible powers but there is, over them all, an invisible power. A late philosopher asserted that over all the confusion of affairs he could see a power over all which works towards righteousness. There is such a power! There is a King of kings and a Lord of lords! And who is He? It is He of whom we read, The Father has committed all things into His hands.

He is ruling! He is reigning even now and, despite our unbelief, things are moving on! God is being glorified! His kingdom is coming! The ultimate destruction of evil on the earth is sure and the eternal reign of the right and of good is certain. The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Enthroned at the right hand of the Eternal, Jesus sits, the Man of Love, the Crucified! He has reassumed His eternal Glory and Sovereignty, and without His bidding shall not a dog move his tongue! The dominion is with the Son of God and He shall end the reign of evil. Glory be to His name forever and ever!

IV. Lastly, I would come close home to each dear friend as we utter a few words of inquiry as to THE EXPERIENCE OF ALL THIS IN OURSELVES. Has the Son of God been manifested to you to destroy the works of the devil in you? Come to the point and look at yourself! At first there was in your heart an enmity to God, for, the carnal mind is enmity against God. Is that enmity destroyed? Has the love of God in Christ Jesus appeared to you in such a way that you can truly say you no longer hate God, but love Him? Though you do not love Him as you wish to do, yet your heart is toward Him and you desire to be like He and to be with Him forever. This is a good beginningthe Son of God has destroyed your enmityyou have seen the love of God in Christ and your rebellion against God has ceased.

The next work of the devil which usually appears in the human mind is self-righteous pride. The man says, I am no enemy to God! I am righteous! If I am not perfect, yet I am tolerably good. God, I thank You that I am not as other men are. I do this and I do that, and I do not do the other. This is our natural boasting, but the Son of God destroys it! Has the Son of God destroyed all your self-righteousness? It is a precious lot of rags! But we so constantly practice the art of patching and mending that we dream that we are clothed in royal apparel. Have all those rags gone from you? Has a strong wind blown them right away? Have you seen your own natural nakedness? Why, if I were to talk about my own righteousness, I would be a fool and a liar in one! I have no righteousness of my own! I dare not dream of such a thing!

Is that your case? Then the Lord Jesus Christ has been manifested to destroy in you the works of the devil! That is a pretty name for your righteousness, is it not? It deserves that name, for the best righteousness of man, when it is set up in opposition to the righteousness of Christ, deserves small complimentsit is one of the works of the devil. When the Lord has destroyed self-righteousness in us, the devil generally sets us forth another form of his powerand that is despair. Ah, he says, you see what a sinner you areGod will never be reconciled to you! There is no forgiveness for you! Oh that ever he should have the impudence to make a man believe so gross a slander of such a God as ours, whose very name is Love and who gave His Son to die for sinners!

But, if the Lord Jesus Christ has been manifested to you, despair has gonethat work of the devil has been all destroyedand now you have a humble hope in God and a joy in His mercy! Though you speak, sometimes, with bated breath, yet your doubt is about yourself, not about your Lord. You know whom you have believed and you know that He is a God that passes by transgression, iniquity and sin. Thus three sets of works of the devil are gone alreadyenmity is gone; self-righteousness is gone and despair is gone. What next? Have you any unbelief in your heart as to the promises of God? That is a favorite work of the devilunbelief is one of his darling children. Now, I beseech you, do not say, I must always feel this unbelief. No! Down with it! Christ was manifested to destroy the works of the devil. Grind your cutlasses and cut down these doubts!

All mistrusts must die. Not one of them must be spared. Hang them up before the face of the sun! Jesus has not come that He may lock up our sins and keep them quiet, hidden away in a dark corner. He has come to destroy them. Israel was not to make a league with the Canaanites, as they unwisely did with the Gibeonitesthey were to sweep out the entire race, root and branch! Thus must sin be exterminated and extirpated. Cry to the Lord Jesus Christ that you may never tolerate the sin of unbelief and look upon it as a pitiable infirmity! No, it is a grievous sinwar to the knife with itthe Son of God is manifested that it may be utterly destroyed. Happy is that man who no longer doubts his God, but exercises the Abrahamic faith which staggers not at the promise through unbelief!

Do fleshly lusts arise in your heart, my Brothers and Sisters? In whose heart do they not arise? The brightest saint is sometimes tempted by the foulest vice. Yes, but he yields not. By the Grace of God, he says, Christ is manifested to destroy the works of the devil. He will not play with these things and dally with them, and let them be his Delilah, for he knows that they will cost him his eyes, even if they do not ruin his soul. He cries, Away with them! It is not meet, even, to mention these vile thingsthey are works of the devil and to be destroyed! My Brothers and Sisters, do you quickly become angry? I pray God you may be angry and sin not, but if you are of a hasty temper, I entreat you to overcome it. Do not say, I cannot help it. You

must help it, or rather, Christ must destroy it. It must not be tolerated. Does your anger ever intensify into hate? Do you ever feel envious of those who are better off than yourself, or better than yourself? Does that envy ever lead you to think harshly of them, to indulge yourself in suspicions that are groundless concerning them?

Oh, for the sword of the Lord and of Gideon! Slay all these Midianites, for Christ is revealed on purpose to clear the heart of the whole brood of them! God is Love and he that dwells in love dwells in Godand hate and sin must not live! Every form of evil must fall! Destruction is meted out to them all. Every idol must be broken. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, there is to be in every true Believer the ultimate abolition of sin! What a prospect this is! The cutting up of the very roots of evil! The sooner the better. The day shall come when every child of God shall be transformed and transfigured into the likeness of Christand shall be without fault before the Throne of God. This is already foreshadowed upon us, for the outlines are drawn in the fact that we hate all sin and long after perfect holiness. The great Father has put His mark upon the lump of clay and we can see from the rough draft that He will fashion it and form it into the perfect image of His dear Son!

After that image we are struggling. It is begun in us by the power of the Spirit of God and He will not fail nor be discouraged till the purpose of God shall be accomplished and all the works of Satan in us shall be destroyed! This robs death of all dreadthe prospect of being totally free from sin makes us welcome, even, the grave, if by that road we are to come to the home of the perfect! Meanwhile, let us seek after sanctification. Let us labor after holiness and let us abound in it to the glory of God. Despite our failures and mistakes let us pursue holiness! Taking it by the heel, let us keep close to it. So may the Lord enable us for Jesus sake. Amen.

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LIFE PROVED BY LOVE

NO. 2556

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1898.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 18, 1883.

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.   
1 John 3:14.

I HAVE heard it said, by those who would be thought philosophers, that in religion we must believe, but cannot know. I am not very clear about the distinction they draw between knowledge and faith, nor do I care to enquire because I assert that, in matters relating to religion, we do know! In the things of God, we both believe and know. If you will read this Epistle through and, with a pencil draw a line under the word, know, wherever it occurs, you will be astonished to see how John continually asserts about the great Truths of our faith, We know, we know, we know, we know. He does not admit that any one of these things is the subject of conjecture, but he asserts it to be a matter of positive knowledge. These philosophical gentlemen call themselves Agnostics that is a word derived from the Greek and has the same meaning as the word, ignoramus, which comes from the Latinand is the English equivalent for a know-nothing. Well, if they like to be called ignoramuses, I have not the slightest objection to their keeping the title, but they should never presume to argue with Christian men! They put themselves out of court, directly, for we say, We know. They cannot deny anything we choose to affirm, after that, because confessedly they do not know. If we do know and they cannot allege against us that we are deceiversif, in any court of law they will admit that our testimony would be taken quite as quickly as theirs, and that our general repute is that we are as upright and as honest as they arethen they ought, in modesty, never to contradict us in anything, but to believe what we declare to be true.

As they do not know anything, themselves, let them be guided by those who do know. At any rate, whether they choose to agree with us or not, we shall always affirm that we know what we know! And there are some things about God, and about the future, and about prayer and about the work of the Spirit of God in our own souls which we do not fancy, or imagine, or even make to be merely matters of faith. We know them, we are sure of them, for we have felt them, tasted them, handled themand we know them as surely as we know the fact of our own existence. My text seems to me to speak of four things about which Believers in Christ are and ought to be positive and certain.

I. First, WE KNOW THAT ONCE WE WERE DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS. That is implied in the textWe know that we have passed from death unto life. We could not have passed from death if we were not in death. Neither would there have been a change in bringing us into life if we were in life before. Herein, I believe, lies the Doctrine of the Natural Ruin of Manhis original sin, the depravity of his heart. I have heard it said that the children of some Christians are so very goodI suppose on account of their having such wonderfully good fathers and mothersthat they may be considered to have been born in the Church. They, I am assured, have no need of any conversion, and they never ought to need it. There are such principles within the dear little souls that you have only to nourish those blessed principles and they will turn into veritable angels! I have seen some of these children and I regret to say that I have not found them different in nature from other peoples boys and girls, neither have they grown up to be better than the children of the most ungodly. I believe, concerning everybodys child, that it must be born again, that the Spirit of God must change its natural heart if it is to become a child of God. At any rate, whatever may be the theory as regards other people, we know that we were once dead in sinwe have no question about that!

We who have been converted and become the subjects of the work of the Spirit of God know that we were once fast bound in spiritual death at one time we were utterly insensible. We heard the Word of God and were pleased, perhaps, with the oratory of the speaker, or moved by his earnestness. But we were never led, by all his pleadings, to hate sin and to believe in Christ. We were shaken, but we were not awakened. We were insensible, spiritually, to the power of the Law of God. We heard it preached and we might be, for a moment, disquieted, but we never felt the terror of the condemnation which God pronounces upon the sinner who breaks His Law. If we did feel anything of it, we strived to get away from its influenceand drowned in pleasure and in sin all thoughts of the wrath of God. We could also hear the Gospel, as well as the Law, and the sweetest note in it had no music for our ears. What cared we for Jesus and His bleeding wounds? What respect had we for Infinite Love and the invitations of the precious Word? We came and we went, yet continued just as we were. We saw our face in the glass, but we did not wash itand the spots of sin still remained.

Some of you, dear Friends, remember that you had grown so insensible to spiritual things that you did not even care to hear the Gospel. The Sabbath was to some of you just like any other day in the week, except that, sometimes, you took most of your pleasure that daywhich meant that you went further in sin than you ordinarily didfor your daily labor kept you pretty steady through the week. You know how often Sunday brought St. Monday after it, with all sorts of mischief in its trainthe Sabbath became to you rather a door of sin than a gate of mercy. Some of you had godly parents, yet you took no notice of your fathers God and your mothers Savior. You saw others go to the House of Prayer, but you were in your shirt-sleeves all the morning. And in the evening you did not care to go, you said, to be stirred up with a crowd to listen to dry talk. Just soall this was because you were quite insensible to Divine things. Charm he ever so wisely, the charmer cannot allure the deaf adder and, for a time, the Gospels charming music could not reach your ears. That was one proof of your being deadthat you were spiritually insensible.

More than that, we had not the appetites of living men and women. You know that if a man is alive, he will be hungry, in due time. There is a bell that is sure to ring inside to tell him that it is time to coal up and set the fires going again. He will be thirsty, too. The body will need moisture and there will be a summons for him to drink if he is alive. He may be just on the borders of life, perhaps almost gone, and then hunger and thirst may be forgotten, but the healthy man has these tokens of life about him at fit seasonsthat he must eat and drink. There was a time when you and I had no hunger for the Bread of Life. Pshaw, we said, what cant! What nonsense! We did not desire to drink of the river of the Water of Life. We did not believe in its existence and, though now every drop of the Gospel is sweet to us as honey, we cared not an atom about it once! We despised the Doctrines of Grace and we did not wish for the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself! He who is the Bread of Heaven was without any attraction for uswe did not feel any need of Him. We thought that we were strong and could find our own way into Heaven. We did not know our own weakness nor His strength. We believed that we were fat and flourishing and, therefore, we did not need to feed upon Him. It is perfectly true that with regard to Grace and all spiritual things, we were dead! Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. But dead are they unto whom no spiritual hunger or thirst ever comes! This was the second proof of our spiritual death.

There was this further evidence that we were without power of movement of a spiritual kind. You remember the philosopher who was asked to prove that he lived and he did it by simply walking?

Movement is a proof of life. Certainly, spiritual movement proves spiritual life. To draw near to You, my God, proves that I am alive. To approach Youthough it is with faltering steps, like a tottering infant who any moment may fallyet, to draw near to You, though I do but crawl like a baby of a few months old, proves that I am alive! The movement of godly desire, the movement of a humble hope, the movement of a holy wish, the movement of a penitential sigh or cryif there are any of these in the soulthey are proofs of life. It is not so very long ago since some of you had none of them. I had the great delight, yesterday, of seeing many who have just lately been quickened by Divine Grace. Many of them, as they looked me in the face with holy shame, told how dead they had been towards Godthey were alive, indeed, unto transgression and unrighteousnessbut stone dead as to any movement of the Spirit of God who now has made them alive in Christ Jesus!

There is another sign which proves death, namely, the lack of breath. That is one of the last tokens of expiring life. You have heard of friends holding a mirror to the mans mouth and, as long as there is a little dimness to be seen upon the glass, they say, He still lives. But when the breath is all gone, then the life has gone. The poet truly said

*Prayer is the Christians vital breath,*

but there was a time with us when we did not pray. Perhaps some of you, from your childhood, always said a form of prayer and if you ever went to bed without saying it, you dared not go to sleep. Yet how much of that formality was but a mockery of God! I will not speak too harshly about the childs form of prayer, for sometimes that form has been made use of by God to lead on to true spiritual supplication. Still, it would be idle for us to imagine that the mere repetition of certain words was prayerwe know, now, that it was not prayer. We did not really ask anything of God, we did not truly speak to God at allwe might just as well have said our prayers backward, as forward, for any good there was in them! I have heard of some people who, even at 30 and 40 years of age, have repeated the same form of prayer that they used when they were children. I have even read of one who, at 60 or 70, used to pray God to bless his father and mother who had been dead 30 years! When men once get into the way of using a form of prayer, they are apt to keep to that form when there is positively no meaning whatever in it. That is the state in which some of us werewe used dead prayers, for there was no life in us.

Ah, but it is not so now, Beloved! Now, we pray. I think that some of us could more easily tell when we pray than when we do not pray. As we walk the crowded streets, we cry to God in secret, Oh, that You would be with me! We cannot read a book without praying that we may have help from God to spy out the meaning. We do not even go to look at a baby without pleading with God to save the soul of that dear child. We feel habitually in the spirit of prayer. If it is not so with any of us, we ought to pray that it may be so! Mark you, the spirit of prayer is better than any mere act of prayer. The act of prayer is good, the habit of prayer is good, but to have the spirit of prayer always with us so that we as naturally pray as we breathethis is the highest blessing of alland one of the surest signs of spiritual life!

I grieve to add, but it is true of some of us in a very special degree, that we know we were dead in sin because we had begun to corrupt. If a man has lost his life for only a certain number of hours, he may still look very much as he did and, if the eyes were the only guide, we might scarcely know whether he was a living man or not. But that appearance will not last many daysyou soon perceive the signs of an inward dissolution. Corruption is beginning to take possession of the place which death has conquered and, very soon, you will have to say, Bury my dead out of my sight. It happened to some of us to be, in our salvation, like the little girl to whom Christ went soon after the breath was out of her body. He took her by the hand and said, Talitha, cumiMaid, arise and she lived again before corruption had worked any great change within her. Happy are they who are saved in their youth, before the inward death has begun to show itself in outward corruption! Yet, some of us who were converted while we were yet boys, remember enough of our wanderings to make us fear what we might have been if Grace had not interposed.

I have often told the story of Rowland Hill and the good Scotchman who sat for some time looking at the preachers face and at the strange, comic twinkling about his eyes. What are you doing? he asked. I am looking at the lines of your face, said the Scotchman. And what do you make of them? Oh, I was thinking what a bad fellow you would have become if it had not been for the Grace of God. And some of us, as we look back at the lines of our young character before it was allowed to develop, cannot help saying to ourselves, What great sinners we would have been but for the Grace of God! There were already tokens of commenced corruption.

But there are others in whom the corruption has become more apparent. They have gone into actual transgression and have become familiar with what are called the pleasures of this worldits vanities, gaieties and pollutions. They have not been worse than others. Indeed, even while dead in sin, they compliment themselves that they are not so bad as others! Yet they would not like to have their secret deeds proclaimed before the face of all men, as they will be at the Judgment Day! They would be ashamed to have them known. You, my Friend, are like that young man who was carried out at the gate of Nain, whom Christ met on the way to the sepulcher and raised from the dead. You are dead, surely enough, but there are some others who are dead, like Lazarus, who had lain four days in the graveand of whom his sister said, Lord, by this time he stinks. Gods Grace has come to some who will easily recognize my description of themwhen they were as far gone in evil as they could be. There was not any other sin left for them to commit! They had sinned up to their neckthey had plunged into it and done as much evil as they could. Rottenness was in their very soul, corruption was in everything they said, for it was full of obscenity and blasphemy. It was in all they did, for the more nauseous the sin was in the nostrils of God, the more pleasing it was to them! There are some here who will always say, I know that I was dead, for I was corrupt. Death had set his seal upon me with a stamp that could not be mistaken. I was, indeed, dead before God, for I had begun to be offensive even in the nostrils of good men.

That will suffice for this part of our subject. Let us look back with shame on our original. Let us remember the hole of the pit from where we were dug and then stand fast in this one certaintywe know that we were dead.

II. Secondly, we know another thing and a brighter thingWE KNOW THAT WE HAVE UNDERGONE A VERY AMAZING CHANGEWe know that we have passed from death unto life.

That passage, from death unto life, is the reverse of the natural one. We all expect to pass from life unto death. The heathen talks of a Charon to ferry men across the river into the unseen world. Long ago the poet said, Easy is the descent to Avernus. But to retrace your stepsthat is the work, that is the difficulty. Yet that is just what God has done for us who believe! We have not gone from life to death, but He has brought us up from death unto life! There has been such a change in us as is altogether supernatural, such a change as never would have occurred had we been left to ourselves. We now are sure that it is so. I speak to some in whom the change is so evident to themselves that they often wonder at it. One of the surest proofs to any man of the existence of a God consists in His dealings with that man in turning him front darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan, unto God. All the arguments that ever were written by Butler, or Paley, or any of the defenders of religion, will never convince a man like coming into personal dealings with God. And when those dealings assume this formthat we have passed from death unto lifethey become indisputable proofs of the Godhead and of the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

I do not think that it is easy to describe the passage from life to death. I could not describe it, though I have seen many pass away. And it is almost impossible to describe the passage from death unto life. I know what it is, as you do, Brothers and Sisters, many of you. It has happened in your own case, yet you could not explain it. What a wonderful process it is! It is not dyingit is quite the reverseit is being quickened. Can you tell another person how it happened? You can speak of the outward means and the external circumstances, but you cannot picture to anyone the secret way of the Spirit. His methods of quickening are deep mysteries and even he who has felt them cannot translate them into human language. Yet believe us, O Unbelievers, we are before you, men and women as different from what we used to be as though we had died and risen from the dead! We are, some of us here, so changed and altered that if we met our old selves, we would not know them! We are no longer ourselves, though now most truly we are ourselves by the effectual working of the almighty Grace of God!

We can tell you, however, that this passing from death unto life usually begins with pain. I have heard that when men have been nearly drowned and animation has been restored by rubbing and other processes, their first sensation was that of intense anguish. When the blood began to move, again, and the lungs began gently to heave, the first feeling was one of great pain. You know how, if your foot, goes to sleep, as we say, when it begins to get right, again, what pain there often is! That is, on a very small scale, what happens to a man who is being resuscitatedit is just a faint picture of the pain that is usually felt by those who pass from death to life. Yet let me lay down no hard and fast rule! I am not giving a description that is to be stereotyped, but I only say what usually happens. I do not know that the little girl, to whom the Lord Jesus said, Talitha, cumi, had any pain at all. I expect that she just opened her eyes and sat up, and as soon as she saw that it was Jesus, she wanted to wait upon Him, but He commanded that something should be given her to eat. And there are some dear children and some persons of older age who are brought to Jesus very gently. There are not so many pangs in their birth as there are in the births of othersyet they are as truly regenerated and born into the family of God. Still, I think that the new life usually begins with pain.

One of the first signs of it is that it is accompanied with great selfdepreciation. The man who is passing from death to life grows very little in his own esteem. He gets to despise what he once thought to be his beauty and his comeliness. As to his supposed excellence, he is not half the man he thought he was! He would never have been able to go through the needles eye while he was such a size as that, so he had to be reduced and then still further reduced till he became less than nothing in his own eyes.

At the same time, when that life really does begin in a soul, it begin very quickly. There may be, at first, only enough light to make the darkness visible, only enough life to incarnate itself in a sigh. The prayer, God be merciful to me a sinner, is rather a large-sized form of the heavenly life. Sometimes the poor, trembling soul cannot get as far as that. Yet, not a single spark of the Divine Life ever dies out, or ever can. The living and incorruptible seed of the Word of God lives and abides forever! If it is but as a grain of mustard seed and it falls into the ground which God has prepared for it, it must live and it must grow! But, often, it is at first exceedingly weak. The test of its reality is that the man trusts in Jesus, for he that believes on the Son has everlasting life. That is a sure Word of God, for He has, Himself, spoken it: Whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. The renewed man, however feeble his life may be, does believe in Jesus and, therefore, he is saved!

When that life comes to the birth, it is usually attended with great joy. When at last the man has believed in Jesus, and rested in Him, then he passes from darkness to light in the sense of passing from sorrow into overflowing joy! It is not always so, but that is the general waythere is a joy unspeakable and full of glory which attends this passing from death unto lifeit is a period to which a man may always look back with gratitude to God. I am always glad when our friends get a very decided conversion because, though I am not going to say a word about those who come to Christ very gradually, yet their experience is rather cloudy. No doubt they are just as safe as others, but they lack a good deal of comfort afterwards and, sometimes, persons who are very readily converted and who have no very deep sense of sin, are more apt to play with evil than others are who have had a clearer sight of its enormity. So, we know however it came to passwe know that we have undergone a very amazing change!

III. Thirdly, we know something else. WE KNOW THAT WE LIVEWe know that we have passed from death unto life.   
In that life, first of all, is included non-condemnation. A man who is condemned to die can hardly be said to live, but he who has believed in Jesus Christ knows that there is, for him, no condemnation! Nothing shall ever be laid to his charge, for all his sins were punished on Christ a full atonement was made for themand they were forever put away. This we know, and we rejoice to know itit is the very glory and bliss of our life!   
We live now, dear Friends, in this waywe have entered into a new state of being. We have made the acquaintance of a great many things that we did not know anything of before. All things have become new. Ah, Sir, said one to me once, either all the world has altered, or else I have, for people I once delighted in I am now afraid of. The things that once made me glad, now make me unhappy, and those that I thought melancholy are now the very things in which I find my highest joy. Yes, we have not merely to talk about God, now, but to know Him! Not simply to speak about Christ, but to live in Him! Not now to dream or read about the Spirit of God, but to feel Him working in us! We have come now to know the blood of Jesus as applied to our souls to make us cleanthe promises are now our riches and prayer is a reality to us! We never need anybody to tell us that there is a power in prayer, for we have tokens from day to day that the Lord hears our petitions. We are living in a new world altogether, we know we are! These things were unknown and unperceived by us once, but they are perceived by us now.   
Beside that, we are now introduced into spiritual society. I hardly know how to explain the great change to some here, but suppose you had been a pig all your life and that you were suddenly made into a man. Well, now you are a man, you look through a telescopeswine cannot do that. You look through a microscopeI never knew a pig do that in my life. Swine do not talk, but you speak, you sing, you pray, you are quite a different creature from what you were before. It is just so with some of us we have another life than we ever possessed before, we live in a different world to what we used to live in, we know things that were unknowable to us once, we enjoy what we never had enjoyed and we have griefs that never occurred to us before we passed from death unto life. By all these things we know that we do really live.   
Further, this new life necessitates new food. We feel, now, an appetite which nothing but Christ can satisfy! We love the House of God, we delight in Gods Word, and when the Holy Spirit blesses us, then are we filled as with marrow and fatness! We believe, too, that this life guarantees to us eternal lifethat, in fact, it is eternal lifelife that can never die, or be taken away from us. Let me tell you, my un-converted Friend, that we are very happy! But, you say, you said that you had sorrows which we do not have. Exactly so. Men, you know, have sorrows which swine do not have. Do I compare you to swine? Well, if you do not like that image, I cannot help it. I will take any other that is true, but there is as great a difference between a living Christian and a mere man as there is between a living man and a dog. He has another life, a higher life and he has entered another realm. I would not try to teach a dog astronomy and it is impossible for an unrenewed man to know the things of God. I should not think of putting my dog into a chair and beginning to explain theology to himand until you are born again, you will never understand the meaning of Gods Grace. You must get a new life, pass from death unto life, or you cannot know these things. But we who believe in Jesus know that we have this life.   
IV. Now, fourthly, WE KNOW THAT WE LIVE BECAUSE WE LOVE.   
The enquiry as to whether we are alive or not is a very curious thing. This morning I received a letter informing me that the High Court of Chancery has ordered investigation, with affidavit, as to whether the said Charles Haddon Spurgeon is still alive. I replied to the lawyer that I would not make an affidavit to that effect, for I would not take an oath for any purpose, but that I was willing most solemnly to affirm that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, I am still alive. And I expect to have to do that before long. I did not say to myself, Am I really alive or not? But I have known some Christian people, who have so often sung *Tis a point I long to know*

which all of us have to sing some time or otherthat they are not sure whether they are alive or not! Making themselves sad, miserable and melancholy, they think is a proof of life. Perhaps it is, but there are other proofs of life beside that, and I like the one that is given in the textWe know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.

So, Brothers and Sisters, if we can say that we love Gods people, as Gods people, because they are Gods people, that is a mark that we have passed from death unto life! Do you love them for Christs sake? Do you say to yourself, That is one of Christs people. That is one who bears Christs Cross. That is one of the children of God and, therefore, I love him and take delight in his company? Then that is an evidence that you are not of the world. If you were, you would love the world, but, belonging to Christ, you love those who are Christs and you love them for Christs sake.

Another is you love them for the Truth of Gods sake. We are but earthen vessels, yet there is the excellency of the treasure of God put within us, so, when you can say, I love that man because of the Truth of God he preaches. I do not care about his talents, but I do care about his Gospelwhen you can say, I love that woman, I delight to hear her speak of Jesus, her experience comforts me because it is full of Christ. Or, I love to read the writings of such a Brother because there is a savor of Christ about every letter that he writesthat is a mark that you have passed from death unto life. If you love the children, you love the Father, I am pretty sure of that. And if you love Him, it is because He first loved you!

It is another mark of our passing from death unto life when we love Gods people for their own sake, when we wish that we were like they are, when we say to ourselves, I would gladly be the least among them, washing their feet and filling the humblest place, so that I might share the love which is their joy. It is a sure token that you are a child of God when you love Gods people even when the world hates them, taking their part, being willing to be reproached with them. When you say, You scoff at such a saint, do you? I am one of the same family, so give me some of your scorn! If you have any rotten stuff to fling and you set this Christian man in the pillory, I will stand by his side and count it a great honor to share the contempt that comes upon a child of God. If you thus love the saints, you need not be afraid whether you have passed from death unto life.

It is also a sure mark of Grace when we love the company of Gods people as a people, when we are willing to go to the little Prayer Meeting to hear them pray, when we hear them groaning and yet feel, That is just the kind of sorrow that I would like to feel. When we hear them joyful and say, That is the kind of joy I want to feel. When we hear them tell about what the Lord has done for them, and though we have not felt quite the same joy, ourselves, yet say, I love them because the Lord has loved them. If He has not yet worked all this in me, I love them because He has worked it in them. I rejoice to see my Fathers finger anywhere, on anyone, whoever he may be. Well, if that is your case, go your way in peace! It seems but a very small token of the inward life that we love the Brothers and Sisters, yet it is one of the surest in the world, and it is one of which even you high and mighty saints may be glad to avail yourselves in the cloudy and dark day which, sooner or later, may come upon you.

God grant us all to have a share in this precious knowledge, for Christs sake! Amen and Amen.   
EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:   
**PSALM 32.**

A Psalm of David, giving instruction. The 32nd Psalm is a Gospel benediction. It belongs not to the lawit is a word which can only come of Sovereign Grace to the guilty. The very first sentence tells us that.

Verse 1. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed would have been the man who never transgressed, who never sinned, but, be encouraged, O Sinner, there is blessedness even for the likes of you! Blessed is he who, though he has transgressed, has had his transgression forgivenwho, though he has sinned, and sinned often, and sinned foully, yet, nevertheless, has had his sin covered. There is such blessedness in this forgiveness that scarcely can the bliss of an unfallen spirit excel it! There is a tenderness, a delicacy, a fragrance, a love about the dealings of God with pardoned sinners that even angels can scarcely tell the excessive sweetness of it! They have never known the joy of redeeming Grace and dying love and, although they are blessed, yet peculiarly and especially is he blessed whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

2 *.* Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. He is blessed twice over. God multiplies the blessing. He blesses him effectually, He blesses him emphatically, He blesses him in body, He blesses him in soul. He is blessed! He has iniquities, but God does not impute them to him. They have been of old imputed to Another who stood in the sinners place, bore the sinners guilt and put it all away by His own expiatory sufferings! Therefore, as these deeds were put to Christs account, they are not laid to the account of the Lords people! Blessed is the man unto whom Jehovah imputes not iniquity. But even pardon and deliverance from guilt would not be sufficient to make a man blessed if they stood alone, for, as long as our heart is full of sin and deceit and follows crooked ways, there can be no true rest to us. Therefore the blessedness comes to the man in whose spirit there is no guileno falsehood. The guile and the guilt have gone together and the gall is gone, too. Now the man is truthful, so he confesses his sin. He is also trustful, so he lays hold on the sinners Substitute and thus he finds peace. Dear Friends, do you all know this blessedness? If you do not, I pray that you may, for it is Heaven begun belowthe Heaven of a poor sinner whose sin is covered and whose heart is purified from guile. Now see the way by which we come to this blessedness

3 *.* When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. Sin was in his heart but he would not confess it. He was silent before God in hardness of heart and then his sorrow grew worse and worse, till not only his flesh began to fail, but his bonesthe most solid part of his frame began to grow old, too. He felt like a man prematurely aged, melting away into the grave.

4 *.* For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. When a man gets Gods hand on him, I guarantee you that he will want no other burden! This hand of God goes with him wherever he goes, it is like his own shadow. Whenever you meet with persons who are self-righteous, you may pray God to lay his hand on themthat will drive the pride and unbelief out of them. David says that he was so pressed under Gods hand that the very essence of his soul was squeezed out of him.

5 *.* I acknowledged my sin unto You, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and You forgave the iniquity of my sins. Selah. And You forgaveblessed, and! How very simple it was! The floods of Divine Wrath were swelling. David just pulled up the sluices of confession, the floods ran away, and all was quiet! Oh, what a simple plan this is! But pride cannot stand itto humble oneself and confess before God that one is utterly undone and ruined and sinfulour proud spirit will not bring itself to do if it can help it. Yet that is the way of peace. Down, down, down, flat on your face! He that is down need fear no fall. But we do not like that going down, that acknowledgment of transgression. Still, we must come to it and the sooner, the better. The Lord bring every proud soul here to a full acknowledgment and confession of sinand then forgiveness will surely follow.

6 *.* For this shall everyone who is godly pray unto You in a time when You may be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come near unto him. The fact that God hears us at the first and gives us a great deliverance when we are under a sense of sin, makes us pray to Him as long as we live. We shall never forget how God heard us thenand something whispers into our heart, He heard you then. He will hear you now. One thing I know, if you do notI can never come to God again in such a plight as I came to Him at the first. Whatever happens to meif I am bereaved a thousand timesif I am covered from head to foot with sores and sit like Job on a dunghillI can never be brought so low as I was when, in my despair, I was ready to lay violent hands on myself rather than live any longer under a sense of sin! I looked unto Him and I was lightenedand that first grand deliverance ensures that, in every other time of trial, in every other flood of great waters, when I cry unto God, He will deliver me!

7 *.* You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah. Here is a threefold declaration. You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall compass me about with songs of deliverance. Yes, says God, I will. And now He speaks to His servant. When we speak to God, we may expect that God will speak to us. And what a happy dialog it is when a soul can pray, and praise, and magnify the Lordand then the Lord condescends to speak to His poor servant after this fashion!

8 *.* I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you shall go. I have led you so far. I have brought you up out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay. I will not let you perish, now. I will not leave you to your own folly.

8. I will guide you with My eyes. It is a very gentle way of guidance when a mistress just turns her eyes towards her servant, who understands her without a word. So God is quite willing to guide His people with His eyes if they are willing to be so guided.

9. Be you not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto you. Alas, there are some hard-mouthed Christians! They will not take a hint from God. They do not watch Gods eyes and so do not learn by that gentle means and, therefore, they require to have a bit and a bridleand such things are not at all nice in ones mouth. Some Christians must always be in trouble, or else they would be in sin. It seems as if some could never be allowed a furlough from sorrow, or else they would spend it in the tents of wickednessBe you not as the horse, or as the mule. Be tender-mouthed. Be willing to be guided. Yield to the gentle admonitions of the Divine Spirit that you may have a truly happy life.

10. Many sorrows shall be to the wicked. It is all merriment with them nowthey count it one of the wisest things, to drive dull care away. But hark to this knell of all their joys, Many sorrows shall be to the wicked. If not today, or tomorrow, yet by-and-by, and in that day it shall be so. All the future is dark to the wicked. The further they go, the worse they will grow.

10. But he that trusts in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about. He that trusts in the Lordhe is the very opposite of the wicked. Do you trust in the Lord, my Friend? If not, you will have to be put among the wicked, for there are only two sorts of people in the worldthe wicked and those that trust in the Lord! If you are not a believer in Christ, you must go with the other company. He that trusts in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about. Mercy shall go all round him, before him, behind him, above him, beneath him, within him and around him everywhere! As you see the moon, sometimes, with a halo around it, so shall you be you shall have brightness within and round about you, mercy shall compass you about.

11 *.* Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, you righteous: and shout for joy, all you that are upright in heart. If anybody has a right to be glad, you have! So indulge the gladness and magnify the name of the Lord.

HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK30, 561, 560.   
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THE DEATH OF CHRIST FOR HIS PEOPLE   
NO. 2656

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, JANUARY 7, 1900.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, ON A LORDS-DAY EVENING, IN THE WINTER OF 1857.

He laid down His life for us.   
1 John 3:16.

Come, Believer, and contemplate this sublime Truth of God, thus proclaimed to you in simple monosyllablesHe laid down His life for us. There is not one long word in the sentenceit is all as simple as it can beand it is simple because it is sublime. Sublimity in thought always needs simplicity in words to express itself. Little thoughts require great words to explain them. Little preachers need Latin words to convey their feeble ideas, but great thoughts and great expressers of those thoughts are content with little words.

He laid down His life for us. Here there is not much upon which any man can display his eloquence. Here is little room for metaphysical discussion or for deep thoughtthe text sets before us a simple yet sublime Doctrine of God. What, then, shall I do with it? If I would speak of it profitably to myself, since I need not employ my wit to dissect it, nor my oratory to proclaim it, let me exercise my adoration to worship it! Let me prostrate all my powers before the Throne of God and, like an angel when his work is done and he has nowhere else to fly at his Lords command, let me fold the wings of my contemplation and stand before the Throne of this great Truth and meekly bow and worship Him who Was, and Is, and is to comethe great and glorious One who laid down His life for us.

It will be well for me, in commencing my discourse, to remind you that there is no understanding the death of Christ unless we understand the Person of Christ. If I were to tell you that God died for us, although I might be telling you the truth and you might possibly not misunderstand what I meant, yet I would be, at the same time, uttering an error. God cannot die! It is, of course, impossible, from His very Nature, that He could even for a moment cease to exist! God is incapable of suffering. It is true that we sometimes use words to express emotions on the part of God but, then, we speak after the manner of men. He is impassive. He cannot suffer. It is not possible for Him to endure anything, much less, then, is it possible for Him to suffer death. Yet we are told, in the verse from which our text is taken, Hereby perceive we the love of God. You notice that the words, of God, are inserted by the translators. They are in italics because they are not in the original. A better translation would be, Hereby perceive we love. But when we read, of God, it might lead the ignorant to fancy that God could die, whereas God could not.

We must always understand and constantly remember that our Lord Jesus Christ was very God of very God and that, as God, He had all the attributes of the Most High and could not, therefore, be capable either of suffering or death. But then He was also Man, Man of the substance of His mother. Man, just like ourselves, sin alone excepted. And the Lord Jesus died not as Godit was as Man that He gave up the ghost. As Man, He was nailed to the Cross. As God, He was in Heaven, even when His body was in the tomb. As God, He was swaying the scepter of all worlds even when the mock scepter of reed was in His hand. And the imperial robe of universal monarchy was on the eternal shoulders of His Godhead when the soldiers old purple cloak was wrapped about His Manhood. He did not cease to be God, He did not lose His Omnipotence and His eternal dominion when He became Mannor did He, as God, die or sufferit was as Man that He laid down His life for us.

Come now, my Soul, and worship this Man, this God! Come, Believer, and behold your Savior! Come to the innermost circle of all sanctity, the circle that contains the Cross of Christ, and sit down and, while you worship, learn three lessons from the fact that He laid down His life for us. The first lesson should beDid He lay down His life for us? Ah, then, my Brothers and Sisters, how great must have been our sins that they could not have been atoned for by any other price! Secondly, did He lay down His life for us? Ah, then, Beloved, how great must have been His love! He would not stop short anywhere until life, itself, had been resigned. Thirdly, did He lay down His life for us? Ah, then, my Soul, be of good cheerhow safe you are! If such an Atonement has been offered, if such a sure satisfaction has been given to Almighty God, how secure you are! Who is he that can destroy him who has been bought with the blood of such a Redeemer?

I. Come, then, let me believingly meditate on the first sad fact. Did Christ lay down His life for me? Then, HOW GREAT MUST HAVE BEEN MY SINS!

Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, I will speak a little of my own experience and, in so doing, I shall also be describing yours. I have seen my sins in many different ways. I saw them once by the blazing light of Sinai and, oh, my spirit shrank within me, for my sins seemed exceedingly black! When the sound of the trumpet waxed loud and long, and the lightning and fire flashed into my heart, I saw a very Hell of iniquity within my souland I was ready to curse the day that I was born, that I should have had such a heart so vile and so deceitful! I thought that then I had seen the exceeding blackness of my sin. Alas, I had not seen enough of sin to make me loathe it so as to leave it, for that conviction passed away! Sinai was but a volcano and it was hushed to silenceand I began to play with sin, againand loved it as much as ever.

I beheld another sight one day. I saw my sins by the light of Heaven. I looked up and I considered the heavens, the work of Gods fingers. I perceived the purity of Gods Character written on the sunbeams. I saw His holiness engraved upon the wide world as well as revealed in Scripture and, as I compared myself with Him, I thought I saw how black I was. O God, I never knew the heinousness of my own guilt until I saw the glory of Your Character! But now I see the brightness of Your holiness, my whole soul is cast down at the thought of my sinfulness and my great departure from the living God! I thought that, then, I had seen enough. Ah, I had seen enough to make me worship for a moment, but my gladness was as the early cloud and as the morning dew! Soon I went my way and forgot what manner of man I was. When I had lost the sense of the majesty of God, I also lost the consciousness of my own guilt!

Then there came to me another view. I beheld Gods loving kindness to me. I saw how He had dandled me upon the knee of Providencehow He had carried me all my lifehow He had strewn my path with plenty and given me all things richly to enjoy. I remembered how He had been with me in the hour of trial, how He had preserved me in the day of hurricane and kept me safe at the moment of storm. I remembered all His goodness to me and, struck with surprise at His mercy, I looked upon my sin in the light of His Grace and I said, O Sin, how base you are! What dire ingratitude do you manifest against a God so profoundly kind! I thought, then, I had surely seen the worst of sin, when I had laid it side by side, first, with the Character of God and afterwards with His bounties. I cursed sin from my inmost heart and thought I had seen enough of it. But, ah, my Brothers and Sisters, I had not! That sense of gratitude passed away and I found myself still prone to sinand still loving it.

But, oh, there came a thrice-happy, yet thrice-mournful hour! One day, in my wanderings, I heard a cry, a groan. I thought twas not a cry such as came from mortal lipsit had in it such unutterable depths of wondrous woe. I turned aside, expecting to see some great sight and it was, indeed, a great sight that I saw. Lo, there, upon a tree, all bleeding, hung a Man! I marked the misery that made His flesh all quiver on His bones! I beheld the dark clouds come rolling down from Heaven, like the chariots of miseryI saw them clothe His brow with blackness! I saw even in the thick darkness, for my eyes were opened and I perceived that His heart was as full of the gloom and horror of grief as the sky was full of blackness. Then I seemed to look into His soul and I saw torrents of unutterable anguishwells of torment of such an awful character that mortal lips dare not sip lest they should be burned with scalding heat. I said, Who is this mighty Sufferer? Why does He suffer thus? Has He been the greatest of all sinners, the basest of all blasphemers? But a voice came forth from the excellent Glory and it said, This is My beloved Son, but He took the sinners sin upon Himself and He must bear its penalty. O God! I thought I never saw sin till that hour, when I saw it tear Christs glories from His headwhen it seemed, for a moment, even to withdraw the loving kindness of God from Himwhen I saw Him covered with His own blood and plunged into the uttermost depths of oceans of grief! Then I said, Now shall I know what you are, O Sin, as never before I knew it! Though those other sights might teach me something of the dire character of evil, yet never, till I saw the Savior on the Cross, did I understand how base a traitor mans guilt was to mans God!

O heir of Heaven, lift now your eyes and behold the scenes of suffering through which your Lord passed for your sake! Come in the moonlight and stand between those olives! See Him sweat great drops of blood. Go from that garden and follow Him to Pilates bar. See your Master subjected to the grossest and filthiest insults! Gaze upon the face of spotless Beauty defiled with the spit of soldiers! See His head pierced with thorns! Mark His back, all torn, and scarred, and bruised and bleeding beneath the terrible lash! And O Christian, see Him die! Go and stand where His mother stood, and hear Him say to you, Man, behold your Savior! Come you tonight and stand where John stood. Hear Him cry, I thirst, and find yourself unable either to relieve His griefs or to comprehend their bitterness. Then, when you have wept there, lift your hands and cry, Revenge! Bring out the traitors! Where are they? And when your sins are brought forth as the murderers of Christ, let no death be too painful for them! Though it should involve the cutting off of right arms, or the quenching of right eyes and putting out their light forever, do it! For if these murderers murdered Christ, then let them die! Die terribly they may, but die they must! Oh that God the Holy Spirit would teach you that first 1esson, my Brothers and Sistersthe boundless wickedness of sinfor Christ had to lay down His life before your sin could be wiped away!

II. Now we will come to the second head and here we will lift up our hearts from the depths of sadness to the heights of affection. Did the Savior lay down His life for me? We will read it, now, He laid down His life for me, and I pray the Lord to help each of you, by faith, to read it so, because when we say, us, that is dealing in generalitiesblessed generalities, it is truebut let us, at this time, deal in specifics and say, each one of us who can do so truthfully, He laid down His life for me. Then, HOW GREATLY HE MUST HAVE LOVED ME!

Ah, Lord Jesus! I never knew Your love till I understood the meaning of Your death! Beloved, we, shall try again, if we can, to tell the story of our own experience to let you see how Gods love is to be learned. Come, saint, sit down and meditate on your creation. Note how marvelously you have been formed and all your bones fitted to one anotherand see love there. Mark next, that predestination which placed you where you are, for the lines have fallen unto you in pleasant places and, notwithstanding all your troubles, you have, compared with many a poor soul, a goodly heritage. Mark, then, the love of God displayed in the predestination that has made you what you are and placed you where you are. Then look back and see the loving kindness of your Lord as displayed to you in all your journey up till now. You are getting old and your hair is whitening above your brow, but He has carried you all the days of old not one good thing has failed of all that the Lord your God has promised! Recall your life story. Go back, now, and look at the tapestry of your life which God has been working every day with the golden filament of His loveand see what pictures of Grace there are upon it! Can you not say that Jesus has loved you? Turn your eyes back and read the ancient rolls of the Everlasting Covenant and see your name among the first-born, the elect, the Church of the living God! Say, did He not love you when He wrote your name there? Go and remember how the eternal settlements were made and how God decreed and arranged all things so that your salvation should come to pass! Say, was there not love there?

Pause at the remembrance of your convictions. Think of your conversion. Remember your preservation and how Gods Grace has been working upon you in adoption, in justification and in every item of the New Covenant. And when you have summed up all these things, let me ask you this questionDo all these things produce in you such a sense of gratitude as the one thing that I shall mention now, the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ? For, my Brothers and Sisters, if your mind is like mine, although you will think highly enough of all these things that God has given you, you will be obliged to confess that the thought of the death of Christ upon the Cross swallows them all up! This I know, my BrethrenI may look back, I may look forwardbut whether I look back to the decrees of eternity, or look forward to the pearl-gated city and all the splendors that God has prepared for His own beloved children, I can never see my Fathers love so beaming forth, in all its brilliance, as when I look at the Cross of Christ and see Him die there!

I can read the love of God in the rocky letters of the Eternal Covenant and in the blazing letters of Heaven hereafter, but, my Brothers and Sisters, in those crimson lines, those lines written in blood, there is something more striking than there is anywhere else, for they say, He laid down His life for us. Ah, here it is you learn love! You know the old story of Damon and Pythiashow the two friends struggled together as to which should die for the other. There was love there. But, ah, there is no comparison between Damon and Pythias, and a poor sinner and his Savior! Christ laid down His life, His glorious life, for a poor worm! He stripped Himself of all His splendors, then of all His happiness, then of His own righteousness, then of His own robes till He was naked to His own shame! And then He laid down His lifethat was all He had leftfor our Savior had not kept anything back.

Just think of that for a moment. He had a crown in Heaven, but He laid that aside, that you and I might wear one forever. He had a belt of brightnessbrighter than the stars, about His loins, but He took it off and laid it bythat you and I might eternally wear a belt of righteousness. He had listened to the holy songs of the cherubim and seraphim, but He left them all that we might forever dwell where angels sing. And then He came to earth and He had many things, even in His poverty, which might have tended to His comfort, but He laid down first one glory, and then another, at loves demand. At last it came to thisHe had nothing left but one poor garment, woven from the top, throughout, and that was clinging to His back with bloodand He laid down that, also. Then there was nothing left. He had not kept back one single thing. There, He might have said, take an inventory of all I have, to the last farthing. I have given it all up for My peoples ransom. And there was nothing left now but His own life. O insatiable Love, could you not stay there? He had given up one hand to cancel sin and the other hand to reconcile us unto God. He had given up one foot that we might have our sinful feet forever transfixed, and nailed, and fastenednever to wanderand the other foot to be fastened to the Cross that we might have our feet at liberty to run the heavenly race! And there was nothing left but His poor heart and He gave His heart up, toothey ripped it apart with the spear and forthwith there came out blood and water.

Ah, my Lord! What have I ever given You compared to what You have given me? Some poor things, like some rusty farthings, I have given You, but how little compared with what You have given me! Now and then, my Lord, I have given You a poor song upon an ill-toned instrument. Sometimes, my Lord, I have done some little service for You, but, alas, my fingers were so dirty they spoiled what I intended to have presented to You white as snow! It is nothing I have done for You, my Lord. No, though I have been a missionary and surrendered home and friends. No, though I have been a martyr and given my body to be burned, I will say, in the last hour, My Master, I have done nothing for You, after all, in comparison with what You have done for me! And yet, what can I do more? How can I show my love to You, for Your love to me, so peerless, so matchless? What shall I do? I will do nothing but

*Dissolved by Your goodness, Ill fall to the ground, And weep to the praise of the mercy Ive found!* That is all I can do, and that, by Your Grace, I must and will do.

III. Now, Beloved, we will change the theme and go one note higher. We have run a long way up the gamut and now we have reached the height of the octave. But we have something else to get out of the text, He laid down His life for us. Did my Savior lay down His life for me? Then, HOW SAFE I AM!

We will have no controversy, tonight, with those who do not see this Truth of Godmay the Lord open their blind eyes and show it to them! That is all we will say. We, who know the Gospel, see, in the fact of the death of Christ, a reason that no strength of logic can ever shakeand no power of unbelief can remove why we should be saved. There may be men with minds so distorted that they can conceive it possible that Christ could die for a man who afterwards is lost. I say, there may be such. I am sorry to say that there are still to be found some such persons whose brains have been so addled, in their childhood, that they cannot see that what they hold is both a preposterous lie and a blasphemous libel! Christ dies for a man and then God punishes that man again? Christ suffers in a sinners stead and then God condemns that sinner after all? Why, my Friends, I feel quite shocked in only mentioning such an awful error! And were it not so current as it is, I would certainly pass it over with the contempt that it deserves!

The Doctrine of Holy Scripture is this, that God is just, that Christ died in the stead of His people and that, as God is just, He will never punish one solitary soul of Adams race for whom the Savior did thus shed His blood! The Savior did, indeed, in a certain sense, die for allall men receive many a mercy through His bloodbut that He was the Substitute and Surety for all men is so inconsistent, both with reason and Scripture, that we are obliged to reject the doctrine with abhorrence! No, my Soul, how shall you be punished if your Lord endured your punishment for you? Did He die for you? O my Soul, if Jesus was not your Substitute and did not die in your very place, then He is no Savior to you! But if He was your Substitute. If He suffered as your Surety, in your place, then, my Soul, Who is he that condemns? Christ has died, yes, rather, has risen again and sits at the right hand of God, and makes intercession for us. There stands the master-argumentChrist laid down His life for us. And if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. If the agonies of the Savior put our sins away, the everlasting life of the Savior, with the merits of His death added thereunto, must preserve His people, even unto the end!

This much I knowyou may hear men stammer when they say itbut what I preach is the old Lutheran, Calvinistic, Augustinian, Pauline, Christian Truth of Godthere is not one sin in the Book of God against anyone that believes. Our sins were numbered on the Scapegoats head and there is not one sin that ever a Believer did commit that has any power to damn him, for Christ has taken the damning power out of sin by allowing itto speak by a bold metaphorto damn Himself, for sin did condemn Him and, inasmuch as sin condemned Him, sin cannot condemn us! O Believer, this is your securitythat all your sin and guilt, all your transgressions and your iniquities have been atoned for and were atoned for before they were committedso that you may come with boldness, though red with all crimes, and black with every lust, and lay your hand on that Scapegoats head! And when you have put your hand there and seen that Scapegoat driven into the wilderness, you may clap your hands for joy, and say, It is finished, sin is pardoned!

**Heres pardon for** transgressions **past,   
It matters not how black their cast.   
And oh, my Soul, with wonder view,   
For sins to come, heres pardon too!**

This is all I need to knowdid the Savior die for me? Then I will not continue in sin that Grace may abound, but nothing shall stop me of thus glorying, in all the Churches of the Lord Jesus, that my sins are entirely removed from me and, in Gods sight, I may sing, as Hart did sing

*With Christs spotless vesture on,*

*Holy as the Holy One!*   
O marvelous death of Christ, how securely do You set the feet of Gods people on the rocks of eternal love! And how securely do You keep them there! Come, dear Brothers and Sisters, let us suck a little honey out of this honeycomb! Was there ever anything so luscious and so sweet to the Believers taste as this all-glorious Truth that we are complete in Him? That in and through His death and merits, we are accepted in the Beloved? Oh, was there ever anything more sublime than this fact that He has already raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, far above all principalities and powers, just where He sits? Surely there is nothing more sublime than that, except it be that a master-thought stamps all these things with more than their own valuethat master-thought that, though the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, the Covenant of His love shall never depart from us! For, says Jehovah, I will never forget you, O Zion. I have engraved you upon the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me.

O Christian, that is a firm foundation, cemented with blood, on which you may build for eternity! Ah, my Soul! You need no other hope but thisJesus! Your mercy, my Savior, never dies! I will plead this Truth of God when cast down with anguishYour mercy never dies! I will plead this when Satan hurls temptations at me and when conscience casts the remembrance of my sin in my teeth! I will plead this always and I will plead it now

*Jesus, Your blood and righteousness*

*My beauty are, my glorious dress.*   
Yes, and after I die, and even when I stand before Your eyes, You dread Supreme

*When from the dust of death I rise,   
To take my mansion in the skies,   
Even then shall this be all my plea,   
Jesus has lived and died for me.   
Bold shall I stand in that great day,   
For who anything to my charge shall lay? While through Christs blood absolved I am From sins tremendous curse and shame?*

Ah, Brothers and Sisters, if this is your experience, you may come to the Table of Communion now right happilyit will not be coming to a funeral, but to a feast of gladness! He laid down His life for us.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **JOHN 9; 1 CORINTHIANS 10:15-33; 11:1.**

We will first read about one of our Lords miracles and then, as many of us will be coming to the Communion Table, we will read about the Lords Supper.

John 9:1-3. And as Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents. That is, the sin of the man or of his parents was not the cause of his being blind.

3. But that the works of God should be made manifest in him. What a very blessed way of looking at evilas an opportunity for God to manifest the power of His works of Grace by getting rid of it! I wish that everyone here would look upon the evil within his own heart in this very hopeful light and say, There is something in me for God to conquer. There is some spiritual disease in me for the great Physician to heal. There is space in my poor soul for the Lord, Himself, to work some miracle of mercy.

4-7. I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day. The night comes when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came seeing. You notice, Brothers and Sisters, that the disciples wanted to know how the man became blind, but Christ removed his blindness and gave him sight. I have known a great many puzzle themselves about the origin of evil. Christ did not come to explain that mysteryHe came to put an end to evil. That is an infinitely more practical objective than that of speculating about how evil first entered the world, or how it entered any individual soul! He will tell you how to get rid of it. What a blessed way of healing Christ used! He could have spoken and the mans eyes would have opened at once. He who said, Let there be light, and there was light, in the first creation, could have said the same thing to this blind manand light would at once have entered his eyes. Instead of that, He chose to use means, and the means did not appear to be very likely to effect the cure. Jesus covered the mans eyes with clay and bade him go and wash it off. Is this the way to give him sight? Yes, Our Lord often uses means that seem to be very unlikely to accomplish His purpose. But He always uses the right means. Often, when He is going to open a mans eyes, spiritually, He first makes him feel more blind than he ever was in all his life. A sense of deeper darkness hangs over him just before the dawn of eternal day! Perhaps even this very hour some words of mine, human and imperfect as they are, may, nevertheless, have the Truth of God in them, just as the clay was made efficacious by the spittle from the Saviors blessed mouth. And if so, there will be healing work worked among blind hearts tonight. God grant that it may be so!

8, 9. The neighbors, therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he. Others said, He is like he. But he said, I am he. There is an end of all question about the matter! He says, I am the very man. No one knew this better than he did and, therefore, he was the one to say it.

10, 11. Therefore said they unto him, How were your eyes opened? He answered and said, A Man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam and wash. And I went and washed, and I received sight. A very plain story, very well told. It is the story of every soul that gets the eternal light. Christ told me to believe in Him. I did believe in Him and I received the blessing. There are not many incidents in the narrative and there is nothing very romantic it is a simple and plain declaration of what Christ had done for him. And, blessed be God, just as sight was given to the blind man, Christ still gives salvation to all who trust Him!

*There is life for a look at the Crucified One! There is life at this moment for thee.   
Then look, sinnerlook unto Him and be saved Unto Him who was nailed to the tree!   
It is not your tears of repentance or prayers, But the blood that atones for the soul.   
On Him, then, who shed it, believing at once, Your weight of iniquities roll.   
But take, with rejoicing, from Jesus at once The life everlasting He gives:   
And know, with assurance, you never can die, Since Jesus, your righteousness, lives.*

12-14. Then said they unto him, Where is He? He said, I know not. They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. And it was the Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. Oh, that He would do the same thing, in a spiritual sense, this Sabbath day! On another occasion, when He had worked a miracle on the Sabbath and the Jews, therefore, sought to persecute Him and slay Him, He said to them, My Father works hitherto, and I work. The Sabbath day was often Christs chief working daymay He make it to be so again now!

15-17. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon my eyes, and I washed, and do see. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This Man is not of God because He keeps not the Sabbath day. Others said, How can a Man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They said unto the blind man again, What do you say of Him, that He has opened your eyes? He said, He is a Prophet. There was no mistake about that matter in the mind of the man whom he had healednone but a Prophet, mighty in word and deed, could have worked such a miracle as that!

18-21. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How, then, does he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, but by what means he now sees, we know not; or who has opened his eyes, we know not. He is of age, ask him: he shall speak for himself. And so he did. He was one of those people who can speak for themselves and it is greatly to be wished that many more of those who have been cured by Christ could do the same! He was a conscientious man, who, outside fear of offending or any desire to curry favor, spoke out honestly what he knewnothing more.

22-27. These words spoke his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had already agreed that if any man did confess that He was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise; we know that this Man is a sinner. He answered and said, Whether He is a sinner or not, I know not. One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. Then said they to him again, What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and you did not hear: why would you hear it again? Will you also be His disciples? He was a sharp, ready-witted man who was not to be enticed into making any rash and unguarded statements. He knew what he did know and he kept to that. And whenever any of you are assailed by the enemies of Christ, you will do well to imitate this man and neither be abashed by their frowns and sneers, nor yet be too ready to cast your pearls before swine!

28. Then they reviled him. That is the usual way with the men of the worldwhen they cannot beat a man in argument, they begin to call him bad names. They reviled him.

28-31. And said, You are His disciple; but we are Moses disciples. We know that God spoke unto Moses: as for this Fellow, we know not from where He is. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvelous thing, that you know not from where He is, and yet He has opened my eyes. Now we know that God hears not sinners. That is to say, He does not work miracles by them. He does not hear their prayers and give them the power to open blind mens eyes.

31-33. But if any man is a worshipper of God, and does His will, him He hears. Since the world began it was not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this Man were not of God, He could do nothing. Christ could not have given sight to the blind man if He had not, Himself, come from God. This was good reasoning and it would have been convincing if the objectors had been willing to be convinced by the truth.

34. They answered and said unto him, You were altogether born in sins, and do you teach us? Holy and learned people like us Pharisees do you set up to be our teacher?

34-38. And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out and when He had found him, He said unto him, Do you believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him? And Jesus said unto him, You have both seen Him, and it is He that talks with you. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him. Then was his cure, indeed, complete! He had seen Christ spiritually as well as naturally, and fell at His feet and worshipped Him as the Son of God.

39-41. And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said unto Him, Are we blind, also? Jesus said unto them, if you were blind, you would have no sin: but now you say, We see; therefore your sin remains.

1 Corinthians 10:15-19. I speak as to wise men; judge you what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What say I then? That the idol is anything, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything? After they had offered the beasts as sacrifices to their idols, it was the custom to sell the carcasses in the shambles. Christian men, going into the market to buy meat, and asking no questions, bought and ate portions of these sacrifices, and they did no wrong whatever. But there were some in the Church who were very tender of conscience and who said, If we eat meat which has been offered to idols, we thereby become partakers with the idolaters. Paul therefore writes:

20, 21. But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that you should have fellowship with devils. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils. It cannot bethere must be a separation between these two things. We cannot have any delight in idol-worship and yet worship the Christ of God.

21-28. You cannot be partakers of the Lords Table, and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He? All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man anothers wealth. Whatever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lords, and the fullness thereof. If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and you are disposed to go; whatever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. But if any man says unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lords, and the fullness thereof. So, you see, you may eat the meat if you like, for the idol is nothing at all. But still, if you are told that it is meat that has been offered to idols and that you, by eating of it, seem to join in the worship of idols, abstain from doing itnot for your own sake, but for the sake of the man who might be caused to stumble through you. This is a safe rule with regard to Christian behavior in many other things. There may be things lawful in drink as well as in meat which a man may take without sinning. But if he knows that his example leads others astray, then let him take heed that he does not set such an example! An example which is an excuse for drunkenness is not a good one. Therefore, let none of us set it before the eyes of men. If any man says to you, This meat has been offered in sacrifice to idols, eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lords, and the fullness thereof.

29. Conscience, I say, not your own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another mans conscience? That man may not be able to do it without injury to himself, but I may, and I have liberty to do so. But yet, as a Christian, I am to consider his need of power, and I am not to use my liberty lest I do harm to my brother.

30, 31. For if I by Grace am a partaker, why am I evilly spoken of for that for which I give thanks? Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. And if anything you might do would not glorify God, do not do it!

32, 33. Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

1 Corinthians 11:1. Be you followers of me, even as I, also, am of Christ.   
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GODS LOVE TO THE SAINTS   
NO. 2959

[Also see Sermon No. 2958, Volume 51 The Saints Love to God.] A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1905.

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, JULY 11, 1875.

Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us. 1 John 3:16.

TRUE love cannot long be dormant. It is like fire of an active natureit must be at work. Love longs for expressionit cannot be dumb. Command it to be without expression and you command it not to live. And true love is not satisfied with expressing itself in words. It does use words, but it is painfully conscious of their feebleness, for the full meaning of love is not to be conveyed in any human language. It breaks the backs of words and crushes them to atoms when it lays upon them all that it means. Love must express itself in deeds, as our old proverb says, Actions speak more loudly than words. Love delights, too, in sacrifices. She rejoices in self-denials and the more costly the sacrifice, the better is love pleased to make it. She will not offer that which costs her nothingshe loves to endure pain, losses and crossesand thus she expresses herself best.

This is a general principle which is not only applicable to men, but it reaches even up to God, Himself, for, God is Love, and being love, He must display love, nor can He rest with merely speaking of His love. His love must manifest itself in action. More than that, God could not rest until He had made the greatest sacrifice that He could make and had given up His only-begotten Son to die in the place of sinners. When He had done that, then He could rest in His love. God does not come to us and say, Men and women, I love you and you must believe that I love you although I do nothing for you to prove My love. He does ask us to believe in His love and He has given us abundant proofs of it. Therefore He has a right to claim our belief in it. The Apostle of Love, who wrote the chapter from which our text is taken, tells us, Hereby we are made to knowfor that would be the real translation of the originalHereby we come to know, we do know, the love of God, because He laid down His life for us. Just as we learn the love of others by seeing what they are prepared to sacrifice for us, so is it even with God, Himself, we discover, discern, perceive and are made to know the love which He bears for us by the fact that He laid down His life for us.

I. First, I want to show you that THERE ARE MANY ACTS OF GOD IN WHICH HIS LOVE IS VERY CLEAR, BUT IN WHICH THE MOST OF MEN FAIL TO SEE.

There are many of His acts of which it might be said, Hereby the love of God is manifested, yet many men fail to perceive the love which lies behind the actions. Let us examine ourselves to see how we stand with regard to this matter. There are some of us who ought to have perceived the love of God to us in the surroundings into which we were brought at our very birth. I am addressing many who, like myself, owe very much to Christian parents. Many of us could truly say, in the words of the childrens hymn

*I was not born, as thousands are,   
Where God was never known   
And taught to pray a useless prayer   
To blocks of wood and stone.*

But without being born slaves or heathens, it might have happened that we would have had to spend our childhood in the slums of London. Some of you think that you have been very good, but would you have been better than the boys that fill our reformatorieswould you have been better than those who crowd our prisonsif you had had the same training, or lack of training, that has been their lot? If you had had such an example as they have hadif the taste of strong drink had been familiar to you almost from your birthif the first thing you ever heard was blasphemyif you had lived in the thieves kitchendo you think that you would have been any more clear from guilt than they have been? When we look down upon others and despise them, it may be that if we knew all their temptations and the conditions of their upbringing, we might almost admire them for not being worse than they are! It costs some people a great struggle to be honest. And there are many women in this dreadful London whom we, perhaps, think ill of, who, nevertheless, have suffered almost a martyrdom and who have fought stern battles with temptation! If they have fallen somewhat, they are to be honored because they have not fallen still further!

But what a blessing it was to us that when we woke up in this world, we looked up into a face that smiled upon us and to lips that, by-and-by, spoke to us of Jesus Christ! The first example that we had was one that, to this day, we wish to follow. Our companions, from our youth up, have been of a godly order and there are some who are in Heaven, now, who had much to do with the formation of our characterand for whom we should always thank God. Now, had we been wisehad we understood the meaning of this gracious arrangementwe might, in the very conditions in which we were born and brought up, have perceived the love of God to us! Yet many of us did not. I should not wonder if some of you thought that you were badly treated because you were placed in such a strict family where you were checked and kept from what you regarded as the pleasures of life. Many a young man has felt that he has been tied to his mothers apron strings a great deal too much. He saw other young men enjoying themselves, but he could nothis father, like a grim jailer, was always looking after him too closely. That is the way many of us put it in the days of our ignorance. But now that God has opened our eyes, we can see the love of God in it all. Yet we did not see it then and, as a general rule, young men and women who have the high privilege of Christian parents and training do not perceive the love of God in it, but often kick against it and wish they had not to endure what they regard as so great a hardship!

Then, dear Friends, the love of God may be clearly seen in reference to all of us in His giving us a wise and judicious Law. That Law of the Ten Commandments is a gift of great kindness to the sons of men, for it tells us the wisest and the happiest way of living. It forbids us nothing but what would be to our injury and it withholds from us nothing which would be a real pleasure to us. The commands which say, You shall, or You shall not, are like the signs which you sometimes see at swimming places, bearing the words, Dangerous! Keep so many yards away from this spot. God does not make laws denying us anything that would really be for our good. There is a poisonous berry growing in your garden and your child has been told that he is not to eat it. If he is a wise child, he will understand that it is your love to him which has told him not to eat of that poisonous berry. If you had no care about him at all, he might eat what poison he chose. But because you love him, you say to him, My child, do not do this and do not do that because it will be to your serious injury and, possibly, your death, if you disobey. We ought to see the love of God in the gift of His Law, but nobody ever does that till he is led to the love of God in other ways. We cannot say of it, though we ought to do so, Hereby perceive we the love of God towards us.

We have also had in the daily bounties of Divine Providence, abundant manifestations of the love of God. If our eyes were really opened, every loaf of bread would come to us as a token of our Fathers careand every drop we drink would come as the gift of our Fathers bounty. Are we not clothed by His love? The breath that is in our nostrilswho gives it to us but our Creator? Who preserves us in health but our great Benefactor? Is it not a proof of love that you are not on a sickbed tonight? That you are not in the lunatic asylum? That you are not do the borders of the grave? Yes, and that you are not in Hell? We are a mass of mercies and a mass of sinswe seem to be made of mercy and ingratitude mixed together! But if the Lord will open our eyes, we will then perceive the boundless mercies of which we are the recipients and we shall begin to perceive His love! But this is not the first place where man ever sees Gods love. The Cross is the window through which the love of God is best seen, but, until that window is opened, all the bounties of Gods Providence fail to convince us of His love. See how the mass of men reap their harvests and yet never thank the God who gives the harvest. See how they drive the loaded wagons to the granaries and thresh out the wheatand send it to be sold in the marketsbut did you ever hear of a song of praise being sung in the market when they brought the first new wheat to be sold? Did you ever hear of such a thing? Why, they would think we were all gone mad if at Mark Lane, on the arrival of a sample of new wheat, we were to begin to sing

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow!*

The probability is that there are many of them there cursing because the wheat has gone down a shilling or two and the poor people will, possibly, get their bread a little cheaper! Praising God seems to have gone out of fashion and we are told by philosophers, who ought to know, that the wheat springs up naturally and that God has nothing to do with it. They say that whether it rains or whether the sun shines, the processes of Nature are ruled by iron law with which God has no concern at alland they practically imply that He has gone for a holiday and left the world to manage itself, or wound it up, like a watch, and put it under His pillow and gone to sleep! That is the philosophers religion and, as far as I am concerned, the philosophers may keep it, for it is not mine! My religion believes in the God of the showers, the God of the sunshine and the God of the harvests. I believe in the living God, who gives us all things to enjoy and let His name be praised for it! Were our hearts right with Him, we would hereby perceive the love of God, but we do not that perception comes to us through a stained glass windowthe window that was stained crimson by the precious blood of Christ! There, and only there, do we perceive the love of God, because He laid down His life for us.

II. That brings me to my second point which is thisIN THE LAYING DOWN OF HIS LIFE, CHRISTS LOVE IS BEST SEEN.   
I have already said that in many acts of God, His love ought to be seen, but, according to the text, we hereby perceive the love of God, because He laid down His life for us. It is universally admitted that there can be no greater proof of love than for a person to lay down his life for the object of that love. All sorts of sacrifices may be taken as proofs of affection, but the relinquishment of life is the supreme proof of love which nobody doubts. A man says that he loves his countryand suppose that man should be in the condition of Curtius, in the old Roman fable, when a great chasm opened in the Forum and it was declared that it could only be closed by the most precious thing in Rome being thrown into it. The story goes on to say that Curtius, fully armed and riding his charger, leaped into the chasm, which instantly closed. Well, nobody could doubt the love of such a man for his country! If the question happened to be the love of humanity, we have the storythe true storyof the surgeon at Marseilles. And if we acted as he did, nobody could doubt our love to our fellow creatures. The plague was raging through the city and the people were dying by thousands. The good bishop remained among them, discharging the last offices to the dying and cheering the livingand many of the surgeons of the town who might have departed, lingered to wait upon the sick. At a consultation among them, it was resolved to make a post mortem examination of one of the worst cases of the plague and the question was who should make it, for whoever did it must certainly die of the disease within a few hours. One of them, to his honor, said, My life is of no more value than that of any other manwhy should I not sacrifice it if I can, by doing so, discover the cause of this terrible malady and save this city?   
He finished his grim task, wrote his notes about the case and then went to his home and died. Nobody doubted that he loved Marseilles, for he had laid down his life for it. And you probably read, the other day, the story of a mothers love which nobody could doubt. In the late disastrous floods, a mother who had her two little children in a cradle, climbed a hill, carrying them with her. She reached a tree, or some other frail shelter with these two dear objects of her love and held them up till she found that the support on which she was resting was not strong enough to sustain herself and her two babies. So, placing them out of harms way as far as she could, she leaped into the waters and soon sank. Nobody could doubt that mothers love when she laid down her life for her children! This is the crowning proof of love! Even the devils advocate will not rise up to dispute this truth! They that can die for others must surely love those for whom they lay down their lives.   
Now, our Lord Jesus Christ has proved His love to sinners by dying for them. Do you need me to tell you the story again? O my Brothers and Sisters, read it for yourselves. Read it often! You have it written four times, but not once too oftenthe story of the Son of God, who, for our sakes, died a felons death, barbarously nailed to the Cross to bleed away His life. Read that story and see how He proved His love to us!   
But there were certain points about Christs death which are very extraordinary and which are better proofs of love than those I mentioned just now. The first is thisJesus need not have died at all. When the Marseilles surgeon died, he only did what he would have to do a few years afterwards. When the mother perished to save her children, she did but die a few weeks, or months, or years before her appointed time, for, being mortal, she must die. If we give our life for others, we do not really give our lifewe but pay the debt of Nature a little while before it is due. But it was altogether different in the Lord Jesus Christs case. Over Him death had no powerIt is of Him that Paul writes, who only has immortality. Who could, without His consent, have laid his hands upon the Prince of Life, the Son of God, and said to Him, You shall die? No one could have done that! It was a purely voluntary act for Christ to die at allnot merely to die on the Cross but ever to die, was a voluntary act on His part and, consequently, a most singular proof of His love to us.  
Remember, again, that in our Lords case, there were no claims upon Him on the part of those for whom He died. I can understand a mother dying for her children. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? I can see some reason why a noble citizen would be willing to die for his city. When the six principal burgesses of Calais put the ropes round their necks and went out to Edward III, to offer to die instead of their fellow citizens, I can understand their action. Were they not the leaders of that community? Were they not put into a position of responsibility and honor which, if it might not exactly demand the sacrifice, yet, at least, rendered it a most likely thing that if they were men of truly noble spirit, they would make it? But there were no such claims upon our Lord Jesus Christ! When Queen Eleanor sucked the poison from her husbands wounds at the risk of her own life, I can see reasons why she would do it. I say not that she was bound to do it, but I do say that the relationship of a wife accounts for what she did. But Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had no relationship to us until He chose to assume the relationship which He did assume out of infinite compassion! There was no more relation between Him and us then between the potter and the clay! And if the clay upon the wheel goes amiss, what does the potter do with it but take it and throw it into a corner? And so might the great Creator have done with us. But instead of doing so, He shed His blood that He may make us into vessels of honor fit for His own use! O Son of God, how could You stoop so low as to take upon Yourself our nature and in that nature to bleed and die, when between us and You there was a distance infinitely greater than that between an ant and a cherub, or a moth and an archangel? Yet with no claims upon You, of Your own free will, You did yield Yourself to die because of Your amazing love to us!

Another extraordinary thing about Christs love was that there were no appeals whatever made to Him to die. In the other cases which I have quoted, you may remind me that there were no vocal appeals made. The little children in the cradle did not beg their mother to die for them. No, but the very sight of them was enough to plead with their mother. In the case of the city dying of pestilence, could the surgeonwho believed that by an examination he might discover the secret of the evilgo through the streets and see the doors marked with the fatal cross and hear the wailing of the widows and the children without feeling that they did make most pitiful appeals to his heart? But man made no appeal to God to die for him! Our father Adamand he was the representative of us all, did not fall down on his knees in the Presence of God and say, God be merciful to me a sinner. O God, whom I have offended, provide for me a Savior and deliver me from Your wrath! No prayer came from Adams lips, nor even a confessiononly a wicked and mean attempt to cast upon God the blame for his disobedience! The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. That is all that human nature usually doesit will not acknowledge that it needs a Savior and it will not confess that it has sinned sufficiently to need an expiatory sacrifice and, consequently, the sullenness of man might have paralyzed the love of Christ if anything could have done it! You did not sue for mercyyou did not ask for an Atonementyou did not desire expiation for your sin, yet Jesus came, unasked, undesired, unsought to lay down His life for sinners!   
Notice, again, that Jesus Christ well knew that if He did lay down His life, He would get no love in return from those for whom He died unless He, Himself, created that love. This He has done in the hearts of His own people, but, in the hearts of others who have been left to themselves, there is no love to Jesus Christ. Here, Sabbath after Sabbath, it is our privilege to preach a dying Savior to dying sinners, but, of all themes in the world, it seems to make the least impression upon some of our hearers! If we were to come here and talk of Howards devotion in living and dying to relieve the woes of the prisoners in our jails, many would be moved to admiration of the philanthropist! But how little admiration have most men for our sweet Lord and Master? It is an old story, you say, and you have heard it so often that you care little for it. Now, that mother, who died to save her children, felt that they loved her. How often they had charmed her with their cooing and smiles while they were lying on her bosomand she felt that she could freely give up her life for them. But our Lord Jesus Christ knew that He was dying for stony-hearted monsters whose return for His love, if left to themselves, would be that they would utterly reject Him! They would not believe in Him. They would trust in their own righteousness rather than in Hisand they would try to find a way to Heaven by sacraments and ceremonies rather than by faith in the meritorious Sacrifice which He made when He laid down His life for sinners!   
Remember, too, that our Lord died by the hands of men as well as for the sake of men. The surgeon at Marseilles was not to die by the act of his fellow citizens. The mother was not to die at the hands of her children. Curtius, leaping into the gulf, was not forced there by the anger of his fellow citizens. On the contrary, all would have been glad for them to continue to live. But it was this that made the death of Christ so sadly unique, that He came to die for men who wished that He should be made to die! Crucify Him, crucify Him, they cried in their mad rage, foaming at the mouth. Oh, some of you say, but we never said that. No, not then, but perhaps you are saying it nowfor there are still many who hate the Gospel of Christand to hate the Gospel is to hate Christ, Himself, for that is His very essence and heart! And to reject Christ to choose your own pleasure and to keep on delaying to repent, as some of you do, and to die at enmity against Christ is very much the same thing as crying, Crucify Him! And it comes to the same thing in the long run. You know that if you could be quite sure that there is no Christ and no God, and no Heaven, and no Hell, you would be perfectly happy. That is to say, you would, if you could, crucify Christ and put Him out of existence with everything that has to do with Him! Well, that is the very same spirit as that which made the Jews of old cry, Crucify Him, crucify Him!   
Yet once more, there was this remarkable thing about Christs death that in dying for us, He was taking upon Himself an awful mass of shame and dishonor, and also a most intimate connection with sin. There was nothing shameful about the leap of Curtius into the chasm. Had I been there to see him, I would have clapped my hands and cried, Well done, Curtius! Who would not have said the same? But when our Lord died, men thrust out their tongues at Him and mocked Him! His was, indeed, a shameful death. And, I think when that mother put her babes up in a place of safety and herself sank into the raging flood, the angels might have smiled as well as sorrowed at such a deed of heroism. But when Jesus sank into the raging flood to save us, even God, Himself, did not smile at Him! Among our Saviors expiring cries was that agonizing utterance, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? This was because He had, as our Representative, come into contact with human sinand so with human shame. The just and holy Son of God was made a curse for us! Or, as Paul tells us, God has made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.   
All this helps to manifest to us Christs amazing love, so I finish my discourse by askingas the text says, Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for ushave you and I perceived that love? Do we know it? That is a very simple question, yet I take the liberty to press it upon you. I think it was Aristotle who saidand he was a great master of thoughtthat it is impossible for a person to know that he is loved without feeling some love in return. I think, as a rule, that is true. So, if you do really perceive that Christ loved you so much as to die for you, there will leap up in your heart somewhat, at any rate, of love to Him! One Sunday night I was reading, in Exeter Hall, the hymn beginning   
*Jesus, Lover of my soul*   
And, just at that time, there strayed into the hall, a man of fashion, a man of the world, careless of all spiritual things, but that line caught his ear   
*Jesus, Lover of my soul.*   
He said to himself, Does Jesus really love me? Is He the Lover of my soul? And that line was the means of begetting love in his thoughtless heartand then and there he surrendered himself to the love of Christ! Oh, that such a result as that might come of my repeating the story herethat some who have never loved the Lord Jesus Christ up till now, would say, Did He thus love His enemiesthus strangely love them even to the death? Then we, though we have up to now been His enemies, can be His enemies no longer! We will love Him in return for His great love to us.   
And you Christian people who do love Him, if you have perceived His love somewhat, try to perceive it still more, that you may love Him more! And if you really love Him more, try to show that you do. Notice the rest of the verse from which my text is taken. I did not leave out the latter part because I was afraid of it, but because I had not time to deal with it as it deservesHereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. We ought to prove our love to our God by our love to our fellow menbut especially by our love to our fellow Christiansand to prove our love by our actions! I do not know what the love of some professors is worth. I suppose they do if they put down how much it costs them in a year. I fear that it does not cost some professors nearly as much for their religion as it does for their ribbons, or for some foolish indulgence. They pay their shoeblacks better than they pay their ministers and they take care to spend upon themselves in perfect waste, a hundred times as much as they spend upon spreading the Gospel, saving the heathen, helping the poor, or rescuing the fallen! We do not believe in such Christianity as that! And we certainly do not wish to practice it. If we profess to be Christians, let us be Christians in deed and let us especially show our love to Christ by loving our fellow Christians. If you see any of them in need, aid them to the uttermost of your power! If they need cheering and comforting, give them good cheer and comfort. But, if they need substantial aidfinancial aidlet them have that, too!   
In the old days of persecution, there were always some noble souls who tried to hide away the Christians from those who sought their lives, although they did so at the risk of their own lives. And many a Christian has given himself up to die in order to save the lives of his fellow Christians. Some of the old people came tottering before the judge because they thought that they would not be so much missed from the Church as the younger ones would be and, possibly, some of them also thought that they had more faith than the younger ones hadand if they had more faith, they were more ready to die and so to let the younger ones live on until they grew stronger in faith and hope, and love. But, on the other hand, sometimes the young men would gently push back the fathers and say to them, No, you are oldyou had better linger here awhile and teach the young. We young people are strong, so we will go and die for Christ. And there was many a contention in the Church of God, in persecuting times, as to who should die first for Christ! They were all willing to lay down their lives for their Brothers and Sisters!

Where has this self-sacrificing love gone? I would like to see some of it! I would even wear microscopes over my eyes if I thought that I could so discover itbut I am afraid I cannot. Why, if we loved each other, now, as Christians loved each other then, we should be the talk of the town and even worldings would say, Look how these Christians love one another! Yet this is only what we ought to do, so, Brothers and Sisters in Christ let it be what we will do! God help you to do it for Christs sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **1 JOHN 3.**

Verse 1. Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Behold it, wonder at it and never cease to admire it! Is it not one of the greatest marvels that even God, Himself, has ever worked that we should be called the sons of God?

1. Therefore the world knows us not, because it knew Him not. It does not know the Father, then how should it know the children? It did not know the elder Brotherthe First-Born among many brethrenand as it did not know Him, how should it know us?

2. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And that vision will be transforming and transfiguring! The pure in heart see God and they are pure because they see God. There is both action and reactionwhen God has purified us, we shall see Christ and when we see Christ as He is, our purification will be complete! When will that day arrive? Oh, for the blessed vision! Meanwhile, let us be content to look at Him by faith and to be always growing more and more prepared for that brighter vision which is yet to be ours.

3. And every man that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure. It is the nature of this Divine hopethis hope of being like Christthat it helps us to grow day by day more like Him and so we purify ourselves, as Christ is pure.

4. Whoever commits sin, also transgresses the Law, for sin is the transgression of the Law. And there will never be a better definition of sin than this. However men may philosophically try to mar it, this simple statement will be better than any that they can give usSin is the transgression of the Law.

5. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. What a marvelous thing it was for Christ to bear sin as He did and yet to have upon Him or within Him no taint arising from it! You have to go into the world and you say, How can we help sinning while we have to mix with so much that is evil? Well, the Lord Jesus Christ had to mix with evil more than you will ever have to, for He not only lived in this sinful world, but the transgression of His people was actually laid upon Him so that He came into very close contact with sinHe was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.

6. Whoever abides in Him sins not: whoever sins has not seen Him, neither known Him. If this declaration is related to any one act of sin, none of us could ever say that we have seen or known Himbut it relates to the habit of sinif we love sin and live in sinif the main course of our life is sinful, then we have not seen Him, neither known Him.

7. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that does righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. You must judge a tree by its fruit. If it brings forth good fruit, it is a good treeand if it brings forth evil fruit, it is an evil tree. Do not be deceived about that matter, for there have been some who have dreamed of being righteous and of being the children of God, yet they have lived in sin as others do! They have been selfdeceived! It has been a mere dream on which they have relied. Practical godliness is absolutely necessary to a true Christian characterand a man is not righteous unless he does that which is righteous.

8. He that commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sins from the beginning. Ever since he became a devil, he has continued to sin. It was sin that changed the angel into a deviland he has always remained a sinner.

8, 9. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested; that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever is born of God does not commit sin. That is to say, this is not the course, habit and tenor of his life there is sin in much that he does, but he hates it, loathes it and flees from it.

9-11. For His seed remains in him: and he cannot sin because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil, whoever does not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loves not his brother. For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Love is the essential mark of the true child of God. God is Love and, therefore, he that is born of God must love. Hatred, envy, malice, uncharitablenessthese are not the things to be found in the children of God! If they are found in you, you are not one of His children.

12. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And why did he slay him? Because his own works were evil and his brothers righteous. That was the real evil at the bottom of his great crimeit was the wickedness of Cains character that made him hate the good that was in Abeland, therefore, after a while he slew his brother, because his own works were evil and his brothers righteous.

13. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hates you. This hatred is too old for you to wonder at it. If it began with the first man who was born into the world, even with Cain, do not marvel if it should spend some of its fury upon you!

14, 15. We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loves not his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer: and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. What a warning this is against the evil spirit of hate, revenge and all that kind of feeling! These things are not compatible with the possession of the life of God! Where hatred lives, there is no life of God in the soul. That evil must be shot to the very heart by the arrows of Almighty Grace, or else we are not free from the dominion of the devil. Every man who hates another has the venom of murder in his veins. He may never actually take the deadly weapons into his hand and destroy life, but if he wishes that his brother were out of the wayif he would be glad if no such person existedthat feeling amounts to murder in the judgment of God! It is not the lifting of the dagger, nor the mixing of the poison that is the essence of the crime of murder! It is the hate that prompts the commission of the deadly deed! If we never commit the crime, yet if the hate is in our heart, we are guilty of murder in the sight of Godand eternal life cannot be abiding in us.

16, 17. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this worlds goods and sees his brother has need, and shuts up his heart of compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him? Indeed, it cannot be there at all! He has the love of himself and not the love of God dwelling in him!

18, 19. My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth and shall assure our hearts before Him. You notice how the Apostle constantly writes about knowing. Take your pencil and underline the word, know, in Johns Epistles and you will be surprised to find how frequently he uses it. He is not one of those who suppose, or fancy, or imagine, or have formed a certain hypothesishe knows and he tells us what he knows in order that we, also, may know! Love has a knowledge which is peculiarly her owna full assurance which none can take from her!

20. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart and knows all things. If you, with your narrow knowledge of right and wrongyour imperfect understanding of your own motivesif you find reason to condemn yourself, what must be your position before the bar of the all-seeing, heart-reading God? That little flutter in your bosom, my Friendthat trembling, that uneasinesswhat does it mean? Is not this a forewarning of the sounding of the trumpet of the Great Assize when you will have to stand before the Judge of all the earth and answer for yourself to Him? It is easy to deceive your fellow manbut it is impossible to deceive your God!

21. Beloved, if our heart condemns us not, then have we confidence toward God. Other people may condemn us, but that does not matter. They may impute wrong motives to us and misrepresent us, but that is no concern of ours so long as we have confidence toward God.

22. And whatever we ask, we receive of Him because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. Notice the link between confidence as to our rightness and power in prayer. When a child has done wrong and knows it, he cannot run to his father and ask for favors as he used to dohe feels timid in his fathers presence because of the sense of his guilt. But if you and I know that we have endeavored with all our heart to love the Lord and our fellow men and to act righteously in all things, we have a sacred confidence which enables us to speak with God as a man speaks with his friend! God greatly loves this kind of confidence and He listens to those who possess it. Such people may ask what they will of Godthey have learned to bring their minds into conformity with the will of Gods so the desire of their heart shall be granted to them.

23, 24. And this is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment. And he that keeps His commandments dwells in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He has given us. Oh, to be more and more under the sacred influence of that blessed Spirit!

HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK286, 293 AND FROM SACRED SONGS AND SOLOS44.   
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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3152 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE LOWER COURTS   
NO. 3152

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 8, 1909.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, MARCH 23, 1873.

*For if our heart condemns, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.   
1 John 3:20, 21.*

[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon, on verse 21, is #1855, Volume 31WHAT IS THE VERDICT? Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

THE fault of a very large number of persons is that they will not lay spiritual things to heart at all, but treat them in a very superficial manneror, if they exercise any judgment concerning them, it is of the most superficial kind. Now this is very foolish because, to say the least, the soul is of some value. And if men lay to heart the loss of their bodily health or of their estate, much more ought they to lay to heart anything which concerns their soul. It is very wicked as well as very foolish because, in refusing to lay spiritual matters to heart, we virtually tell the God who made us that He is of no account to us, that we are quite indifferent to His Being, to His Character, or to His commands. It is telling Him that we do not desire to be obedient to Him and that if we have been disobedient to Him, we do not trouble ourselves about that. It is also as dangerous as it is foolish and wicked to be unconcerned about spiritual matters, for God will not be trifled with and, one of these days, those who would not lay eternal things to heart will find their souls full of anguish and with remorse they will be visited for this lightness of theirs. Whereas, today, like those of old who were invited to the wedding of the kings son, they make light of it and go their way to their farm or to their merchandise, there will come a day when they would give all their farms and their merchandise if they might have but another hours respite, another invitation of mercy and another opportunity to seek and find the Savior. I do pray that if any here have been among those who do not lay to heart the things that concern their immortal souls, they may not any longer be allowed to remain in the company of such vain and sinful persons, but may come out from that congregation of the foolish and begin to lay to heart the things which make for their eternal peace.

Then, beloved Friends, there is another class of persons, very much superior to those of whom I have spoken, who nevertheless make a mistake of another kind. They do lay the things of God to heart and they are constantly weighing themselves in the balances of conscience. They look within again and againthey are not afraid of heart-searchingindeed, they spend the most of their time in that stern occupation. Am I about to blame these friends? I must answer, No and yes. I will not blame them for what they do, for they do the right thingbut I shall blame them for what they leave undone! Namely thisthey forget that the tribunal of conscience, though a very important one, is not the supreme court and that, although it is well to try matters before the heart to see whether it condemns or acquits, yet there is another court, far higher than the court of the human heartGod is greater than our heart, and knows all things. There are some good Christian people who are always distressed because they never take their cases into the supreme court and, on the other hand, I fear that there are some ungodly professors who are always presumptuously at ease because they have been satisfied with the verdict of the lower court, which is very liable to err in its judgmentand so they have never presented their case before the great Judge who cannot by any means make a mistake.

I am going to speak of these two courts. First, of the lower court of the heart or conscience, and then of the higher court where He presides who is greater than our heart, and knows all things. In speaking upon this subject, I shall mention four forms of verdict which may be given in the court of the heart. The first is a correct verdict against ourselves. The second is an incorrect verdict against ourselves, (the first verse of our text applies to both of these). The third is a correct verdict of acquittal, (that is in the second verse of our text). And then, lastly, I will say something about an incorrect verdict of acquittal, which, perhaps, our heart may sometimes give.

I. First, then, the Apostle speaks of A CORRECT VERDICT AGAINST OURSELVESIf our heart condemn us.   
There are some persons whose hearts justly condemn them and the voice of conscience is, in them, the Voice of God. The echo of the Divine sentence, Depart, you cursed, is heard by them in the halls of conscience before the Voice of God has spoken itstrangely contrary to echoes among men, which always follow the voice. Conscience is saying, You will be driven, O Man, from the Presence of God! Now, in this case, the court of conscience sits under the Kings arms with the marks of Divine Authority displayed above its head. And conscience sitting thus as a judge, judges rightly when it judges by the Word of God. Righteous judgment must not be according to mans whim or fancy, but according to the supreme Law of Godand the verdict of conscience is worth nothing unless it is so formed. The charge against the culprits is that they have broken Gods Law and, in the case of many of them, that they have also rejected Gods mercy. They have offended against the Law and the Gospel!   
There stands a prisoner at the bar and there sits conscience as the judge. And over its head I see tokens of Gods Authority permitting conscience to judge him! The first witness that is called against the prisoner is memory. I put to it certain questions. Memory, what have you to say concerning the life of this man? Has he kept Gods Law? And Memory answers truthfully, No. Has he then violated it? Yes, thousands of times. How long is it since he began to violate it? From a child. Has he continued to do so? Yes, to this very hour. Has he not repented of his sin and craved forgiveness from God? No, he has pretended to repent. He has had twitches of consciencehe has been alarmed at times, but he has hardened his heart and gone back to his sin and done despite to the Spirit of God. Memory, can you tell me how often the prisoner has broken Gods Law? I cannot. Count the stars of the sky, or the sand by the seashore only then can you know how often he has sinned. Against which of the commands has he offended? Against them all. Can you give us some instances?   
I will not ask Memory to expose any of you before this congregation, but I will ask your own memories to charge each one of you with your own sins whatever they may have beenthat sin of licentiousness, that piece of trickery in trade, that angry thought, that hard word, that oppression of the innocent, that tempting of another to sin, that ruin of another in body and soul, that putting down of conscience on such-andsuch a night when he struggled with you and would have had you cease from sinthat wicked resolve not to be melted down under a certain especially earnest sermon, that desperate determination not to feel the force of Divine Love even when it came so near to you as to graze you! Who of all the unpardoned sinners in the world has not some special sins to remember, to blush over and to weep over, yes, with tears of blood if that were possible? Ah, Memory, if you should tell all that you have recorded, your story would be too terrible for us to hear and we would have to close the court, or bid some withdraw out of hearing, for you would have much to tell which would not be fit for their ears to hear!   
Another witness is called, for it would not be right to condemn a man upon the evidence of only one witness, however excellent that witness might be. So I call the mans own knowledge into the witness box, and examine it. What do you know, Man, concerning yourself? Are you at this moment a lover of God? No, he says. Are you at this moment one who loves Christ? Are you at this hour one who desires to be reconciled to your Maker? Do you desire to glorify God? Do you desire to overcome all sin and to live in perfect holiness? The answer is a negative in every case and the Judge hears this. It is not merely what the man has done, but what the man isnot merely what he was yesterday, or in his youth, but what he is today. He is still an enemy to his God and he has no love to his Maker! He is still content to lead an unholy life. So in the mouth of these two witnesses his guilt is established.   
But there are witnesses for the defense, so let them be heard. These are usually twoself-love and self-esteem. The man pleads that he is no worse than others! Yet a thief would not be allowed to escape punishment if he pleaded, I am no worse a thief than my brother thieves. The man next says that he has done many good things, as if the keeping of one Law of God would be any excuse for having broken another. This is as if the thief should plead before the judge that he was not a drunk, or if he had committed burglary, that he had not been a murderer. Would this be accepted as an excuse? Then the man pleads that he has attended a number of outward religious ceremonieswhich is just as if a thief should say that he washed his hands every morning and took care to shave himself at certain intervals. What would all that have to do with the offense laid to his charge? If those things were right things for him to do, he did well in doing them, but they could make no atonement for his offenses! Men will sometimes plead that, after all, it was more their misfortune than their fault that they fell into any sin at all. Yet man never considers such an excuse as that in reference to wrongs done to his fellow creaturesbut the law deals with the offenses as having been willfully committedand even so does God.

The court, after having heard these two lying witnesses, whose testimony is worth nothing, considers its verdict and the heart condemns the prisoner at the bar. Now what says the text? If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. So, if any man or woman here feels self-condemned, how much more must such an one be condemned by God! If you feel uneasy even now, what cause for disquietude must there be in prospect of the just judgment of God! If your bleary-eyed conscience, which never yet half-opened its eyes, has condemned you, what guilt must God see in you! If conscience has decided against you, knowing only halfno, perhaps not a millionth part of your criminality, how certainly will the unerring Judge of all the earth, who knows all things, decide against you! I would like to make those four words ring again and again in your ears, God knows all things. Then He knows the sins that you have forgotten, or that you wish you could forget! Well, even if you have done so, they are fresh in His unfailing memory. Perhaps you cry, in the bitterness of your agony, Cursed be the day wherein I committed them! Oh, for fountains of water to wash out the damning spots! But though I should redden the Atlantic and with the crimson ocean try to remove the accursed spots of sin, they would still remain! And even though I could not see them, yet still that Eye which through the murky night looks down on all and sees as through the brightest day, that Eye still sees my sins.   
God knows all things.That is, He knows all about your sins of omission, the good things that you have not done, the righteous acts which you have failed to perform. He knows what your motives have been. He knows how that apparently good action of yours was based upon sheer selfishnesshow your pretended religiousness was, after all, only varnished hypocrisy! O Sirs, unless this blessed Book is all fiction, there are some of you who are great fools, for while you are condemning yourselves, you are calmly sitting down in prospect of the eternal judgment as if you thought that God would acquit you! You have lost the case in the lower court, where the judge is partial and would give a verdict in your favor if possible. How, then, will you dare to stand in the higher court, where the verdict must go against you if your case remains as it now is? Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. God grant that these words may not be forgotten, but may they be words that shall awaken some here whom God intends to bless!   
II. Now I must pass on to the second pointAN INCORRECT VERDICT AGAINST OURSELVES.   
Sometimes our heart condemns us, but in doing so, it gives a wrong verdict. And then we have the satisfaction of being able to take the case into a higher court, for God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. This is giving another sense to the passage and almost all the great expositors say that there are two senses herethe legal sense and the evangelical sense. This evangelical sense was that which Luther was so bold in proclaiming. I will give you the meaning of the text in this way. The question before our heart isare we Christians or not? Have we believed in Christ or not? Conscience takes knowledge of all our imperfections, failings, shortcomingsand saysNo, the man is not a Christian. He is guilty of such-and-such sins. And many a dear child of God, yes, and some of the best of Gods children, have often had a verdict in the court of their own conscience which has been adverse to their hopesthe reason being that their conscience has been cognizant of only one side of the case, or they have forgotten some great and important Truth which ought to have been mentioned before the courtand then its verdict would have been different.   
I may have here many children of God who are condemned by their own conscience. And if I only looked within my own heart, it would condemn me. If I had to bring the evidences of my salvation from my prayers, my preaching, or my daily actions, my heart would condemn me! New evidence is sometimes brought into court which completely changes the aspect of the case. I daresay you have sometimes been a juryman and you would not like to tell your brother juryman how many times you have changed your mind while you have heard the evidence. But if you have listened to it attentively, I expect you have had half a dozen different opinions during the trial. You have heard the whole case against the prisoner and you have said to yourself, Hes certainly guilty. And you have thought, Ah, Mr. Foreman, you shall have my verdict against him! Then some evidence is brought which throws more light upon the case. And then something else is said in favor of the prisoner and you have said, Ah, I was too much in a hurry, and before the whole case was finished, you have been quite satisfied that the man was innocent! It is just so with our heartit condemns a man when it has only heard half the evidence. But happily, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.   
Here is the case. This man, a Believer in Jesus Christ, has been guilty of all these sins. He admits that he has. They are very many and very black, so it is a clear case that he should be condemned. No, it is not, for there is a circumstance that has not been mentioned yet. It is true that the man was deeply in debt to the Law of God, but his debt has been paid for him by his glorious Suretyand there is a receipt for it signed by God, Himself! Does not that alter the case? The debt is proved, it is truebut, as soon as the debt is proved, the receipt is produced to show that the debt has been discharged! The Christian comes into court and says, I admit my guilt, but I plead that Christ suffered in my place. I confess my sin, but I also claim that it was laid upon Christ and though my heart condemns me, God is greater than my heart and He does not condemn me, for He looks upon His dear Son and sees me in Him, accepted in the Beloved.   
A man is tried for a certain crime, but his counsel assures the court the man who committed that crime is dead and that the prisoner at the bar is not that man at all. A reliable witness is produced who testifies that he knew the other man well and that he saw him dead and buried. And another trustworthy person declares that the prisoner at the bar is a different man altogether. So it is with us todayevery true Believer in Christ can say, I was verily guilty, but I died with Christ and was buried with Him and now I am a new creature in Christ Jesus! Old things have passed away and all things have become new. I am no longer what I once was, for I have been begotten again unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The case against the prisoner stands as it did before and the heart was right in condemning himbut now there is more light thrown on the subject and he can confidently ask, Who shall lay anything to the charge of Gods elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Through the death and Resurrection of Christ and our union to Him, so that they are counted as our death and resurrection, we have passed into a state of justification! And through the substitutionary Sacrifice of Christ, the sin which was laid at our door has ceased to be and we are accounted righteous through the righteousness of Christ! So that, if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.   
Have you ever had a battle (I know you have, if you are a true child of God), with your own evidences? It is usually very poor work to turn over your own evidences. I believe that lawyers enjoy poring over musty old deeds because there are generally six-and-eight-pences or guineas to come to them as the result. But I cannot say that I am much interested in rights, easements, hereditaments, and so onand the experience of reading an old deed is very much like the experience of turning over your own evidences. You say, I am a man of prayer. But what kind of prayer was it? Why, your thoughts were wandering all the time you were praying! But, you say, I do love God. Ah, cries the devil, and a precious kind of love it is! It needs a microscope to see it if there is any love there at all! Ah, but I do long after holiness. You have nobody to bear witness to that but yourself, says the devil, for as soon as a sin looks attractive to you, though you do not actually go to it, you know that your heart goes after it. But my faith is fixed on Christ. Ah, but where does your unbelief go? You would like to trust to yourself, after all, if you dared to do so! Satan can generally beat us in an argument and when our own conscience also condemns us, the best thing is to go straight away to the Court of Kings Bench and say, The devil is too strong for us, so we will go where we can leave our case in the hands of our great Advocate who is more than a match for Satan.   
Then, Beloved, God can often see in His people the good which they cannot see in themselves. And I believe He likes best those people who think least of themselves. When you look into the mirror, do you see a very lovely face? Ah, then you have never really seen yourself! But if you look into the mirror and see yourself defiled and filthyand then see the change that Christ works in youyou are one of those whom God loves because He loves those who are contrite in spirit and broken in heart and who think little of themselves.  
Well, says one, I never had a doubt about my state. I have always felt sure that I was all right. Then, my Friend, if you never had a doubt about yourself, allow me to doubt for you. Ah, Beloved, it is not high thoughts that prove us to be Christiansit is lying humbly in the dust before the Mercy Seat that is one of the sure signs that we are the children of God! So although your heart condemns you, as my own heart and conscience have condemned me a thousand times, I trust that you can yet say with me

*I do believe, I will believe   
That Jesus died for me!   
That on the Cross He shed His blood   
From sin to set me free.*   
Savior, I will trust You and I do trust You. Lost and ruined, and guilty, and all but damned, I will still trust Youand so You cannot cast me away, for You have promised, Him that came to Me I will in no wise cast out.   
So, you see, there is a blessedly comforting meaning in these words of the Apostle John as well as a meaning that should awaken us all to earnest concern about our real standing in the sight of God.   
III. Now, thirdly, we have A CORRECT VERDICT OF ACQUITTAL, If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.   
When is it that our heart does not condemn us? Of course it always condemns us in some things. There may be people in the world who are perfect. I would like to have the pleasure of their acquaintance, yet I do not know whether they would like to have the pleasure of mine, for I am afraid that my imperfections and their perfections would make a quarrel, before long, and I do not know whether they would not be the people to quarrel first. Superior articles generally crack the soonest and whenever a Brother has had a very high polish on him and much varnish of the very first quality, I have generally proved him to be a hypocrite before long! Still, it is not my business to judge himto his own Master let him stand or fall. If he is perfect, I say again that I should like to know him, for I know that I am not perfect.   
But our heart does not condemn us about some things. For instance, we ask, Are we really sincere in our profession of religion? and our conscience answers, Yes, we do not make a profession of religion in order to gain by it, nor because it makes us respectable, nor because it brings us comfort and ease. God knows that we do it because we cannot help doing it! We love Christ and we must take sides with Him and unless we are utterly deceived, we are sincere in saying that we are followers of Christ. I am putting these words into the mouths of those of you who really feel that you ought to utter them. And I trust that each one of you will join me in saying, I am a poor lost sinner, but I do trust in Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and I do hang upon Him as the only Savior. And if that is the faith that saves the soul, I certainly have exercised it. I have no reliance on any ceremony, or any doctrine, or anything that I can do, or feel, or say, or benothing but the crucified, risen and glorified Christ is my confidence. Beloved, that is one thing in which our heart does not condemn us!   
And then, it is the same when we can add, With all our imperfections, we feel that we do love Gods people and we do love our fellow men. We desire to relieve their distresses as far as we can. And as much as lies in us, we desire to promote the happiness and comfort of others. If a man cannot say this, he cannot claim to be a Christian because any man who lives for himself is no more a Christian than the devil is! The first objective of the Christian is to glorify God. And the next objective is to make other people happy. Those who never study other people in the household, but are selfish and let their narrow soul be confined within their own ribs, have nothing about them in common with a real Christian. If a man truthfully says, I love others and I especially love the saints of God, then he may say that his conscience does not condemn him. I am not saying this on my own authority. Let me turn your attention to a few of the verses preceding our text, reading from the 14th verseWe know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loves not his brother abides in death...Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this worlds good and sees his brother has need and shuts up his heart of compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth and shall assure our hearts before Him. You see, this is the very evidence that God givesthat by our love to others, our hearts will be assured before Him and we shall have confidence concerning our own relationship towards God.   
There is one other thing about which our hearts do not condemn us we do feel that we love holiness and love righteousness. And though we do not always act as we should, and have to mourn over our sins, yet we hate them and loathe ourselves for going into sin. We would, if we could, have perfect tempers. We would, if we could, act in perfect righteousness towards man and in perfect holiness towards God.   
It is the duty of a Christian to be strictly just in all his business transactions and not to ask, What is the custom of the trade? The customs of many trades are dishonestand the usual modes of carrying them on are little better than systematic roguery. I have heard of men who mark a hundred as a hundred and twenty, and who mark goods as of certain lengths when they know they are not of such lengths. And they say, It is the custom of the trade. Well, if it is the custom of your trade to lie, remember that it is Gods custom to send all liars to Hell! A Christian has no right to lie even if all the world should concur in the lies! He should say, No, I serve the God of Truth and, come what may, no lie shall defile my tongue, for Christ has cleansed it and made it His own.   
Our text says, If our heart condemn us not, and we thus know that we are Gods children, then have we confidence toward God. I wish I had an hour in which to preach upon this part of the text, though I daresay you do not! But these words are full of comfort, then have we confidence toward God. The man who has a clear conscience, like a little bird, to sing in his heart, has confidence toward God in this way. He knows that he is the Lords and that God loves him. He knows that God will not do him any hurt and knows that God is blessing himand will continue to bless him. He knows that God is his Father and his Friend and he, therefore, goes to God in great confidence about his troubles and tells them all to Him. He has much confidence in prayer and he may talk to God in prayer in a way which other people may think too familiar, yet it will not be so. His heart is right with God and, therefore, he has confidence toward God. He does not doubt Gods faithfulness, or Gods Truth, or Gods power, or Gods veracity. He simply confides in God and lets things go as they will, for he knows that God is ruling and overruling alland he walks through the world with a childlike, restful confidence knowing that God will keep him and preserve him even to the end. And when he has to die, he will die in confidence. And when he rises from the grave, he will rise in confidence. And when the world is all ablaze, he will behold the last great conflagration without alarm. And when he stands before the Judgment Seat of Christ, he will stand there without a tremor! He has confidence toward God, for he has peace within him.   
IV. Now I have very briefly to speak concerning AN INCORRECT VERDICT OF ACQUITTAL.   
There are some persons whose hearts do not condemn them for this reasontheir hearts are hopelessly indifferent. God save you, my dear Hearers, from a heart which is so full of pride that it is, as David says, as fat as grease, from a heart that is harder than adamant and from a heart that knows it is guilty, but will not condemn itself, but whispers, Peace, peace, where there is no peace! There are tens of thousands of men walking the streets of London who are living habitually in the worst of sin, yet their hearts are so petrified and rendered so perverse from everything like right judgment, that they rarely, if ever, appear to condemn them!

But I take leave to tell them that what little heart they have left does condemn them for this reason, that when a mans heart is right and does not condemn him, he has confidence toward God. Ask these men whether they have any confidence toward God. God! they say, do not let us even hear His name! How do you know that there is a God? Such men never feel so easy in mind and never are in such an argumentative mood as when some precious philosopher attempts to prove that there is no Godthat is the very thing for them! Would not the devils children ring all the bells for many a day if they could but prove that there was no God? What a jubilation there would be among the rogues, thieves, vagabonds and skeptics if they could once feel sure that there was no God! It would be the worst thing that could possibly happen to us who love Him, but to them it would be the best thing that could happen according to their notions. And why? Because there is something within their heart that tells them, after all, that they are not rightand as they do not want to get right, they try to persuade themselves that there is no God! That is their way of getting a little sleep for their conscience.

But they are not really as quiet as they think they are. Supposing I were to ask such a man who was so quiet and at ease, whether he would mind sitting down for half-an-hour when he got home to look into the future and see whether there is a judgment, a Heaven, and a Hellwhat would be the result? Not I, he says, I am not going to bother myself about such things as those! It is said that you ought not to talk about the gallows if you know that there is anybody present who had a relative who was hung. And these men, in like manner, do not like us to talk about judgment, Heaven, and Hell. O Sirs, you are like the silly ostrich that buries its head in the sand and hopes that nobody will see it! Why, if there are no such things, it will have done you good to have thought about them and to have confirmed yourself in the notions of which you boast so much!

I also ask you to do another thing. You say that your heart does not condemn you, but will you, for a little while, contemplate death? We will let judgment alone for a minute. I suppose you believe that you will die you have not yet discovered a patent for the preservation of highlycultured intellects from the vulgar hands of the sexton, have you? You do not expect that education will keep you out of the tomb, do you? So will you think about death? No, says the man, I shall do nothing of the sort! It would give me the blues for a week. Ah, I see, I see! Your conscience has not acquitted you, after all, for, if it had, you would not be so unwilling to think about death! I do not object to think of death and there is no Believer in Christ here who objects to thoughts of death, but rather we pray, So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. There must be something radically wrong about that supposed ease and peace of mind which will not bear contemplations of death and judgment. The fact is, you are condemned by your own heart for if you were not, you would have confidence toward God! And let me assure you that those who have once experienced confidence toward God, greatly rejoice in it! It is the joy of life and it will light up even the dark valley of death! Confidence in God is, in fact, the beginning of Heaven, and I think it is a part of the very fruition of Heaven itself!

God bless you, dear Friends! May we all be led to faith in Jesus Christ! Remember that there is salvation in Him. Whoever trusts Jesus Christ is saved! Whoever relies upon His finished work shall never come into condemnation and even though his heart may sometimes accuse him, Christ will clear him from all guilt through His own most precious blood. May this be the happy portion of each one of you here! May each one to able to say

*In Christ I have believed,   
And through the spotless Lamb   
Grace and salvation have received!   
In Him complete I am.*

In closing my sermon, I ask every individual here that old and personal question, Do you believe on the Son of God? Somebody says, Yes, I do believe in Him, glory be to His holy name. I hope there are many in this place who can truly say, With all our hearts we do believe in Jesus Christ our Savior. We have a thousand infirmities, but we do trust in Him. Just a notch lower there is one who says. I do believe in Jesus, but not as fully as I would like to. Ah, well, dear Brother, faith grows if is true faith! That is a good prayer, Lord, I believe; help You my unbelief. I expect you will get higher, by-and-by, and be able to say, I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.

Another friend says, I hope and trust that I do believe in Jesus. Brother, get out of that stage, I implore you! I never like to hope and trust in that fashion. When I get to bed at night and say to myself, Did I lock the door? I am not content to lie there and say, I hope and trust that I did. There may be a thief in the garden, so it will not be safe for me to hope and trust that all doors and windows are properly fastened. We like to be sure about these less important mattershow much more ought we to be sure about the salvation of our souls! If a man owes you a hundred pounds and someone says to you, Is he solvent? it is not very satisfactory if you can only say, I hope he is. You will feel much easier in your mind when you know that he is solvent! And it is a great deal better to know that you are saved than to go on hoping and hoping, or saying, I hope and trust it is all right. You are either saved or you are not saveddo get to know which is true! Give no rest to your eyes nor slumber to your eyelids till you really know that you are trusting in Jesus and, therefore, you are saved!

Somebody a little lower down says, I do not know whether I believe in Jesus or not. Well, if you do not know, nobody else can tell you. And I would recommend you to begin trusting Christ now. I always find that the shortest way to deal with doubt and fear is to say, Well, if I am not a Believer in Jesus Christ, I will believe in Him now. So I urge you, my Friend, to go to Him and say

*Just as I amwithout one plea   
But that Your blood was shed for me   
And that You did bid me come to You,   
O Lamb of God, I come.*

Begin tonight, dear Friend! If you fancied you did begin once before, begin again, now! And if you never did begin before, begin now!

Well, says another, I am trying to believe in Jesus. That is another grade and it is all wrong, for a man cannot truly say that he is trying to believe in Jesus. What are you doing to help you to believe in Him? Are you hearing the Gospel earnestly? Are you searching the Scriptures for evidence concerning Christ? Or are you just doing nothing but saying I am trying to believe? Suppose I read an article in the newspaper and then say, I am trying to believe it. Well, if I am searching for evidence and questioning others as to whether it is true or not, I speak correctly but if I merely put the paper away and sit down and say, I will try to believe itthat is absurd! The fact is, you do not believe in Jesus or you would not say, I am trying to believe in Him. Well, says one, I do not yet believe in Jesus, but I wish I did. I like to hear you say those last words, for when a man wishes to believe what is certainly true, I think he will soon believe it! There is many a man who has wished to believe a lie till he has believed itand I think that a man who wishes to believe the Truth of God has the easier task of the two! May the ever-blessed Spirit lead you into a solemn conviction of the Truth as it is in Jesus!

If there is one here who says, I do not believe in Jesus and I do not want to believe in Him, may God have mercy upon that poor sinner and save him tonightand God shall have the Glory both now and forever! Amen.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1855 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

WHAT IS THE VERDICT?

NO. 1855

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 16, 1885, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Beloved, if our heart condemns us not,   
then have we confidence toward God.   
1 John 3:21.

CAREFULLY observe that this text is spoken to the people of God. It speaks to those who are called, beloved. These are the people who are especially loved of God and of His people. It is a very sweet and endearing title, but it evidently, in this case, belongs only to those who are of the family of Gracethese, alone, can remain uncondemned of their hearts and live in confidence towards God. I want you to observe this because there are different ways of addressing different people and these ways are instructive. To those who are not yet numbered among the beloved, we preach the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is a Gospel intended for the sinful and it talks to them of pardon bought with bloodit is a Gospel intended for the ungodly and it speaks to them of the work of the Holy Spirit, whereby their ungodly hearts may be renewed. Its tale is altogether of Grace and free favor and the passing by of transgression, iniquity and sin to all those who cast themselves believingly at Jesus feet. That is the voice of Scripture to those who, as yet, are not beloved. The hope is that the Lord will call them beloved who were not belovedand that in the place where it was said, They are not My people, they shall be called the people of the living God!

But when we come to speak to those who are saved, to those who are the beloved of God, we deal not with the pardon of criminals, but with the conduct of children. They are saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation and, therefore, we do not so much urge them to saving faith as to the higher degree of boldness which grows out of faithto that confidence towards God which is the right and privilege of the heirs of salvation! We want them not only to know that they have believed, but to be assured of it and to enjoy that holy familiarity with God, that blessed boldness towards God, that sweet joy and restfulness of spirit which are their privilege as the beloved of the Lord. These enjoyments may be had by them if they will be obedient to the directions of the Spirit of God which are laid down by the beloved Apostle in this Epistle.

As soon as we become children, we are freed from the condemning power of the Law. We are not under the principle and motive of the Law of Works, but yet we are not without Law unto Christ. We come under those sacred regulations which rule the household of God. We are dealt with not as mere subjects are ruled by a king, but as children are governed by a father. We come from under that Law which was promulgated with thunder and lightning and the sound of a trumpet waxing exceedingly loud and long, and we listen to the gentle voice of the Man, Christ Jesus. We come from under that Law which did not permit even a beast to touch the mountain, but kept all Israel at a distance by boundaries set about the mountain, and we draw near with glad hearts unto the Lord. We come, I say, from under the Law and we feel the sway of love. You are not under the Law, but under Grace and, therefore, sin shall not have dominion over you. We have come into the family of Godand in that family there is a rule and discipline devised by love and carried out with infinite compassion. Upon our obedience to that discipline, our peace and prosperity depend. If we so live that our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.

It appears from the text that this child-like confidence towards God originally arises out of a certain solemn trial of our case. There is to be a trial within the heart, or consciencea trial in which every power of the inner nature is to take its part as prosecutor, witness, jury, or judge. Out of this trial comes the non-condemnation which gives birth to confidence toward God. At this time I shall bring before you, first, the trial in the inward court of the heart. Secondly, the acquittal pronounced by this court, If our heart condemn us not. And thirdly, the result, the confidence which comes of this acquittal. If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. May the Holy Spirit teach us while we think on these things!

I. I want you to think of THE TRIAL HELD IN THE INNER COURT OF MANS NATURE, within his heart. It is a sort of petty session, not the Great Assize. Conscience sits within us, as judges sometimes sit in chambers, hearing cases, as they say, in camera. If we are righteously acquitted in this first court, then the matter is ended and we have confidence toward God. But if our heart condemn us; if in this preliminary trial we are condemned, it is an evil omen, for the probability is that the great allknowing Judge will more than confirm the sentence. Condemnation by our own conscience is a bad sign, though there is a court of appeal. If our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart and knows all things.

I will now speak upon this trial under the heads of certain observations.   
This trial is studiously avoided by very many. Many professors shun anything like a testing of their professionany trying of their religion by examination. Multitudes of persons seldom think! They live the life of butterflies, flitting from flower to flower with careless wingthere is no real purpose in their lives. Many others think, and think deeply, but not about their

souls or their God. They consider the matter of their relationship to their Creator to be a very secondary matter which can be taken up in the last few minutes of their lives, when the death sweat is on their brow and they are quite incapable of proper judgment! They leave, I say, the best things to the worst moments and think that they are wise in so doing! This is a grave folly and ought not to rule a man in his senses.   
Certain Christian professors, too, who should know better, seldom examine themselves as to whether they are in the faith. They take it for granted that all is well with them. They made a profession a great many years ago. They have been decent sort of people ever sincein fact, they have been respected among their fellow Christianspossibly they have even taken office in the Church. Are they to question their foundation? Is it necessary that they should put themselves into the scales and be weighed again? It is a very ominous sign for a man, when he is afraid of discussing his spiritual state in the chamber of his own heart. I am persuaded that many Christians are the subjects of doubts and fears about their own condition simply because they have never thought the matter out. It is a great deal better to sift an affair to the bottom than it is to be always tormented by suspicion. If I must go to sea and I suspect the soundness of the vessel, I shall demand that the ship be surveyed and that I know whether it is a rotten old coffin, or whether it is a good substantial ship.   
I do not think it is a healthy state of things for man to be always singing   
*Tis a point I long to know.*   
Brothers and Sisters, you ought to know whether you love the Lord or not! Your love must be very cold and feeble if it is a matter of question! Warmth of love proves its own existence in many ways. Friend, you should be anxious to the last degree to take stock of your spiritual estate. Your desire should be to know the very worst of your case. If your condition should turn out to be horribly bad, you had better know itcertainly your knowing it will not make it any worse! If your case should turn out to be all right, then you will have the confidence that comes of this knowledge the confidence of which our text speaks. If our hearts, after due, deliberate and impartial trial, condemn us not, then we have confidence toward God and that confidence sweetens life! He that gets confidence through honest searching of heart shall be filled with delight and strength. But, I repeat it sadly, many avoid the inward trial of the heartthey will not bring their case into the spiritual court, even though the Judgement Seat is set up in the privacy of their own inward nature! Thus they walk on blindfolded to the brink of the precipice. God grant the bandage may be taken off before they have taken the final and fatal step.   
But secondly, let us note that genuine Christians very much frequent this court of conscience. They long to have their condition put to a thorough test, lest they be deceived. I have known some Christians even stay too much in this courtthey so often test themselves that it looks as if they would spend their lives in making trials of their state. Looking within can be easily overdonewe ought to have higher work than that of continually laying the foundation of repentance from dead works. When a ship first leaves the stocks, it is well for it to go on a trial trip, but to have a ship always being tried would be very absurdit is time that it took voyages in real earnest and was registered in the merchant servicethere will then be trial enough in the actual execution of service.   
Some Christians, by a continual introspection, are always raising the point, Am I a Christian? Brothers and Sisters, be a Christian! Am I a child of God? Brothers and Sisters, be a child of God and enjoy it! And do not spend a lifetime in searching for the family register. However, it is certain that the genuine Christian is not averse to self-examination, nor to any form of test through which he can be put. If you are right with God, your prayer will be, Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. O my God, I do not wish to be deluded with Peace, peace, when there is no peace! I do not want to deceive myself, or to be lulled into soft slumbers upon the dainty bed of presumption. No, let me be emptied from vessel to vessel rather than be suffered to settle upon my lees. Let me be searched with candles rather than harbor sin within me. Let me even be thrust into the fire rather than remain base metal, the counterfeit of the Kings money. Make sure work for eternity. Be certain, by the witness of the Holy Spirit within you, that you are, indeed, the children of God! The spirit of the true man answers to thishe is always willing to set in order the court of conscience and make solemn trial of his heart and life.   
In this court, dear Friends, the question to be decided is a very weighty one. What is that question, do you think? I do not think it is the question, Am I perfect? because we can solve that without holding a formal court. The question is not, Am I absolutely free from sin? for, if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. The question is this, Am I sincere in the truth? Is my religion true and am I true in my profession of it? Next, Does love rule in my nature? All this chapter deals with love and teaches us that the possession of love is the supreme test of our state. Note the 14th verseWe know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loves not his brother abides in death. The enquiry isDo I love God? Do I also love my brother? Is my spirit that of lovefor, if not, I am not a child of God.   
Then the next question is, Do I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? In the verse which succeeds my text, this is put as a great test, that we believe in Jesus Christ. Faith is the main question for conscience to decide, together with the following one, Do I also keep His Commandments? Do I obey God? Do I seek to be holy as Jesus is holy? Or am I living in known sin and tolerating that in myself which does not and cannot please God? The verse that follows my text puts it, We keep His Commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And the question is, Do we not only try to keep the Commandments, but do we do so because it is pleasing to God? Is my master motive to please God? Do I want to be an Enoch, who had this testimony, that he pleased God? Do I keep His Commandments and labor to please Him?   
These are the questions to be tried in the court of conscience and never was there a weightier issue! On this, our eternal state depends! It is not your estate that is now at stake; it is not your health that is now in question. It is your living unto God, your being now a child of God and so being prepared to face the mysterious solemnities of eternity. O Sirs, do not hesitate to take these matters into the court of conscience! If you have avoided that court before, attend it, now, and give your soul a solemn hearing!   
This court is guided by a mass of evidence. That evidence has not to be sought forit is there already! If the case were to be, Do my fellow men think me a child of God; do they regard me as being a Believer in whom faith works by love? that would be a difficult question because we would have to subpoena so many to give their opinion of our private and public life. But in this case, we have nothing to do with outsidersthe conscience is the witness as well as the judge and jury! The whole case is carried on within. We cannot object to the witnesses, for they are our own heart and conscience. We must believe what these say. Nor can we object to the judgement, since our own conscience is judge and we are not at all likely to be unjust towards ourselves. We are so partial and there is so much of flattering deceit and self-love about us, that we could not wish to be tried by a more favoring judge than our own conscience! We cannot decline the jurisdiction under any pretence of prejudice against us.   
And, oh, what a mass of evidence our heart can furnishevidence even more conclusive than that of outward actions! Memory rises up and says, I remember all you have done since your profession of conversionyour shortcomings and breaches of the Covenant. The will confesses to offenses which never ripened into acts for lack of opportunity. The passions admit outbreaks which were concealed from human observation. The imagination is made to bear testimonyand what a sinful power that imagination is and how difficult it is to govern itits tale is sad to hear! Our tempers confess to evil anger, our lusts to evil longings, our hearts to evil covetousness, pride and rebellion. Hopeful witness there is, also, of sin conquered, habits broken and desires repressedall this is honestly taken in evidence and duly weighed.   
Everything within us will have to tell whether it has been renewed or not, whether it has been changed from darkness to light, and come from under the power of sin and Satan into the power of Christ. Each power can give evidence of Grace or token of unregeneracy and, according to the weight of evidence, the verdict must go. The heart possesses a mass of evidence utterly unknown anywhere else, for the heart knows its own sinfulness as it knows its own bitterness and the mans heart can reveal secrets to itself which it dare not whisper into the ear of the kindest friend! The trial cannot fail from lack of evidence bearing upon the point.   
While the trial is going on, the deliberation causes great suspense. I stand trembling as long as I have to ask my heart, Heart, do you condemn me, or do you acquit me? You may have seen a picture entitled, Waiting for the Verdict. The artist has put into the countenances of the waiters every form of unrest, for the suspense is terrible. Blessed be God, we are not called upon to wait long for she verdict of conscience! We ought never to let the question remain in suspense at allwe should settle it and settle it in the Light of Godand then walk in the light as God is in the light. I confess I cannot understand the comfort which I see in some peoples faces when they admit that they do not know whether they are the people of God or not. If you are not saved, or are not sure of it, how dare you rest? Are you in danger of eternal wrath? Then give no sleep to your eyes till you know that you have escaped so great a peril! It looks to me as if your doubt could not be real if it does not work in your heart great misery and agony of spirit. A person in doubt about his salvation and unable to rest, I can perfectly well understand. But a person in doubt in any measure about his reconciliation to God and yet

happy, is a mystery! How can the Grace of God be in a heart which is not sure of pardon and yet is content? It is an exceedingly painful thing to have this trial going on in the soul and to be waiting for the verdict.   
One thing I will observe, however, before I leave this matterit is not the supreme court. If it should so happen that the verdict of the court should be against you, if your heart condemns you, remember the verdict is not finalthere is still a higher court. I love the way in which Peter put it once. He had denied his Master, denied Him repeatedly with oaths, but he had bitterly repentedand when his Lord said to him, Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me? His heart did not condemn him upon the question of loving his Master, but it did condemn him sorely for having denied his Lord. So, after pleading, Lord, I do love You, he takes his case into the Higher Court and says, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. In moments of soul conflict, it will be wise for you to carry this question beyond yourself up to the Omniscient One! The translation of the Revised Version, though I do not like it, has a bearing on this point and so I quote itHereby shall we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before Him, whenever our heart condemn us, because God is greater than our heart and knows all things.   
I pray you all to remember this, that the trial by your conscience is not, after all, the ultimate and the decisive one, because your conscience may go to sleep, or make a mistake in your favor. Or your conscience may become morbid and may not take under its consideration all the facts of the case and so, may go against you. Since there may be an error of judgment, you should make your appeal to the Most High, saying, Search me, O God. Above all, if your conscience should now condemn you, still remember that there remains the free, full Gospel even for the chief of sinners! If you stand before God condemned in heart, this morning, throw yourself upon your face with that sense of condemnation upon you and cry, God be merciful to me, a sinner! Whichever verdict comes from an enlightened conscience, it will be exceedingly serviceable to you if you have regard to it. If it condemns you not, then have confidence toward God. And if it condemns you, the condemnation may drive you, at once, to flee for refuge to the Hope that is set before the guilty in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. May the Holy Spirit thus bless you!   
II. Allow me, secondly, to speak to you upon a pleasing theme, namely, THE ACQUITTAL ISSUED FROM THIS COURTIf our heart condemns us not. Observe that a man may get an acquittal from the court of conscience, for the question laid before the heart can be settled. It can be ascertained whether I sincerely believe in Jesus Christ. It can be ascertained whether I sincerely love God and love His people. It can be ascertained whether my heart is obedient to the Commands of the Lord Jesus Christ. These are not hazy, mysterious problems which can never be solved! The case may be made clear one way or the other. The court has no difficulty before it beyond its facultyit is quite competent to decide the question in the light of Scripture by the help of God.   
These questions, however, must be debated with great discernment. Suppose a person to be greatly tempted, to be tempted morning, noon and night with foul temptations, yet conscience must not say, This person is no child of God because he is tempted. There is no sin in being tempted, since our Lord Jesus was tempted of the devil and yet in Him was no sin. Abundance, yes, superabundance of temptation is no proof against the sincerity of our faith in our God! On the contrary, it may sometimes happen that the more we are tempted the more true is it that there is something in us to tempt, some good thing which Satan seeks to destroy.   
Again, the verdict of the heart must be given with discrimination, or otherwise we may judge according to outward circumstances and so judge amiss. It will never do to say, I am greatly afflicted in estate, in family, or in depression of spirits and, therefore, I cannot be a child of God. What? Are not Gods children chastened? What son is there whom the Father chastens not? Some of the best children of God have been the most afflicted. Yes, and let me say it pointedly, some of the purest Christians that have ever lived have had the most sickness to bear and by that means they have been made more meet for Heaven, even as the sycamore fig, by being bruised becomes ripe. When, therefore, it is suggested that you are not a child of God because you are afflicted, the idea is not to be tolerated, since we are born to trouble as the sparks fly upward!   
Neither, again, do our imperfections or infirmities decide against us. An enlightened conscience says, It is true this man has sinned, but it was not of intent, but by inadvertence or surprise. His soul hates the sin into which he fell. He deeply repents of his offense. The occurrence of sin in the life does not prove a man to be out of Grace. The prevalence of sin, the toleration of sin, the love of sin, the willful continuance in sin would do sobut the fact of imperfection, if wept over and repented of, is not condemnatory evidence! The fact that my child is little and feeble is no proof that he is not my son. The boy may be like his father and yet be only a tiny baby. Weakness and even faultiness may be confessed and yet we may have confidence towards God. So the verdict has to be given with great discrimination.   
And the verdict has to be given, mark you, upon Gospel principles. The question before the court of conscience is not, Have I perfectly kept the Law? The answer to that is simple enoughThere is not a just man upon earth that does good and sins not. By the works of the Law shall no flesh living be justified. The question is, Am I a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ? Am I resting in Him for salvation and do I prove the truth of that faith by loving God, loving the Brethren, by doing those things which are pleasing to God and avoiding those things which are displeasing to Him? The question is not concerning merit, but concerning Grace and the fruit of Grace! Salvation is of Grace and of Grace, alonetherefore my enquiry should beAm I partaker of that Grace? Unworthy though I am, am I washed in the blood of Jesus? Am I covered with His righteousness? Am I accepted in the Beloved? That is the question and if ever you get to discussing it upon legal principles, you will go wrong. We are not tried in the court of the heart according to the Old Covenant, but according to the New Covenantanother book is opened which is the Book of Life.   
Permit me to say, here, that this question in the court of the heart must never be settled by our feelings. If the heart is at all right in its judgments, it will never say, I am a child of God because I am so happy. Nor will it exclaim, on the other hand, I cannot be a child of God because I am so sad! Holy feelings may be brought in as evidence, but they are hard to estimate. Feelings are variable as the windthey depend so much upon the body and outward surroundingsso much, even, upon the condition of the atmosphere! I acknowledge that as to feelings, I go up and down very much according to the weather. Therefore I make small account of my feelings. If I am very happy, I say to myself, Keep steady. Be not intoxicated with joy. If I find my spirits sink, I cry, Come, Heart, do not play the fool! You have nothing to be down aboutrejoice in God, always, and have no confidence in the flesh. Deal thus with yourselves, for the question in hand is not, Am I happy? but, Am I a sincere Believer. Does my faith prove its sincerity by the effect which it produces upon my life? Sinners can rejoice as well as saintsand saints can mourn as well as sinners! The point is not what we feel, but what we believe and do.   
This question of our state ought to be settled speedily. As I have already said to you, it must not be allowed to hang about. We know the laws delays, but we must not allow any delay in this court. No, we must press for summary justice. Does my heart condemn me, or does not my heart condemn me? Get a clear and plain answer, at once, to this issue. If your heart condemns any of you here, this morningif you say, Yes, I am a member of the Church but I ought not to be, I do not live as I should. If you are not Believers in Christ. If you feel that you have no love to the Brethren, then take the verdict and go humbly to God and ask Him to renew your hearts! The door of Free Grace is still open to you. But, on the other hand, if your conscience says, Yes, with all my imperfections, with all my infirmities, I do love God with all my heart. I do trust in Christ, for I have nothing else to trust to. I do lean my whole weight upon His finished work. I hang on Christ as a vessel hangs on the nail. I have no dependence anywhere else. I know there is a change in me; I know that the things I once loved, I now hate, and the things I once hated, I now love. I desire perfect holiness in the fear of Godthen you are in the condition of which the Apostle says, If our heart condemns us not, then have we confidence toward God.   
Let us consider that happy state at some length and then close our discourse. May you all have the full enjoyment of holy boldness before God through the operation of the Holy Spirit.   
III. Let us consider THE CONSEQUENCE OF THIS ACQUITTAL. Here is the man who has had his acquittal in the court of conscience. Your conscience has said, He is a sincere man. He is a believing man. He is quickened with the life of God. He is an obedient and God-fearing man. And now you have confidence toward God, or, at least, you have a right to such confidence. What does that confidence or boldness mean? There is the confidence of truthfulness. When you kneel down to pray, you know that you are praying and not mocking God. When you sing, you are making melody in your heart. When you preach, you are preaching that which your soul believes. If I spoke to you, today, about things which I was not quite sure of, it would be wretched work! But I usually feel a great deal of enjoyment when I am preaching because, to me, the things which I teach are my comfort and life. If

you do not enjoy the sermon, at least I do!   
Sometimes I say to myself, These doctrines are exceedingly sweet. I feed upon them, myself, and, therefore, the people ought to be fed. And if they are not, it is their own fault. A cook may not even get a taste of the meat, but it is not often so with me. Because I believe for myself, I feel a confidence in preaching to you! Confidence towards God is a truthfulness of spirit which prevents our being ashamed in what we do towards Him. Can you say, Whatever I do, I do it honestly. Though I am not what I wish to be in all things, yet that which I profess before God is true? Then you have confidence! One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. I do not put spectacles over blind eyes and make people believe that I can see, but I really see. I know I do! I know I trust, I know I love God, I know I love holiness!   
This deep sincerity breeds in a man a blessed indifference to the judgments of men. Having a conscience void of offense, he feels a holy freedom as to the formalities of pretence. Look at the hypocritehe is afraid of being found out! He has to do everything most primly and demurely lest he should be suspected. If you paint your face, you must take care neither to cry nor laugh, lest you crack the enamel! If you wear shoddy clothing, you must not run or jump, for your garments might tear! Accidents must be guarded against when you deal with shams. A hypocrite will censure you very severely for having smiled just nowand he will condemn me outright for being so wicked as to make you smile on such a day. Poor soul, he must keep up his propriety, for it is all he has.   
In these times of bad trade, many who are ready to fail are afraid to lower their expenditure for fear their poverty should be suspectedand so they keep up a good appearance to stave off bankruptcy as long as they may. If they were solvent, they would not be so fearful. If your conscience condemns you not, then you enjoy a blessed ease of spirit because the Truth of God is in you.   
The next kind of confidence is confidence towards God to ones acceptance with Him. If my heart say, Yes, you do believe, then I know, from Gods Word, that I have eternal life. The Word says, He that believes on Me has everlasting life. Conscience says, Yes, you have faith, and the heart concludes, there is, therefore, now no condemnation. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Believe me, the sweetest stream that ever waters this desert world is the river of confident acceptance in the Beloved! When you know this, your life is gilded with the sunlight of the coming Glory and your heart rejoices exceedingly.   
This produces and, perhaps, it is that which the Apostle most intended, a boldness of converse. The man who knows that he is truthful and that God has accepted him, then speaks freely with God! He feels a holy awe of God and never wishes to lose it. He exercises a sacred boldness towards Him. Is it not wonderful to see how Abraham talked with God? He went up to the place where God spoke with Him and, when God told Him that He was about to destroy Sodom, how exquisitely and yet how boldly did Abraham put itWill You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? That be far from You. What? Does Abraham expostulate with God? Does Abraham dream do an unjust thing? Oh, no! But he is bold and that is the most forcible plea which he can think of and so he urges it again and again with God.   
How he pushes his caseI have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes: perhaps there shall lack five of the 50 righteous: will You destroy all the city for lack of five? It is wonderful pleading and it illustrates the words, confidence toward God. Look at Job. There was a man whose heart did not condemn him, for he could say, Lord, You know I am not wicked. He speaks with God very boldly and he says, Oh, that I knew where I might find Him: I would come even to His seatI would order my case before Him and fill my mouth with arguments. Though the terrors of God might make Him afraid, yet, secure in the quiet of his conscience, he has confidence towards God! Not only confidence in God, mark you, but toward God, so as to speak with God as a man speaks with his friend! Do you understand this? I know you do not if you have any doubt as to your being a child of God. Suspicion makes you a coward, for when your heart does not condemn you and you know that you are right before the Lord, then you feel liberty of converse.   
This leads to great confidence in prayer. Look at the context. We have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask, we receive of Him because we keep His Commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. If you want power in prayer you must have purity in life! There is no promise in the Bible made to all of you that whatever you ask, God will give youit is made to persons of a certain character! The unlimited promise is to the man of God who is so sanctified that he will not ask and does not think of asking anything that is not in accordance with Gods will! Remember this passageDelight yourself, also, in the Lord; and He shall give you the desires of your heart. The desire of the man who delights in God is always in accordance with the mind of Godtherefore he is the man that can get whatever he wills. When you do all things that please God and your life is sanctified and holy, then it is that you abide in His love. Has not Jesus said, If you abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you? Unsanctified desires will be graciously refusedbut the will of the sincerely obedient man is conformed to the will of God and, therefore, it shall be fulfilled. This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He hears us.   
Our text means, also, that such a man shall have confidence towards God in all service for God. Look at the man of God who has confidence towards God, as to the perils encountered in faithfully following His Lord. Take Daniel, for instance. Daniel does not question about what he has to do when the decree is signed that whoever shall pray, shall be cast into the den of lions. He opens his window as he was accustomed to do. He looks towards Jerusalem and bows his knees as he had done beforeand he prays to God as if there were no edict! His confidence toward God is that he is safe in the path of duty. He does not count the cost and neither did the three holy children when the fiery furnace was before them, but they said, Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto you, O king, that we will not serve your gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up.   
Is not that a blessed confidence towards God which a man obtains when his heart does not condemn him? If Daniel had said, I shall pray down in the cellar, or with the blinds drawn, he would have lost all confidence towards God and would not have been the man he was. If the three children had said, We will bow the knee, but we will make in our minds a secret protestwe will not really worship the idol, but we will worship God while we bow before the image, they would not have had confidence in God. Alas, what foolish tricks men play with what they call their consciences, nowadays! This wonderful 19th Century is altogether incomprehensible to a simple, honest man! Consciences used to work up and down, yes or nobut now they have an eccentric action, altogether indescribable! A man serves the devil, nowadays, and gets the devils payand all the while talks of serving God! May you have a conscience void of offense, straight and clear in everything, and so have confidence towards God.   
Moreover, we have this confidence towards God in the way of service so that we are sure of receiving all necessary help. God will help the true man and if he comes to a pinch and cannot get on by himself, he may boldly summon others of his Masters servants to his aid. Look at Joshua fighting with the Amalekites. The day is not long enough and, therefore, he lays his command upon the sun and says to it, Sun, stand still upon Gibeon and you, moon, in the valley of Ajalon! He had need of longer daylight and he dared the sun and moon to move an inch till the pursuit of his foes was over. Thus may a servant of God challenge help from earth and Heaven and impress all forces into the service of his Lord. An officer, if he finds himself in straits, impresses anybody that passes by, saying, In the Kings name, help me. Even so, if you do your Lords bidding and if conscience condemns you not, you may impress into the service of the great King every angel in Heaven and every force of Nature as need requires!   
I wish I had time to tell you all that confidence towards God means. It means rest, perfect rest. Look at your Lord when the tempest was on. Loud roaring, the billows come near to overwhelming the ship, but He is asleep! Nobody but He could dare to slumber because nobody else had such confidence in God! He knew the vessel was safe, why should He worry? True, He was Lord High Admiral of the seas and had responsibility not only for His own flagship, but for the whole fleet of little ships that sailed with Him that daybut He did not give way to sleeplessness because of thatHe cast Himself on God and fell asleep! It was the best thing to do. You and I may do the samewe need not be frightened nor worried, nor troubled, but just trust in the Lord and do good and so shall we dwell in the land and, verily, we shall be fed. This is confidence towards God!   
This confidence often mounts up into joy till the Christian man overflows with delight in God. He cannot contain his happiness. As Solomon says, he eats his bread with joy, for God has accepted his works. He lives with the wife of his youth in full contentment and his children are a blessing to him. He goes to his toil rejoicing to serve God in his calling and he comes home at night to repose himself in the care of his God and Father. All is well and he knows it.

Blessed man that has confidence in God! Such a man goes up to his last bed when the message comes that the spirit must return to God who gave ithe goes to die without alarmhis conscience does not condemn him and, therefore, he lays himself down in patience and waits the signal to be with God. Meanwhile the light of Heaven steals over his face and they that come to cheer and comfort him hear strange words, like notes of the birds of Paradise, dropping from his lips. They see that he is in pain, but they also mark that he is baptized in enjoyment. They think that he is dying, but he testifies that he is entering into life! The pearly gates are open before himthe glitter of the golden street is meeting his failing eyes. Hear him sing, as best as his failing breath permits   
*And when you see my eye-strings break,   
How sweet my minutes roll!   
A mortal paleness on my cheek,   
But glory in my soul!*   
Now he is gone, gone into the land of spirits! He stands before his God and he does not tremble. He has that eagle-eye which can bear the light of the eternal sun! His heart condemns him not and he has confidence towards God. Amidst the supernal splendors he cries, My Father! Angels are crying, Lord and God, but he says, My Fatherand those loyal servants make room for a royal child! The shining ones escort the happy spirit to the blessed Fathers feet. There we leave him. Beloved, if our heart condemns us not, then have we confidence toward God. God bless you. Amen.

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THE CONDITIONS OF POWER IN PRAYER   
NO. 1103

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, MARCH 23, BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**And whatever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment, That**

**we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment. And he that keeps His commandment dwells in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abides in us,**

**by the Spirit which He has given us.   
1 John 3:22-24.**

I THOUGHT of addressing you this morning upon the importance of prayer and I designed earnestly to stir you up to pray for me and for the Lords work in this place. Truly, I do not think I could have had a more weighty subject, or one which weighs more upon my soul. If I were only allowed to offer one request to you it would be thisBrethren, pray for us. Of what use can our ministry be without the Divine blessing and how can we expect the Divine blessing unless it is sought for by the Church of God? I would say it even with tears, Brethren, pray for us. Do not restrain prayeron the contrary, be abundant in intercession, for so, and so only, can our prosperity as a Church be increased, or even continued.

But then, the question occurred to me, what if there should be something in the Church which would prevent our prayers being successful? That is an important question and one which ought to be considered most earnestly even before we exhort you to intercession. As we have already been taught by the first chapter of Isaiah, the prayers of an unholy people will soon become abominations to God. When you spread forth your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; yes, when you make many prayers, I will not hear. Churches may fall into such a state that the devotions will be an iniquity. Even the solemn meeting will be a weariness unto the Lord. There may be evils in the heart of any one of us which may render it impossible for God, in consistency with His own Character and attributes, to have any regard to our intercessions.

If we regard iniquity in our hearts the Lord will not hear us. According to our text there are some things which are essential to prevalence in prayer. God will hear all true prayer, but there are certain things which the people of God must possess or else their prayers will fall short of the mark. The text tells us, Whatever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. Now, this morning the subject of consideration will be the essentials to power in prayerwhat we must do, what we must be, what we must haveif we are to prevail habitually with God in prayer, as a matter of constant fact. Let us learn how to become Elijahs and Jacobs. I. I shall begin, first, by considering THE ESSENTIALS OF POWER IN

PRAYER. We must make a few distinctions at the outset. I take it there is a great difference between the prayer of a soul that is seeking mercy and the prayer of a man who is saved. I would say to every person present, whatever his character, if you sincerely seek mercy of God through Jesus Christ you shall have it. Whatever may have been your previous condition of life, if you now penitently seek Jehovahs face through the appointed Mediator, He will be found of you.

If the Holy Spirit has taught you to pray, hesitate no longer but hasten to the Cross and there rest your guilty soul on Jesus. I know of no qualifications for the sinners first prayer except sincerity, but we must speak in a different way to those of you who are saved. You have now become the people of God and while you shall be heard just as the sinner would be heard, and shall daily find the necessary Grace which every seeker receives in answer to prayer, yet you are now a child of God and you are under a special discipline peculiar to the regenerated family. In that discipline answers to prayer occupy a high position and are of eminent use.

There is something for a Believer to enjoy over and above bare salvation. There are mercies, blessings, comforts and favors which render his present life useful, happy and honorable. And these he shall have irrespective of character. They are not vital matters with regard to salvation the Believer possesses them unconditionally, for they are Covenant blessings. But we now refer to the honors and the dainties of the house which are given or withheld according to our obedience as the Lords children. If you neglect the conditions appended to these, your heavenly Father will withhold them from you. The essential blessings of the Covenant of Grace stand unconditionedthe invitation to seek for mercy is addressed to those who have no qualifications whatever, except their need.

But come inside the Divine family as saved men and women and you will find that other choice blessings are given or withheld according to our attention to the Lords rules in His family. To give a common illustration If a hungry person were at your door and asked for bread, you would give it to him whatever might be his character. You will also give your child food whatever may be his behavioryou will not deny your child anything that is necessary for life. You will never proceed in any course of discipline against him, so as to deny him his necessary food, or a garment to shield him from the cold. But there are many other things which your child may desire which you will give him if he is obedient, which you will not give if he is rebellious to you. I take it that this illustrates how far the paternal government of God will push this matter and where it will not go.

Understand, also, that the text refers not so much to Gods hearing a prayer of His servants now and then, for that He will do, even when His servants are out of course with Him and when He is hiding His face from them. The power in prayer, here intended, is continuous and absolute power with God, so that to quote the words of the text, whatever we ask of Him we receive. For this prayer there are certain prerequisites and essentials of which we have now to speak, and the first is child-like obedienceWhatever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments. If we are destitute of this the Lord may say to us as He did to His people Israel, You have forsaken Me, and served other gods, therefore I will deliver you no more. Go and cry unto the gods which you have chosen.

Any father will tell you that for him to grant the request of a disobedient child would be to encourage rebellion in the family and render it impossible for him to rule in his own house. It is often incumbent upon the parent to say, My Child, you did not listen to my word just now, and, therefore, I cannot listen to yours. Not that the father does not love, but that he does love the child, and because of his love he feels bound to show his displeasure by refusing the request of his erring offspring. God acts with us as we should act towards our refractory children. And if He sees that we will go into sin and transgress, it is a part of His kind paternal discipline to say, I will shut out your prayer, when you cry unto Me; I will not hear you when you entreat of Me; I will not destroy you, you shall be saved, you shall have the bread of life, and the water of life, but you shall have no more: the luxuries of My kingdom shall be denied you, and anything like special prevalence with Me in prayer you shall not possess.

That the Lord deals with His own people is clear from the 81st Psalm Oh that My people had hearkened unto Me, and Israel had walked in My ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned My hand against their adversaries. I should have fed them, also, with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out the rock should I have satisfied you. Why, if the disobedient child of God had the promise put into his hands Whatever you ask in prayer, you shall receive, he would be sure to ask for something that would bolster him up in his rebellion! He would be asking for provision for his own lust, and aids for his rebellion. This can never be tolerated! Shall God pander to our corruptions? Shall He find fuel for the flames of carnal passion?

A self-willed heart hankers after greater liberty that it may be the more obstinate. A haughty spirit longs for greater elevation that it may be prouder still. A slothful spirit asks for greater ease that it may yet be more indolent. And a domineering spirit asks for more power that it may have more opportunities of oppression. As such the man is, will his prayer be a rebellious spirit offers self-willed and proud prayers. Shall God listen to such prayers as these? It cannot be! He will give us what we ask if we keep His commandments, but if we become disobedient and reject His government He, also, will reject our prayers and say, If you walk contrary to Me, I also will walk contrary to you. With the stubborn, I will show Myself stubborn. Happy shall we be if, through Divine Grace, we can say with David, I will wash my hands in innocence; so will I compass Your altar, O Lord. This will never be perfect innocence, but it will at least be innocence of the love of sin and of willful revolt from God.

Next to this is another essential to victorious prayerchild-like reverence. Notice the next sentence. We receive what we ask, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. We do not allow children, when they have a command from their father, to question its propriety or wisdom. Obedience ends where questioning begins. A childs standard of its duty must not become the measure of the

fathers right to commandgood children say, Father has bid us to do so-and-so, and therefore we will do it, for we delight to please him always. The weightiest reason for a loving childs action is the persuasion that it would please his parents. And the strongest thing that can be said to hold back a gracious child is to prove that such a course of action would displease his parents. It is precisely so with us towards God, who is a perfect Parent, and therefore we may, without fear of mistake, always make His pleasure the rule of right, while the rule of wrong may safely remain that which would displease Him.

Suppose any of us should be self-willed and say, I shall not do what pleases God, I shall do what pleases myself. Then, observe, what would be the nature of our prayers? Our prayers might then be summed up in the request, Let me have my own way. And can we expect God to consent to that? Are we to be not only lords over Gods heritage but over God Himself? Would you have the Almighty resign His Throne to place a proud mortal there? If you have a child in your house who has no respect, whatever, for his father, but who says, I want to have my own way in all things, if he comes to you with a request, will you stoop to him? Will you allow him to dictate to you and forget the honor due you? Will you say, Yes, my dear Child, I recognize your importance. You shall be lord in the house and whatever you ask for you shall have?

What kind of a house would that be? I fear there are some such houses, for there are foolish parents who suffer their children to become their masters and so make a rod for their own backs. But Gods house is not ordered so! He will not listen to His self-willed children, unless it is to hear them in anger and to answer them in wrath! Remember how He heard the prayer of Israel for meat, and when the meat was yet in their mouths it became a curse to them? Many persons are chastened by obtaining their own desires, even as backsliders are filled with their own devices. We must have a child-like reverence of God, so that we feel, Lord, if what I ask for does not please You, neither would it please me. My desires are put into Your hands to be corrected. Strike the pen through every petition that I offer which is not right and, Lord, put in whatever I have omitted even though I might not have desired it had I remembered it. Good Lord, if I ought to have desired it, hear me as if I had desired it. Not as I will, but as You will. Now I think you can see that this yielding spirit is essential to continual prevalence with God in prayer. The reverse is a sure barrier to eminence in supplication. The Lord will be reverenced by those who are round about Him. They must have an eye to His pleasure in all that they do and all that they ask, or He will not look upon them with favor.

In the third place, the text suggests the necessity of child-like trust And this is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ. Everywhere in Scripture faith in God is spoken of as necessary to successful prayer. We must believe that God is and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, or else we have not prayed at all. In proportion to our faith will be the success of our prayer. It is a standing rule of the kingdom, According to your faith, so be it unto you. Remember how the Holy Spirit speaks by the mouth of the Apostle James? If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.

The text speaks of faith in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, which I understand to mean faith in His declared Character, faith in His Gospel, faith in the Truth concerning His Substitution and Salvation. Or it may mean faith in the authority of Christ, so that when I plead with God and say, Do it in the name of Jesus, I mean, Do for me as You would have done for Jesus, for I am authorized by Him to use His name. Do it for me as You would have done it for Him. He that can pray with faith in the name of Jesus cannot fail, for the Lord Jesus has said, If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. But there must be faith and if there is no faith we cannot expect to be heard. Do you understand that?

Let us come back to our family similitudes again. Suppose a child in the house does not believe his fathers word and is constantly saying that he finds his mind full of doubts as to his fathers truthfulness? Suppose, indeed, that he tells his brothers and sisters that his faith in his father is very weak? He mentions that wretched fact and is not at all shocked that he should say such a thing, but he rather feels that he ought to be pitied, as if it were an infirmity which he could not avoid. Somehow or other he does not believe that his father speaks the truth and he declares that though he tries to believe his fathers promise, yet he cannot.

I think a father so basely distrusted would not be in a very great hurry to grant such a sons requests. Indeed, it is very probable that the petitions of the mistrustful son would be such as could not be complied with, even if his father were willing to do so, since they would amount to a gratification of his own unbelief and a dishonor to his parent! For instance, suppose this child should take it into his head to doubt whether his father would provide him with his daily food? He might, then, come to his father and say, Father, give me enough money to last for the next 10 years, for I shall then be a man and shall be able to provide for myself. Give me money down to quiet my fears, for I am in great anxiety. The father replies, My Son, why should I do that?

And he gets for a reply, I am very sorry to say it, dear Father, but I cannot trust you. I have such a weak faith in you and your love that I am afraid one of these days you will leave me to starve. And therefore I should like to have something sure in the bank. Which of you fathers would listen to a childs request if he sought such a thing? You would be grieved that thoughts so dishonoring to yourself should pass through the mind of one of your own beloved ones! And you would not and could not, give way to them. Let me, then, ask you to apply the parable to yourselves. Did you never offer requests which were of much the same character? You have been unable to trust God to give you, day by day, your daily bread, and therefore you have been craving for what you call, some provision for the

future.

You want a more trusty provider than Providence, a better security than Gods promise! You are unable to trust your heavenly Fathers Word. A few bonds of some half-bankrupt foreign government you consider to be far more reliable. You can trust the Sultan of Turkey, or the Viceroy of Egypt, but not the God of the whole earth! In a thousand ways we insult the Lord by imagining the things which are seen to be more substantial than His unseen Omnipotence. We ask God to give us, at once, what we do not require at present and may never need at all! At bottom, the reason for such desires may be found in a disgraceful distrust of Him which makes us imagine that great stores are necessary to ensure our being provided for.

Brothers and Sisters, are you not to blame, here, and do you expect the Lord to aid and abet your folly? Shall God pander to your distrust? Shall He give you a heap of cankering gold and silver for thieves to steal and chests of garments to feed moths? Would you have the Lord act as if He admitted the correctness of your suspicions and confessed to unfaithfulness? God forbid! Expect not, therefore, to be heard when your prayer is suggested by an unbelieving heartCommit your way unto the Lord; trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass. The next essential to continued success in prayer is child-like lovethat we should believe on the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another as He gave us commandment.

The great commandment after faith is love. As it is said of God, God is Love, so may we say that, Christianity is love. If we were, each one, incarnations of love we should have attained to the complete likeness of Christ. We should abound in love to God, love to Christ, love to the Church, love to sinners and love to men everywhere! When a man has no love to God, he is in the condition of a child without love to his father. Shall his father promise absolutely to fulfill all the desires of his unloving, unfilial heart? Or, if a child has no love to his brothers and sisters, shall the father trust him with an absolute promise, and say, Ask and it shall be given you? Why, the unloving son would impoverish the whole family by his selfish demands! Regardless of all the rest of the household, he would only care to indulge his own passions. His request would before long beFather, give me all the inheritance. Or, Father, regulate the home to suit me and make all my brothers submit to my wishes.

Vain of his personal appearance, like Absalom, who was proud of his hair, he would soon seek the kingdom for himself! Few Josephs can wear the garment of many colors and not become household tyrants. Who would allow a prodigal to run off with the estate? Who would be so unwise as to install a greedy, domineering brother in the seat of honor, above his brothers and sisters? Therefore, you see that selfishness cannot be trusted with power in prayer. Unloving spirits, that love neither God nor men, cannot be trusted with great, broad, unlimited promises. If God is to hear us we must love God and love our fellow men for, when we love God, we shall not pray for anything that would not honor God and shall not wish to see anything happen to us which would not also bless our brethren. Our hearts will beat true to God and to His creatures and we shall not be wrapped up in ourselves. You must get rid of selfishness before God can trust you with the keys of Heaven. When

self is dead, then He will enable you to unlock His treasuries and, as a prince, shall you have power with God and prevail.

Next to this, we must have child-like ways as well. Read the next verse. He that keeps His commandments dwells in Him, and He in him. It is one of a childs ways to love its home. The good child to whose requests its father always listens loves no place so much as the dear old house where its parents live. Now he who loves and keeps Gods commandments is said to dwell in Himhe has made the Lord his dwelling place and abides in holy familiarity with God. In him our Lords words are fulfilled, If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you. Faith and love, like two cherubic wings, have borne up the Believers soul above the world and carried him near to the Throne of God. He has become like God and now it is that his prayers are such as God can answerbut until he is thus conformed to the Divine mind there must be some limit to the potency of his pleadings. To dwell in God is necessary to power with God.

Suppose one of you had a boy, who said, Father, I do not like my home, I do not care for you and I will not endure the restraints of family rule. I am going to live with strangers, but mark, Father, I shall come to you every week and I shall require many things of you. And I shall expect that you will give me whatever I ask from you? Why, if you are at all fit to be at the head of the house, you will say, My Son, how can you speak to me in such a manner? If you are so self-willed as to leave my house, can you expect that I will do your bidding? If you utterly disregard me, can you expect me to support you in your cruel unkindness and wicked insubordination? No, my Son, if you will not remain with me and own me as a father, I cannot promise you anything.

And so is it with God. If we will dwell with Him and commune with Him, He will give us all things. If we love Him as He should be loved, and trust Him as He ought to be trusted, then He will hear our requests. But if not, it is not reasonable to expect it. Indeed, it would be a slur upon the Divine Character for Him to fulfill unholy desires and gratify evil whims. Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart, but if you have no delight in God and He is not your dwelling place, He will not answer you. He may give you the bread of affliction and the water of affliction and make life bitter for you, but certainly He will not give you what your heart desires.

One thing moreit appears from the text that we must have a childlike spirit, for, Hereby we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He has given us. What is this but the Spirit of adoptionthe Spirit which rules in all the children of God? The willful who think and feel and act differently from God must not expect that God will come round to their way of thinking and feeling and acting! The selfish who are actuated by the spirit of pride, the slothful who are actuated by the love of ease must not expect that God will indulge them! The Holy Spirit, if He rules in us, will

subordinate our nature to His own sway and then the prayers which spring out of our renewed hearts will be in keeping with the will of God and such prayers will naturally be heard.

No parent would think of listening to a willful child, to a child that said, I know my father does not wish me to have this, but I will have it. Why, as a man you would not thus be twisted about by an upstart youngster! Shall God grant us that which we ask for when it is contrary to His holy mind? It must not be! Such a possibility is not conceivable! The same mind must be in us which is also in Christ Jesus, and then we shall be able to say, I know that You hear me always. But we must pass on and occupy your attention, for a few minutes, with another branch of the same subject.

II. In the second place we shall notice THE PREVALENCE OF THESE ESSENTIAL THINGS. If they are in us and abound, our prayers cannot be barren or unprofitable. First, if we have faith in God, there is no question about Gods hearing our prayer. If we can plead, in faith, the name and blood of Jesus, we must obtain answers of peace. But a thousand arguments are suggested. Suppose these prayers concern the Laws of Nature? Then the scientific men are against us. What of that? I will glory in giving these scientific men scope enoughI had almost said scope enough.

I do not know of any prayer worth praying which does not come into contact with some natural Law or other and yet I believe in prayers being heard! It is said that God will not change the Laws of Nature for us, and I reply, Whoever said He would? The Lord has ways of answering our prayers irrespective of the working of miracles or suspending laws. He used to hear prayer by miracle, but as I have often said to you, that seems a rougher way of achieving His purposeit is like stopping a vast machine for a small resultHe knows how to accomplish His ends and hear our prayers by I know not what secret means.

Perhaps there are other forces and laws which He has arranged to bring into action just at times when prayer, also, acts. Laws just as fixed and forces just as natural as those which our learned theorizers have been able to discover. The wisest men know not all the laws which govern the universe, no, nor a tenth of them! We believe that the prayers of Christians are a part of the machinery of Providence, cogs in the great wheel of destinyand when God leads His children to pray, He has already set in motion a wheel that is to produce the result prayed for and the prayers offered are moving as a part of the wheel. If there is but faith in God, God must either cease to be, or cease to be true, or else He must hear prayer!

The verse before the text says, If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God; and whatever we ask, we receive of Him. He who has a clear conscience comes to God with confidence and that confidence of faith ensures to him the answer of his prayer. Childlike confidence makes us pray as none else can. It makes a man pray for great things which he would never have asked for if he had not learned this confidence. It makes him pray for little things which a great many are afraid to ask for, because they have not yet felt towards God the confidence of children. I have often said that it needs more confidence in God to pray to Him about a little thing than about great things. We fancy that our great things are somewhat worthy of Gods regard, though in truth they are little enough to Him! And then we imagine that our little things must be so trifling that it would be almost an insult to bring them before Him, whereas we ought to know that what is very great to a child may be very little to its parentand yet the parent does not measure the thing from his own point of view but from the childs.

You heard your little boy the other day crying bitterly. His mother called him and asked what ailed him? It was a splinter in his finger. Well, that was a small affair. You did not want to call in three surgeons to extract it, or raise a hue and cry in the public press! Bring a needle and we will soon set it right. Oh, but what a great thing it was to that pretty little sufferer as he stood there with eyes all wet with tears of anguish. It was a great concern to him! Now, did it occur to that boy that his pain was too small a thing for his mother to attend to? Not at all! What were mothers and fathers made for but to look after the little needs of little children? And God, our Father, is a good Father. He pities us as fathers pity their children and condescends to us. He knows the number of the stars, and calls them all by their names, yet He heals the broken in heart and binds up their wounds. The same God who kindles the sun has said, I will not quench the smoking flax. If you have but confidence in God, you will take your great things and your little things to Him and He will never belie your confidencefor He has said they that trust in Him shall never be ashamed or confused, world without end. Faith must succeed!

But next, love must succeed, too, since we have already seen that the man who loves, in the Christian sense, is in accord with God. If you confine your love to your own family, you must not expect God to do so, and prayers narrowed within that circle He will disregard. If a man loves his own little self and hopes everybodys crop of wheat will fail, that his own produce may fetch a higher price, he certainly cannot expect the Lord to agree with such mean selfishness! If a man has heart enough to embrace all the creatures of God in his affection while he yet prays specially for the household of faith, his prayers will be after the Divine mind. His love and Gods goodness run side by side. Though Gods love is like a mighty rolling river and his is like a trickling brook, yet they both run in the same direction and will both come to the same end. God always hears the prayers of a loving man because those prayers are the shadows of His own decrees.

Again, the man of obedience is the man whom God will hear because his obedient heart leads him to pray humbly and with submission, for he feels it to be his highest desire that the Lords will should be done. Therefore it is that the man of obedient heart prays like a Prophethis prayers are prophecies. Is he not one with God? Does he not desire and ask for exactly what God intends? How can a prayer shot from such a bow ever fail to reach its target? If your soul gets into accord with Gods soul, you will wish Gods own wishes! The difficulty is that we do not keep, as the word is, in rapport with God. But if we did, then we should strike the same note as God strikes and though His would sound like thunder and ours as a whisper, yet there would be a perfect unisonthe note struck

by prayer on earth would coincide with that which sounds forth from the decrees in Heaven.

Again, the man who lives in fellowship with God will assuredly prevail in prayer because, if he dwells in God, and God dwells in him, he will desire what God desires. The Believer in communion with the Lord desires mans good and so does God. He desires Christs Glory and so does God. He desires the Churchs prosperity and so does God. He desires himself to be a pattern of holiness and God desires it, too. If that man at any time has a desire which is not according to Gods will, it is the result of ignorance, seeing that man is but man and not God. Even when he is at the best he must err, but he provides for this defect by the form of his prayer which always has this addendum at the end of itLord, if I have asked in this, my prayer, for anything which is not according to Your mind, I beseech You, do not regard me. And if any wish which I have expressed to Youeven though it is the desire which burns in my bosom above all other wishesis a wish that is not right in Your sight, regard me not, my Father, but, in Your infinite love and compassion, do something better for Your servant than Your servant knows how to ask.

Now, when a prayer is after that fashion, how can it fail? The Lord looks out of the windows of Heaven and sees such a prayer coming to Him, just as Noah saw the dove returning to the ark, and He puts out His hand to that prayer. And as Noah plucked the dove into the ark, so does God pluck that prayer in unto Him and puts it into His own bosom, and says, You came out of My bosom, and I welcome you back to MeMy Spirit composed you, therefore will I answer you. And here, again, let us say, our text speaks of the Christian man as being filled with Gods SpiritWe know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He has given us. Who knows the mind of a man but the spirit of a man? So, who knows the things of God but the Spirit of God? And if the Spirit of God dwells in us, then He tells us what Gods mind is. He makes intercession in the saints according to the will of God!

It is sometimes imagined that men who have prevalence in prayer can pray for what they like, but I can assure you any one of these will tell you that that is not so. You may call upon such a man and ask him to pray for you, but he cannot promise that he will. There are strange holdings back to such men when they feel they know not how or why that they cannot pray effectual fervent prayers in certain cases, though they might desire to do so. Like Paul, when he essayed to go into Bithynia and the Spirit suffered him not, so there are requests which we would naturally like to put up, but we are bound in spirit. There may apparently be nothing objectionable about the prayer, but the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him and He gives secret intimations when and where His chosen may hope to prevail. He gives you the promise that He will hear your believing prayer, you being a man that walks with Him, filled with His Spirit. But He does not, at the same time, give you faith about everything that everybody likes to put before youon the contrary He gives you a discretion, a judgment and a wisdomand the Spirit makes intercession in the saints according to the will of God.

Thus I think I have laid down the doctrine pretty clearly. Now a few minutes of practical improvement, as the old Puritans used to say. I only wish it may be of improvement to many of us. The first is, we want to pray for a great blessing as a Church. I think I should command your votes if I said we intend to pray God to send a blessing on the Church at large. Very well. Have we the essentials for success? Are we believing in the name of Jesus Christ? Well, I think we are. I do not think fault could be found with the soundness of our faith, though much is to be confessed about the weakness of it.

Let us pass on to the next question. Are we full of love to God and one another? The double commandment is that we believe on the name of Jesus Christ and that we love one another. Do we love one another? Are we walking in love? There are none of us perfect in it. I will begin to confess by acknowledging I am not what I should be in that respect. Will you let the confession go round and each one think how often we have done unloving things, thought unloving things, said unloving things, listened to unloving gossip, held back our hand unlovingly when we ought to have rendered help and put forth our hand unlovingly to push down a man who was falling? If in the Church of God there is a lack of love, we cannot expect prayer to he heard, for God will say, you ask for prosperity. What for? To add more to a community which does not already love itself? You ask for conversions. What? To bring in others to join an unloving community?

Do you expect God to save sinners whom you do not love and to convert souls whom you do not care a bit about? We must love souls into Christ for, under Gods Holy Spirit, the great instrument for the conquest of the world is love! If Christians will love more than Muslims do, and Jews do, they will overcome Muslims and Jews! And if they show less love, Muslims and Jews will overcome them! The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, is the master weapon. But next to that is the loving carriage and generous conversation of Christians towards their fellow men. How much of that have we got? Shall I say, how little?

Next, are we doing that which is pleasing in Gods sight? We cannot expect answers to prayer if we are not. Put the enquiry to yourselves all round. Let each Church member, especially, answer that question. Have you been doing, lately, that which you would like Jesus Christ to see? Is your household ordered in such a way that it pleases God? Suppose Jesus Christ had visited your house this week, uninvited and unexpectedwhat would He have thought of that which He would have seen? Oh, says one, I know so-and-so acts very inconsistently. Sir, I pray you think of yourself! That is the point. Correct yourself. Unless the members of Gods Church do that which is pleasing in His sight, they bar the door against prosperitythey prevent the prayers of the Church from succeeding. Who wishes to be the man that stands in the way of the prosperity of Gods Church through inconsistency of conduct? Who would be so guilty? God forgive some of you! We could speak of some even weeping, for, alas, though they profess to be the followers of Christ, they are so inconsistent

that they are not friends, but enemies of the Cross of Christ! The next question is, do we dwell in God? The text says that if we keep  
His commandments God dwells in us and we in Him. Is that so? I mean,   
during the day do we think of God? In our business are we still with God?   
A Christian is not to run unto God in the morning and again at night, and  
use Him as a shelter and a makeshift, as people do of an arch or a portico  
which they run under in a shower of rain. We are to dwell in God and live   
in Him from the rising of the sun until the going down thereof, making   
Him our daily meditation, and walking as in His sight, feeling evermore,   
You God see me. How is it with you, dear Friends! O, let the question go  
from pew to pew and heart to heart, and mindlet each one answer for   
himself.   
Lastly, does the Spirit of God actuate us, or is it another spirit? Do we  
wait upon God and say, Lord, let Your Spirit tell me what to say in this   
case, and what to do. Rule my judgment, subdue my passions, keep down   
my baser impulses and let Your Spirit guide me. Lord, be You to me better  
than myself. Be soul and life to me and in the triple kingdom of my spirit,  
soul, and body, good Lord, be You supreme Master that in every province   
of my nature Your Law may be set up and Your will may be regarded? We   
would have a mighty Church if we were all of this mind. But the mixed   
multitude are with us, the mixed multitude that came out of Egypt and   
these fall a-lusting. The mischief always begins with them. God save us as   
a Church from losing His Presence!   
The mixed multitude must be with us to try us, for the Lord has said,   
Let both grow together till the harvest, and if we try to root up the tares   
we should root up the wheat, alsoyet, at any rate, let us pray God to   
make the wheat be the stronger. One of two things always happens in a   
Church. Either the wheat chokes the weeds or the weeds choke the wheat.  
God grant that the wheat may overtop the weeds in our case! God grant   
Grace to His servants to be strong enough to overcome the evil which surrounds them and, having done all, to stand to the praise of the glory of   
His Grace, who also has made us accepted in the Beloved. The Lord bless   
you, and be with you evermore. Amen and Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON 1 John 3; Isaiah 1:10-20.   
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THE WARRANT OF FAITH   
NO. 531

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 20, 1863, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

And this is His commandment, That we should   
believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ.   
1 John 3:23.

THE old Law shines in terrible glory with its Ten Commandments. There are some who love that Law so much that they cannot pass over a Sunday without its being read in their hearing, accompanied by the mournful petition, Lord, have mercy upon us and incline our hearts to keep this Law. No, some are so foolish as to enter into a covenant for their children, that, they shall keep all Gods holy commandments and walk in the same all the days of their life. Thus they early wear a yoke which neither they nor their fathers can bear, and daily groaning under its awful weight they labor after righteousness where it never can be found.

Over the tables of the Law in every Church, I would have conspicuously printed these Gospel words, By the deeds of the Law shall no flesh living be justified. The true Believer has learned to look away from the killing ordinances of the old Law. He understands that as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse, for it is written: Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them. He therefore turns with loathing from all trust in his own obedience to the Ten Commands and lays hold with joy upon the hope set before him in the one commandment contained in my text, This is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ.

We sing, and sing rightly, too   
*My soul, no more attempt to draw   
Your life and comfort from the Law,*

for from the Law death comes and not life, misery and not comfort. To convince and to condemn is all the Law can do. O, when will all professors, and especially all professed ministers of Christ, learn the difference between the Law and the Gospel? Most of them make a mingle-mangle, and serve out deadly potions to the people, often containing but one ounce of Gospel to a pound of Lawwhereas even a grain of Law is enough to spoil the whole thing. It must be Gospel and Gospel only. If it is of Grace, it is not of works, otherwise Grace is no more Grace. And if it is of works, then it is not of Grace, otherwise work is no more work.

The Christian then, turning his attention to the one command of the Gospel, is very anxious to know first, what is the matter of the believing here intended? And secondly, what is the sinners warrant for so believing in Christ? Nor will he fail to consider the mandate of the Gospel.

I. First then, THE MATTER OF BELIEVING, or what is it that a man is to believe in order to eternal life? Is it the Athanasian creed? Is it true that if a man does not hold that confession whole and entire, he shall, without doubt, perish everlastingly? We leave those to decide who are learned in

matters of bigotry. Is it any particular form of doctrine? Is it the Calvinistic or the Arminian scheme? For our own part we are quite content with our textbelieving on His Son Jesus Christ. That faith which saves the soul is believing on a Person, depending upon Jesus for eternal life.

To speak more at large of the things which are to be believed in order to justification by faith, they all relate to the Person and the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must believe Him to be Gods Sonso the text puts it His Son. We must grasp with strong confidence the great fact that He is Godfor nothing short of a Divine Savior can ever deliver us from the infinite wrath of God. He who rejects the true and proper Godhead of Jesus of Nazareth is not saved and cannot be, for he believes not on Jesus as Gods Son.

Furthermore, we must accept this Son of God as Jesus, the Savior. We must believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became Man out of infinite love to man, that He might save His people from their sins according to that worthy saying, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief. We must look upon Jesus as Christ, the Anointed of the Father, sent into this world on salvations errand, not that sinners might save themselves, but that He, being mighty to save, might bring many sons unto glory. We must believe that Jesus Christ, coming into the world to save sinners, did really effect His mission. That the precious blood which is shed upon Calvary is almighty to atone for sin and therefore all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, since the blood of Jesus Christ, Gods dear Son, cleans us from all sin.

We must heartily accept the great doctrine of the Atonementregarding Jesus as standing in the place of sinful men, bearing for them the terror of the Laws curse until justice was satisfied and could demand no more. Moreover, we should rejoice that Jesus Christ, by His dying, put away forever the sin of His people, so by His living He gave unto those who trust in Him a perfect righteousness, in which, despite their own sins, they are accepted in the Beloved.

We are also taught that if we heartily trust our soul with Christ, our sins, through His blood, are forgiven and His righteousness is imputed to us. The mere knowledge of these facts will not, however, save us, unless we really and truly trust our soul in the Redeemers hands. Faith must act in this wiseI believe that Jesus came to save sinners and therefore, sinner though I am, I rest myself on Him. I know that His righteousness justifies the ungodly. I, therefore, though ungodly, trust in Him to be my righteousness. I know that His precious blood in Heaven prevails with God on the behalf of them that come unto Him. And since I come unto Him, I know by faith that I have an interest in His perpetual intercession.

Now, I have enlarged the one thought of believing on Gods Son Jesus Christ. Brethren, I would not darken counsel by words without knowledge. Believing is most clearly explained by that simple word, trust. Believing is partly the intellectual operation of receiving Divine Truths, but the essence of it lies in relying upon those Truths. I believe that although I cannot swim, yonder friendly plank will support me in the floodI grasp it and am savedthe grasp is faith. I am promised by a generous friend that if I draw upon his banker, he will supply all my needsI joyously confide in him and as often as I am in want I go to the bank and am enriched my going to the bank is faith.

Thus faith is accepting Gods great promise, contained in the Person of His Son. It is taking God at His word and trusting in Jesus Christ as being my salvation, although I am utterly unworthy of His regard. Sinner, if you take Christ to be your Savior this day, you are justifiedthough you are the biggest blasphemer and persecutor out of Hellif you dare to trust Christ with your salvation, that faith of yours saves you. Though your whole life may have been as black and foul and devilish as you could have made it, yet if you will honor God by believing Christ is able to forgive such a wretch as you are, and will now trust in Jesus precious blood, you are saved from Divine wrath.

II. The WARRANT OF BELIEVING is the point upon which I shall spend my time and strength this morning. According to my text, the warrant for a man to believe is the Commandment of God. This is the Commandment, that you believe on His Son Jesus Christ.

Self-righteousness will always find a lodging somewhere or other. Drive it, my Brothers and Sisters, out of the ground of your confidence. Let the sinner see that he cannot rest on his good works. As foxes will have holes, this self-righteousness will find a refuge for itself in the warrant of our faith in Christ. It reasons thusYou are not saved by what you do, but by what Christ did. But then, you have no right to trust in Christ unless there is something good in you which shall entitle you to trust in Him. Now this legal reasoning I oppose. I believe such teaching to contain in it the essence of Popish self-righteousness. The warrant for a sinner to believe in Christ is not in himself in any sense or in any manner, but in the fact that he is commanded then and there to believe on Jesus Christ.

Some preachers in the Puritan times, whose shoe latchets I am not worthy to unloose, erred much in this matter. I refer not merely to Alleine and Baxter, who are far better preachers of the Law than of the Gospel, but I include men far sounder in the faith than they, such as Rogers of Dedham, Shepherd, the author of The Sound Believer, and especially the American, Thomas Hooker, who has written a book upon qualifications for coming to Christ. These excellent men had a fear of preaching the Gospel to any except those whom they styled, sensible sinners, and consequently kept hundreds of their hearers sitting in darkness when they might have rejoiced in the Light of God.

They preached repentance and hatred of sin as the warrant of a sinners trusting to Christ. According to them, a sinner might reason thusI possess such-and-such a degree of sensibility on account of sin, therefore I have a right to trust in Christ. Now, I venture to affirm that such reasoning is seasoned with fatal error. Whoever preaches in this fashion may preach much of the Gospel, but the whole Gospel of the Free Grace of God in its fullness he has yet to learn. In our own day certain preachers assure us that a man must be regenerated before we may bid him believe in Jesus Christ. Some degree of a work of Grace in the heart being, in their judgment, the only warrant to believe. This also is false. It takes away a Gospel for sinners, and offers us a Gospel for saints. It is anything but a ministry of Free Grace.

Others say that the warrant for a sinner to believe in Christ is his election. Now, as his election cannot possibly be known by any man until he has believed, this is virtually preaching that nobody has any known war

rant for believing at all. If I cannot possibly know my election before I believeand yet the minister tells me that I may only believe upon the ground of my electionhow am I ever to believe at all? Election brings me faith and faith is the evidence of my election. But to say that my faith is to depend upon my knowledge of my election which I cannot get without faith, is to talk nonsense.

I lay down, this morning, with great boldnessbecause I know and am well persuaded that what I speak is the mind of the Spiritthis doctrine that the sole and only warrant for a sinner to believe in Jesus is found in the Gospel itself, and in the command which accompanies that Gospel, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. I shall deal with that matter first negatively and then positively.

1. First, NEGATIVELY. And here my first observation is that any other way of preaching the Gospel-warrant is absurd. If I am to preach faith in Christ to a man who is regenerated, then the man, being regenerated, is saved already. It is unnecessary and ridiculous for me to preach Christ to him and bid him to believe in order to be saved, when he is saved already, being regenerate. But you will tell me that I ought to preach it only to those who repent of their sins. Very well, but since true repentance of sin is the work of the Spirit, any man who has repentance is most certainly saved, because evangelical repentance never can exist in an unrenewed soul.

Where there is repentance there is faith already, for they never can be separated. So, then, I am only to preach faith to those who have it? Absurd, indeed! Is not this waiting till the man is cured and then bringing him the medicine? This is preaching Christ to the righteous and not to sinners. No, says one, but we mean that a man must have some good desires towards Christ before he has any warrant to believe in Jesus. Friend, do you not know that all good desires have some degree of holiness in them? If a sinner has any degree of true holiness in him it must be the work of the Spiritfor true holiness never exists in the carnal mindtherefore that man is already renewed and therefore saved.

Are we to go running up and down the world, proclaiming life to the living, casting bread to those who are fed already and holding up Christ on the pole of the Gospel to those who are already healed? My Brothers and Sisters, where is our inducement to labor where our efforts are so little needed? If I am to preach Christ to those who have no goodness, who have nothing in them that qualifies them for mercy, then I feel I have a Gospel so Divine that I would proclaim it with my last breath, crying aloud, that Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Sinners as sinnersnot as penitent sinners or as awakened sinnersbut sinners as sinners. Sinners of whom I am chief.

Secondly, to tell the sinner that he is to believe on Christ because of some warrant in himself, is legalI dare to say itLEGAL! Though this method is generally adopted by the higher school of Calvinists, they are herein unsound, not Calvinistic but LEGAL. It is strange that they who are so bold defenders of Free Grace should make common cause with Baxterians and Pelagians. I lay it down to be legal for this reasonif I believe in Jesus Christ because I feel a genuine repentance of sin, and therefore have a warrant for my faith, do you not perceive that the first and true ground of my confidence is the fact that I have repented of sin?

If I believe in Jesus because I have convictions and a spirit of prayer, then evidently the first and the most important fact is not Christ, but my possession of repentance, conviction and prayerso that really my hope hinges upon my having repented. And if this is not legal I do not know what is. Put it lower. My opponents will say, The sinner must have an awakened conscience before he is warranted to believe on Christ. Well, then, if I trust Christ to save me because I have an awakened conscience, I say again, the most important part of the whole transaction is the alarm of my conscience and my real trust hangs there.

If I lean on Christ because I feel this and that, then I am leaning on my feelings and not on Christ aloneand this is legal, indeed. No, even if desires after Christ are to be my warrant for believingif I am to believe in Jesus not because He bids me, but because I feel some desires after Himyou will again, with half an eye, perceive that the most important source of my comfort must be my own desires. So that we shall be always looking withinDo I really desire? If I do, then Christ can save me. If I do not, then He cannot. And so my desire overrides Christ and His Divine Grace. Away with such legality from the earth!

Again, any other way of preaching than that of bidding the sinner believe because God commands him to believe, is a boasting way of faith. For if my warrant to trust in Jesus is found in my experience, my loathing of sin, or my longings after Christ, then all these good things of mine are a legitimate ground of boasting, because though Christ may save me, yet these were the wedding dress which fitted me to come to Christ. If these are indispensable prerequisites and conditions, then the man who has them may truly and justly say, Christ did save me, but I had the prerequisites and conditions first, and therefore let these share the praise.

See, my Brothers and Sisters, those who have a faith which rests upon their own experience, what are they as a rule? Mark them and you will perceive much censorious bitterness in them. This prompts them to set up their own experience as the standard of saintship. And this may assuredly make us suspicious whether they ever were humbled in a Gospel manner at all. And so we see that their own best feelings and best repentances and best experiences in themselves are nothing more nor less than filthy rags in the sight of God.

My dear Brothers and Sisters, we must tell a sinner that foul and filthy as he is, without any preparation or qualification, he is to take Jesus Christ to be his All in Allthat he may find in Him all that he can ever need. When we dare on the spot to bid the jailor just startled out of sleep, Believe in Jesuswe leave no room for self-glorificationall must be of Divine Grace. When we find the lame man lying at the temple gates, we do not bid him strengthen his own legs, or feel some life in them! We bid him in the name of Jesus rise up and walksurely, here, when God the Spirit owns the Word, all boasting is excluded. Whether I rely on my experience or my good works makes little difference, for either of these reliances will lead to boasting since they are both legal. Law and boasting are twin brothers, but Free Grace and gratitude always go together.

Any other warrant for believing on Jesus than that which is presented in the Gospel is changeable. See, Brothers and Sisters, if my warrant to believe in Christ lies in the melting of my heart and my experiences, then

if today I have a melting heart and I can pour my soul out before the Lord, I have a warrant to believe in Christ. But tomorrow (who does not know this?) tomorrow my heart may be as hard as a stone, so that I can neither feel nor pray. Then, according to the qualification-theory, I have no right to trust in Christ! My warrant is gone from me.

According to the doctrine of final perseverance, the Christians faith is continual. If so, the warrant of his faith must be always the same, or else he has sometimes an unwarranted faith, which is absurd. It follows from this that the abiding warrant of faith must lie in some immutable truth. Since everything within changes more frequently than ever does an English sky, if my warrant to believe in Christ is based within, it must change every hour. Consequently I am lost and saved alternately. Brethren, can these things be so? For my part I want a sure and immutable warrant for my faith. I want a warrant to believe in Jesus which will serve me when the devils blasphemy comes pouring into my ears like a flood.

I want a warrant to believe which will serve me when my lusts and corruptions appear in terrible array and make me cry out, O wretched man that I am. I want a warrant to believe in Christ which will comfort me when I have no good frames and holy feelingswhen I am dead as a stone and my spirit lies cleaving to the dust. Such an unfailing warrant to belief in Jesus is found in this precious Truth of God, that His gracious Commandment, and not my variable experience, is my title to believe on His Son Jesus Christ.

Again, my Brothers and Sisters, any other warrant is utterly incomprehensible. Multitudes of my Brothers preach an impossible salvation. How often do poor sinners hunger and thirst to know the way of salvation and there is no available salvation preached to them? Personally, I do not remember to have been told from the pulpit to believe in Jesus as a sinner. I heard much of feelings which I thought I could never get, and frames after which I longed. But I found no peace until a true, Free Grace message came to me, Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earth.

See, my Brothers and Sisters, if convictions of soul are necessary qualifications for Christ, we ought to know to an ounce how much of these qualifications are needed. If you tell a poor sinner that there is a certain amount of humbling and trembling and convictions and heart-searching to be felt, in order that he may be warranted to come to Christ, I demand of all legal Giseles distinct information as to the manner and exact degree of preparation required. Brethren, you will find when these gentlemen are pushed into a corner, they will not agree, but will everyone give a different standard, according to his own judgment.

One will say the sinner must have months of Law work. Another, that he only needs good desires. And some will demand that he possess the Graces of the Spiritsuch as humility, godly sorrow and love to holiness. You will get no clear answer from them. If the sinners warrant to come is found in the Gospel itself, the matter is clear and plain. But what a roundabout plan is that compound of Law and Gospel against which I contend! And let me ask you, my Brothers and Sisters, whether such an incomprehensible Gospel would do for a dying man? There he lies in the agonies of death. He tells me that he has no good thoughts or feelings and asks what he must do to be saved. There is but a step between him and deathanother five minutes and that mans soul may be in Hell.

What am I to tell him? Am I to be an hour explaining to him the preparation required before he may come to Christ? Brethren, I dare not. But I tell him, Believe, Brother, even though it is the eleventh hour. Trust your soul with Jesus and you shall be saved. There is the same Gospel for a living man as for a dying man. The thief on the Cross may have had some experience, but I do not find him pleading it. He turns his eyes to Jesus, saving, Lord, remember me! How prompt is the reply, Today shall you be with Me in Paradise. He may have had longing desires, he may have had deep convictions, but I am quite sure he did not say, Lord, I dare not ask You to remember me because I do not feel I have repented enough. I dare not trust You, because I have not been shaken over Hells mouth.

NO! NO! NO!He looked to Jesus as he wasand Jesus responded to his believing prayer. It must be so with you, my Brothers and Sisters, for any other plan but that of a sinners coming to Christ as a sinner and resting on Jesus just as he is, is utterly incomprehensible. Or, if it is to be explained at all, will require a day or two to explain it. And that cannot be the Gospel which the Apostles preached to dying men.

Yet again, I believe that the preaching of alarms of conscience and repentance as qualifications for Christ, is unacceptable to the awakened sinner. I will introduce one, as Saltmarsh does in his, Flowings of Christs Blood Freely to the Chief of Sinners. Here is a poor Brother who dares not believe in Jesus. I will suppose him to have attended a ministry where the preaching is, If you have felt this, if you have felt that, then you may believe. When you went to your minister in trouble, what did he say to you? He asked me whether I felt my need of Christ, I told him I did not think I did, at least I did not feel my need enough. He told me that I ought to meditate upon the guilt of sin and consider the dreadful character of the wrath to come and I might in this way feel my need more.

Did you do so? I did. But it seemed to me as while I meditated upon the terrors of judgment, my heart grew harder instead of softer. And I seemed to be desperately set and resolved in a kind of despair to go on in my ways. Yet, sometimes I did have some humbling and some melting of heart. What did your minister tell you to do to get comfort, then? He said I ought to pray much. Did you pray? I told him I could not pray. That I was such a sinner that it was of no use for me to hope for an answer if I could. What did he say then? He told me I ought to lay hold upon the promises. Yes, did you do so? No. I told him I could not lay hold upon the promises. That I could not see they were meant for me, for I was not the character intended. And that I could only find threats in the Word of God for such as I was.

What did he say then? He told me to be diligent in the use of the means and to attend his ministry. What did you say to that? I told him I was diligent, but that what I wanted was not means, I wanted to get my sins pardoned and forgiven. What did he say then? Why, he said that I had better persevere and wait patiently for the Lord. I told him that I was in such a horror of great darkness, that my soul chose strangling rather than life. Well then, he said, he thought I must already be truly penitent, and was therefore safe and that sooner or later I should have hope. But I told him, a mere hope was not enough for me, I could not be safe while

sin lay so heavy upon me.   
He asked me whether I had not desires after Christ. I said I had, but   
they were merely selfish, carnal desires. That I sometimes thought I had   
desires, but they were only legal. He said if I had a desire to have a desire,  
it was Gods work and I was saved. That did prop me up for a time, Sir,   
but I went down again, for that did not do for me, I wanted something  
solid to rest on. And Sinner, how is it now with you? Where are you now?  
Well, Sir, I scarcely know where I am, but I pray you, tell me what I must  
do? Brethren, my reply is prompt and plain. Hear it.Poor Soul, I have   
no questions to ask you. I have no advice to give you, except thisGods   
command to you is, whatever you may be, trust to the Lord Jesus Christ   
and you shall be saved. Will you do it or not?   
If he rejects that, I must leave him. I have no more to say to him. I am   
clear of his blood and on him the sentence comes, He that believes not  
shall be damned. But you will find in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred, that when you begin to talk to the sinner, not about his repentings   
and his desires, but about Christand tell him that he need not fear the   
Law, for Christ has satisfied it. That he need not fear an angry God, for   
God is not angry with Believers. Tell him that all manner of iniquity was   
cast into the Red Sea of Jesus blood, and, like the Egyptians, drowned   
there forevertell him that no matter however vile and wicked he may  
have been, Christ is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto   
God by Him.   
And tell him that he has a right to come, be he who he may, or what he  
may, because God bids him comeyou will find that the suitability of  
such a Gospel to the sinners case will prove a sweet inducement in the   
hand of the Holy Spirit, to lead that sinner to lay hold on Jesus Christ. O   
my Brothers and Sisters, I am ashamed of myself when I think of the way  
in which I have sometimes talked to awakened sinners! I am persuaded   
that the only true remedy for a broken heart is Jesus Christs most precious blood. Some surgeons keep a wound open too long. They keep cutting and cutting and cutting, till they cut away as much sound flesh as   
proud flesh.   
Better than to half heal it, heal it at once, for Jesus Christ was not sent   
to keep open the wounds, but to bind up the broken in heart. To you,  
then, Sinners of every sort and hueblack, hard-hearted, insensible, impenitenteven to you is the Gospel sent, for Jesus Christ came into the   
world to save sinners, even the chief. I might here pause, surely, but I   
must add yet one other point upon this negative mode of reasoning. Any  
other warrant for the sinners faith than the Gospel itself, is false and   
dangerous.   
It is false, my Brothers and Sisters, it is as false as God is true, that  
anything in a sinner can be his warrant for believing in Jesus. The whole   
tenor and run of the Gospel is absolutely contrary to it. It must be false,   
because there is nothing in a sinner until he believes which can be a warrant for his believing. If you tell me that a sinner has any good thing in   
him before he believes, I reply, impossibleWithout faith it is impossible   
to please God. All the repenting and humbling and convictions that a   
sinner has before faith, must be, according to Scripture, displeasing to   
God. Do not tell me that his heart is broken. If it is only broken by carnal means and trusts in its brokenness, it needs to be broken over again. Do not tell me he has been led to hate his sin. I tell you he does not hate his sin, he only hates Hell. There cannot be a true and real hatred of sin where there is not faith in Jesus. All the sinner knows and feels before faith is only an addition to his other sins and how can sin which deserves   
wrath be a warrant for an act which is the work of the Holy Spirit? How dangerous is the sentiment I am opposing. My Hearers, it may be   
so mischievous as to have misled some of you. I solemnly warn you,   
though you have been professors of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for   
twenty years, if your reason for believing in Christ lies in this, that you   
have felt the terrors of the Law, that you have been alarmed and have   
been convictedif your own experience is your warrant for believing in   
Christit is a false reason and you are really relying upon your experience and not upon Christ!   
And mark you, if you rely upon your frames and feelingsno, if you   
rely upon your communion with Christ in any degree whateveryou are   
as certainly a lost sinner as though you relied upon oaths and blasphemies. You shall no more be able to enter Heaven, even by the works of the   
Spiritand this is using strong languagethan by your own works. For   
Christ, and Christ alone, is the foundation and other foundation can no   
man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Take care of resting in   
your own experience. All that is of natures spinning must be unraveled,  
and everything that gets into Christs place, however dear to you and   
however precious in itself, must be broken in pieces. And like the dust of  
the golden calf, must be strewed upon the water and you will be made   
sorrowfully to drink of it, because you made it your trust.   
I believe that the tendency of that preaching which puts the warrant for   
faith anywhere but in the Gospel command, is to vex the true penitent   
and to console the hypocrite. The tendency of it is to make the poor soul  
which really repents feel that he must not believe in Christ because he   
sees so much of his own hardness of heart. The more spiritual a man is,  
the more unspiritual he sees himself to be. And the more penitent a man  
is, the more impenitent he discovers himself to be. Often the most penitent men are those who think themselves the most impenitent. And if I am  
to preach the Gospel to the penitent and not to every sinner, as a sinner,   
then those penitent persons, who, according to my opponents, have the   
most right to believe, are the very persons who will never dare to touch it,  
because they are conscious of their own impenitence and want of all  
qualification for Christ.   
Sinners, let me address you with Words of LifeJesus wants nothing of  
you. Nothing whatever! Nothing done, nothing felt. He wants not your  
works or feelings. Ragged, pennilessjust as you arelost, forsaken,  
desolate, with no good feelings and no good hopes. Still Jesus comes to  
you and in these words of pity he addresses you, Him that comes to Me I   
will in no wise cast out. If you believe in Him you shall never be confounded.   
2. But now, POSITIVELY and as the negative part has been positive   
enough, we will be brief here. The Gospel command is a sufficient warrant   
for a sinner to believe in Jesus Christ. The words of our text imply this  
This is the Commandment. My Brothers and Sisters, do you want any   
warrant for doing a thing better than Gods command to do it? The children of Israel borrowed jewels of silver and jewels of gold from the Egyptians. Many, as they read the Bible, find fault with this transaction. But,   
to my mind, if God bade them do it, that was enough of justification for  
them. Very wellif God bids you believeif this is His Commandment  
that you believe, can you want a better warrant? I say, is there any necessity for any other? Surely the Lords Word is enough.   
Brethren, the command to believe in Christ must be the sinners warrant, if you consider the nature of our commission. How runs it? Go you   
into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. It ought to   
run, according to the other plan, preach the Gospel to every regenerate  
person, to every convicted sinner, to every sensible soul. But it is not so.   
It is to every creature. But unless the warrant is a something in which   
every creature can take a share, there is no such thing as consistently   
preaching it to every creature. Then how is it put?He that believes and   
is baptized, shall be saved. He that believes not shall be damned. Where is there a word about the prerequisites for believing. Surely the  
man could not be damned for not doing what he would not have been   
warranted in doing. Our preaching, on the theory of qualifications, should   
not be, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, but,   
Qualify yourselves for faith, be sensible of your sin, be regenerated, get   
marks and evidences, and then believe. Why, surely, if I am not to sow  
the good seed on the stony places and among the thorns, I had better give   
up being a sower and take to plowing, or some other work. When the  
Apostles went to Macedonia or Achaia, they ought not to have commenced

with preaching Christ. They should have preached up qualifications, emotions and sensations, if these are the preparations for Jesus. But I find that Paul, whenever he stands up, has nothing to preach but,   
Christ and Him crucified. Repentance is preached as a gift from the exalted Savior, but it is never as the cause or preparation for believing on  
Jesus. These two Graces are born together and live with a common life  
beware of making one a foundation for the other. I would like to carry one   
of those who only preach to sensible sinners and set him down in the   
capital of the kingdom of Dahomey. There are no sensible sinners there!  
Look at them, with their mouths stained with human blood, with their  
bodies smeared all over with the gore of their immolated victimshow will   
the preacher find any qualification there?   
I know not what he could say, but I know what my message would be.  
My word would run thusMen and Brothers and Sisters, God, who made   
the heavens and the earth, has sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world   
to suffer for our sins and whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but  
have everlasting life. If Christ crucified did not shake the kingdom of Dahomey, it would be its first failure. When the Moravian missionaries first   
went to Greenland, you remember that they were months and months   
teaching the poor Greenlander about the Godhead, the doctrine of the   
Trinity, and the doctrine of sin and the Lawand no converts were forthcoming.   
But one day, by accident, one of the Greenlanders happening to read   
that passage, Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon  
us, that we should be called the children of God. He asked the meaning,   
and the missionary, hardly thinking him advanced enough to understand   
the Gospel, nevertheless ventured to explain it to him and the man became convertedand hundreds of his countrymen received the Word.  
Naturally enough, they said to the missionaries, Why did you not tell us  
this before? We knew all about there being a God and that did us no good.   
Why did you not come and tell us to believe in Jesus Christ before? O my   
Brothers and Sisters, this is Gods weapon, Gods methodthis is the   
great battering ram which will shake the gates of Hell. And we must see to   
it that it is brought into daily use.  
I have tried, on the positive side, to show that a Free Grace warrant is   
consistent with the textthat it accords with Apostolic custom and is, indeed, absolutely necessary, seeing the condition in which sinners are   
placed. But, my Brothers and Sisters, to preach Christ to sinners, as sinners, must be right. For all the former acts of God are to sinners, as sinners. Whom did God elect? Sinners. He loved us with a great love, even  
when we were dead in trespasses and sins. How did He redeem us? Did   
He redeem us as saints? No. For while we were yet enemies, He reconciled   
us unto God by the death of His Son. Christ never shed His blood for the   
good that is in us, but for the sin that is in us. He laid down His life for our sins, says the Apostle.

If, then, in election and redemption, we find God dealing with sinners, as sinners, it is a marring and nullifying of the whole plan if the Gospel is to be preached to men as anything else but sinners. Again, it is inconsistent with the Character of God to suppose that He comes forth and proclaims, If, O My fallen creatures, if you qualify yourselves for My mercy, I will save you. If you will feel holy emotionsif you will be conscious of sacred desires after Me, then the blood of Jesus Christ shall cleanse you. There would be little which is godlike in that.

But when He comes out with pardons full and free and says, Yes, when you lay in your blood, I said unto you, Livewhen He comes to you, His enemy and rebellious subject, and yet cries, I have blotted out your sins like a cloud and like a thick cloud your iniquitieswhy, this is Divine! You know what David said, I have sinned. What did Nathan say? The Lord has put away your sins, you shall not die. And that is the message of the Gospel to a sinner as a sinner. The Lord has put away your sins. Christ has suffered. He has brought in perfect righteousness. Take Him, Trust Him and you shall live. May that message come home to you this morning, my Beloved.

I have read with some degree of attention a book to which I owe much for this present discoursea book by Abraham Booth, called Glad Tidings to Perishing Sinners. I have never heard anyone cast a suspicion upon Abraham Booths soundness. On the contrary, he has been generally considered as one of the most orthodox of the Divines of the last generation. If you want my views in full, read his book. If you need something more, let me say, among all the bad things which his revilers have laid at his door, I have never heard anyone blame William Huntingdon for not being high enough in doctrine.

Now, William Huntingdon prefaced in his lifetime a book by Saltmarsh, with which he was greatly pleased. And the marrow of its teaching is just this, in his own words, The only ground for any to believe is He is faithful that has promised, not anything in themselves, for this is the Commandment, That you believe on His Son Jesus Christ. Now, if William Huntingdon himself printed such a book as that, I marvel how the followers of either William Huntingdon or Abraham Booth, how men calling themselves Calvinistic Divines and high Calvinists, can advocate what is not Free Grace, but a legal, graceless system of qualifications and preparations.

I might here quote Crisp, who is pat to the point and a high doctrine man, too. But I mention neither Booth nor Huntingdon as authorities upon the subjectto the Law and to the Testimony we must go! But I do mention them to show that men holding strong views on election and predestination yet did see it to be consistent to preach the Gospel to sinners as sinnersnofelt that it was inconsistent to preach the Gospel in any other way.

I shall only add that the blessings which flow from preaching Christ to sinners as sinners are of such a character as prove it to be right. Do you not see that this levels us all? We have the same warrant for believing and no one can exalt himself above his fellow. Then, my Brothers and Sisters, how it inspires men with hope and confidence! It forbids despair. No man can despair if this is true. Or if he does, it is a wicked, unreasonable despair, because if he has been ever so bad, yet God commands him to believe. What room can there be for despondency? Surely if anything could cut off Giant Despairs head, Christ preached to sinners is the sharp twoedged sword to do it!

Again, how it makes a man live close to Christ! If I am to come to Christ as a sinner every day, and I must do so, for the Word says, As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in Him. If every day I am to come to Christ as a sinner, why then, how paltry all my doings look! What utter contempt it casts upon all my fine virtues, my preaching, my prayers, and all that comes of my flesh! And though it leads me to seek after purity and holiness, yet it teaches me to live on Christ and not on themand so it keeps me at the Fountain Head.

My time flies and I must leave the last head, just to add, Sinner, whoever you may be, God now commands you to believe in Jesus Christ. This is His COMMANDMENTHe does not command you to feel anything, or be anything, to prepare yourself for this. Now, are you willing to incur the great guilt of making God a liar? Surely you will shrink from thatthen dare to believe. You cannot say, I have no right. You have a perfect right to do what God tells you to do. You cannot tell me you are not fitthere is no fitness wanted, the command is given and it is yours to obey, not to dispute. You cannot say it does not come to youit is preached to every creature under Heaven.

And now Soul, it is so pleasant a thing to trust the Lord Jesus Christ that I would gladly persuade myself you need no persuading. It is so delightful a thing to accept a perfect salvation, to be saved by precious blood and to be married to so bright a Savior, that I would gladly hope the Holy Spirit has led you to cry, Lord, I believe! Help You my unbelief.

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Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 1 John 4:10.

To find love, you have need send a loverone whose soul is full of love is the most likely to discover it. John, with love in his heart, soars aloft and, using his eagle eyes, looks over all history and all space and, at last, he poises himself over one spot, for he has found that for which he was looking, and says, Herein is love. There is love in a thousand places, like the scattered drops of spray on the leaves of the forest, but as for the ocean, that is in one place, and when we reach it, we say, Herein is water. There is love in many places, like wandering beams of light, but as for the sun, it is in one part of the heavens and as we look at it, we say, Herein is light. So, Herein, said the Apostle, as he looked toward the Lord Jehovah, Himself, Herein is love. He did not point to his own heart and say, Herein is love, for that was but a little pool filled from the great sea of love. He did not look at the Church of God and say of all the myriads who counted not their lives dear unto them, Herein is love, for their love was only the reflected brightness of the great sun of love! No, he looked to God the Father, in the splendor of His condescension in giving His only Son to die for us, and he said Herein is love, as if all love were herelove at its utmost height, love at its climax, love out-doing itself Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

I have no time for an elaborate discourse and I have no desire to preach in such a fashion, but I do want to get at your hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit. There seem to me to be four things in the text, each of which tends to bring out the greatness of Divine Love. First, here is love to the lovelessHerein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us. Secondly, here is love to the sinfulGod loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Thirdly, here is love providing a propitiation, not passing by sin without atonement, but making a propitiation for sin. And, lastly, here is love surrendering the Only-Begotten God loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

I. First, then, dear Friends, that we may see the love of God in its fullness, I invite you to think of His LOVE TO THE LOVELESSHerein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us.

Now, if man had loved God, God need not have loved man. If all of us from our earliest childhood had loved our God, it would have somewhat lessened the wonder that He should love us. I can understand that we should marvel at Gods loving us, even if we had always loved Him, for we are so insignificant that what little love we can give to Him can never deserve that He should fix His heart of love upon us. If an ant were in love with an angel, it would not, therefore, follow that the angel ought to be in love with the ant, yet there is no difference between an ant and an angel compared with the difference between us and God! We are nothing and He is All in All!

Yet I admit that if, from our youth up we had always loved God, it would not have seemed so extraordinary a thing, knowing what we do of God, that He should have loved us, but this is the startling word in our textNot that we loved God. There is a negative put there and the positive assertion is that God did love us, even though there is also the negative that we did not love Him. It is very easy for us to love those who love us. It is hard, sometimes, to love those who do not love us, especially if they are under great obligation to usand I am sure that was our case with regard to God. We were deeply in debt to Him and we ought to have loved Him with all our heart, mind, soul and strengthbut we did nothing of the kind! Yet, notwithstanding all that, He loved us. While we were His enemies, He loved us and sent His Son to save us.

Furthermore, let me remark that, when man does love God, it is no very great wonder. If you and I love Godand I hope that we doif we love Him with all the fervor of which our hearts are capable, is there anything, after all, very extraordinary in such affection? Why, Brothers and Sisters, not to love the Lord our God is detestable! To love Him is, in one sense, commendable, but it can never be considered meritorious! Who can help loving a kind father who has cared for him all his days? Who can help loving one who has saved him from death? Who can help loving one who has laid down his life for him? Surely, if we are in a right state of heart, we cannot help loving God because He first loved us. When we do love Him, it is not at all wonderfulit would be little enough return for the great love wherewith He has loved us if we gave to Him all the love that we can ever bestow upon anyone

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

And, if Gods love gets all that it demands, it is even then but a poor return that we have made for love so magnificent as His!

But, Beloved, I have been only supposing something which is not true, for I have been supposing that we loved God. The fact is otherwise, according to the text, for the Apostle says, Not that we loved God. Let us think a little of that terrible fact! I do not want to preach to you, but I do wish you to preach to yourselves, or rather, that the Holy Spirit may preach to you from this passageNot that we loved God. For many a year we were indifferent to God. He came across our path in many ways, but we did not want to see Him, or to hear about Him. Some of us were favored by godly training, yet we did our best to miss the blessing of it. We tried, as men say, to sow our wild oats. We did not care to do what God would have us dowe were totally indifferent to His claims! Yet now, with tears in our eyes, we can truthfully say that, He loved us. We know that the Lord loved us even when we were indifferent to Him!

Worse than that, there were some who were even insulting to God. I mean that they spoke ill words about Him and about His Grace, His day, His people, His cause, His Word. Some spoke exceedingly proud and exalted themselves against the Lordyet He loved them. Oh, how it wrings the heart of a penitent sinner to think that God loved him when he was a blasphemer, loved him when he imprecated a curse upon himself, loved him when God, Himself, could not see anything in him that was lovable! Loved him when there was not a spot of merit as big as a pins head upon which love could have rested if it had needed to rest on merit at all! Oh, wonder of wonders! Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that we were indifferent to Him and some even insulting to Him!

And oh, what rebellion against God there was in some of our hearts! How we kicked and struggled against the idea of yielding to Him! Are there not numbers of you who never think of God at all? You go to your daily work, or to your business and God is not at all in your thoughts! If there were no God, it would make no difference to some of you, except that you would feel a little more comfortable and you would then be glad that there would be no Judgment Day. But, O Sirs, this is a sad, a miserable state to be in! If there were no hereafter and I had to die like a dog, I would choose to love my God, for I find a peace, a strength, a joy in it that makes life worth living! There is nothing here on earth that is worth a mans pursuit except his God! If he once knew the love of God, life would wear sunbeams about itbut apart from that it is a drudgery! To the unbeliever, existence in this world is a horrible slavery.

But, Brothers and Sisters, it is very wonderful that God should love us when we try our hardest to be rid of Him, when we are at enmity against Him, when we are opposed, even, to His love, and will not listen to the Gospel of His Grace! Yet so He didHe loved us even in this condition! Perhaps some of you do not feel that there is anything very remarkable in this love of the Lord to the loveless. I should like you to try, if you could, love somebody who has nothing about him that is at all lovable. I hope, dear Christian people, that you do this, but if you learn to love the wicked, the ungodly, the injurious, the deceiversif you even love those who vilify you, those who slander you every day, those who despise you and deride you and those who are ungrateful to youif you do this, then you will get into some sort of sympathy with God and you will begin to understand a little of what His great love must be!

But there are some men who will never know what such an experience as that is until Gods Grace renews them, for if anybody says half a word against them, their fist is soon in his eye! If anyone does them the slightest injury, they will remember it and resent it as long as they live! Yes, and I am afraid that there are some who call themselves Christians who are of this spirit, and will not forgive. I heard of a man who was driving an omnibus and who was beating one of the horses, but he never hit the other. Someone on the box said to him, Why dont you whip the other horse? Oh, he answered, I never touch him, for if I did, when I put him up at night, he would kick me like a Christian. When I heard that, I supposed that there must be some so-called Christians who know how to kick when they get a cut of the whipand I am afraid that there are. But, if you can forgive to 70 times seven and still continue to forgive, even then you have only done what you ought to do, for this is what the Lord Jesus commanded His disciples to doand this is what God did, though He was under no obligation to do anything of the kind! Instead of bearing any resentment, He was full of Almighty Love. And there are some here, tonight, who, as they remember the years in which they lived without loving God, must feel that, herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us.

II. But now, secondly, it greatly enhances the love of God that it is LOVE TO THE SINFUL.   
Remember that all sins are offenses against God. Yet it is clear from our text that the Lord loves those who have offended Him. There are multitudes who have lived a life full of opposition to God, yet He has loved them all the while and saved them after all!   
Remember, too, that God has a very keen appreciation of what sin is. It shocks Him, it disgusts HimHe cannot bear it. He calls it, this abominable thing which I hate. You and I are often callous to sin, but God abhors it. His holy soul is stirred to indignation against it. Yet, notwithstanding that   
*God loved the world of sinners lost   
And ruined by the Fall*   
and sent His Son into the world to deliver men from sin, the sin which He loathed and hated, for He determined to save them from the sin, itself, and from all its terrible results! Well might the hymn-writer I just quoted go on to sing   
*Oh, twas love, twas wondrous love,   
The love of God to me!   
It brought my Savior from above,   
To die on Calvary.*   
Do not forget, also, that many sins are committed specially against Gods Love. That is to say, there are some who even dare to sin the more because God is merciful! There are, no doubt, many who have become hardened in their lives of sinthough it is a shocking thing that it should be soby the very fact that they believe God is ready to forgive them. If such is the condition of your hearts, my Hearers, let me assure you that it has also been the case with many others and yet, notwithstanding such an enormity of guilt, they have been saved from their sins. Verily, herein is love.

In the case of some persons, these sins have been persisted in and aggravated. There are many whom God has loved with an everlasting love and whom Christ has redeemed with His precious blood, who have lived twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy years up to their necks in sin and that against light and knowledge! Some have gone on sinning with a high hand more and more, yet Almighty Love has come in and saved even them! Never let it be thought that any sinner is beyond the reach of Divine Mercy so long as he is in the land of the living. I stand here to preach illimitable love, unbounded Grace to the vilest of the vile, to those who have nothing in them that can deserve consideration from God men who ought to be swept into the bottomless pit at once if Justice meted out to them their just deserts! Even such sinners as these, in multitudes of instances, have been washed and made clean through the blood of Jesus Christ! Herein is love.   
I do not see how God ever could have shown His love to the same extent as it is now displayed if there had never been any sin in the world. I would not dare to say, as Augustine boldly did concerning Adams sin, Beata culpa!Happy fault!because it gave an opportunity for Divine Love to prove itself to an extraordinary degree! But I will say thisif God had made ten thousand worlds and lit them up with all His wisdom and power, I do not see how He could have manifested His matchless love, even then, as He displays it now in the fact that He has loved sinful men and womenand loved them so as to make them His sons and daughters and bring them to dwell with Him at His right hand through Jesus Christ His Son!   
*He gave His Son, His only Son,   
To ransom rebel worms!   
Tis here He makes His goodness known   
In its most Divine forms.*   
I have spoken to you, therefore, of two things that enhance Gods lovelove to the loveless, and love to the sinful. I wish that some poor soul could creep in through the door of Gods Mercy to which I have pointed and get a part and lot in these precious matters!   
III. But now, thirdly, one of the things that make Gods love seem very wonderful is that it is LOVE PROVIDING A PROPITIATION.   
I have heard it asked, Why did not God just wipe out human sin, and say to the guilty, There, there, you have done wrong, but I have forgiven you? Now, if He had done that, what inference would you have drawn from such action on His part? Certainly you would not have been able to say, Herein is love, in the sense in which you can now say it.   
If the Lord had thus passed by sin, sin would have seemed little, and Divine Love little. Many would have said, Oh, well, sin was nothing very great after all. It was an offense against GodHe blotted it outand there is an end of it! Is not everybody here quite certain that we would have spoken like that? We would have concluded that sin was a very trivial matter, nothing to worry about, or God would not have passed it by so readily. But, lookit was such an awful evil that He could not pass it by. In His Wisdom, whose judgment is Infallible, sin was not pardonable except through a propitiatory Sacrifice! It was not possible that offenses against The Divine Majesty should be wiped out without expiation! God was the best judge of that question and now, when He says, There must be a propitiation, but I will provide it; there must be an Atonement, but I will arrange itHerein is lovelove seen at a greater height than it could have been seen in any other way!   
Besides, dear Friends, by any other method of removing sin, love would not have been seen so majestic over all other attributes. Suppose that the Lord had simply said, Well, though these people have offended, I forgive them and there is an end of the quarrel? Then there could not have been exhibited that wondrous sight which we now see! In the death of Christ, the Great Propitiation, we see Divine Wisdom planning the way, exercising itself to the fullest to devise a method by which God might be just and yet, the Justifier of him which believes in Jesus. Then we see Divine Justice coming in fully satisfied by the death of Christ and bowing a glad assent to the pardon of the sinnerwho is as justly forgiven as he would, on the other hand, have been righteously punished! In the vicarious Atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, we see all the attributes of God sitting at the feet of Loveall looking up and saying to LoveWe will do your bidding, we will, all of us, co-act and cowork till the whole Godhead shall be seen exerting its Omniscience and putting forth its Omnipotence, in order that there might be a propitiation for sin. Herein is love.   
Again, I do not see, dear Friends, if God had pardoned us without expiation, how we ever could have felt the security of love that we now feel. I feel at this momentI do not know how every Believer, here, feels but I feel that I am absolutely safe! I am a sinner, but there is no reason on earth, or under the earth, or in Heaven, itself, why I should be sent to Hell. My sin has been forgiven me, but, what is much more than that, my Lord Jesus Christ has made such a complete Atonement for all my guilt that it does not even exist as a charge against me! The debt is paid and the receipt is nailed to His crossand this gives me such a perfect peace, such an absolute restI do not think I could have had if I had merely read in the Scriptures that God had passed by the sin without a propitiation! He has not passed by the sinHe has exacted the full penalty for it! And the penalty having been paid, the Atonement having been offered, who shall lay anything to the charge of Gods elect? Our dead sins are buried! Christ, Himself, has put them away, and they can never rise against us in judgment any more. Looking up to our Lord, we can say,

with Toplady *Complete Atonement You have made,   
And to the utmost farthing paid   
Whatever Your people owed!   
Nor can His wrath on me take place,   
If sheltered in Your righteousness,   
And sprinkled with Your blood.*

And once more, the stoop of love could never have seemed so great without expiation, for, see, if God had pardoned sin without Atonement, He would have sat in the serene majesty of Heaven and we would have thought that sin was a trifling thing, altogether beneath His notice! But now, He that made all things and by whom all things consist, takes off the robes of His splendor and comes down to earth! What can He be going to do? Blessed spirits, who have waited around His Throne for ages, what is He doing? He is going to the earth to unite the nature of fallen humanity with His own perfect Deity! He that is God is also to be Man! What a wonder! What a marvel! But there is something more extraordinary to followbeing found in fashion as a Man, the time comes when mans sin is laid upon Him! What? did He bear sin? ListenWho His own selfthat is, Christ, whom angels worship, the Incarnate Wisdom, without whom was not anything made that was madewho His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.

Why, do you know, sometimes, when I am thinking over this wondrous stoop of love, I wish that I could jump into this pulpit, directly, and tell you what I feel about it? Sometimes, at the dead of night, I sit up in bed, lost in wonder at the amazing Love of God in the gift of His dear Son! That I should commit a sin and that God, Himself, should bear its punishment! That my guilt should make a propitiation, necessaryand that the Divine Son of God should suffer in my place! That the necessary expiation should be madethis is surely the greatest wonder of earth or Heaven! It is the greatest marvel that ever shall be, that He, who is God over all, blessed forever, yet stoops so low as this! I can understand His stooping to poverty and being a carpenter. I can understand His stooping to hunger and to thirst. I can understand His stooping even to death but that He should bear our sinsthis is the greatest stoop of all! Herein is love. O blessed Lord Jesus, how must You have loved us when You did not disdain to bear even the enormous burden of our sin! Oh, that these lips had language that I could tell this old, old story as my heart often tells it to herself! But I must leave each one of you to think it over, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, till you, also, feel, Herein is love,

IV. The last thing on which I am to speak at this time is LOVE SURRENDERING THE ONLY-BEGOTTEN.   
I have shown you wherein Gods Love excels all other lovesit is love to the loveless, love to the sinful, love providing a propitiation. Now here is the climax of the love of God in giving up His only-begotten SonHe loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.   
You do not need for me to say much about this part of our subject. Will you kindly recall the story of Abraham and his son Isaac going to the mount in the land of Moriah? Put the Lord God and His well-beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, in the place of the Patriarch and his son, and you can see the picture of the Atonement drawn to the life before your eyes. You remember how the Lord said to Abraham, Take now your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and get you into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell you of.   
Jesus was Gods Son, His only-begotten Son, whom He loved more than any of you can ever love your sons or daughters, for the love of God towards Him is ineffable, immeasurable! It is not possible for me to tell you how much God loved His Son. But that Son who had always given Him delight, in whom He was well-pleasedthat Son must endure shame, agony and death if sinners were ever to be saved! How could the Father give up His Son for such a purpose? I have sometimes felt as if I could almost rush in, and say, No! It must not be! The price is too great to be paid for the rescue of such worthless worms as we are! Yet, to ransom any one of us, the Son of God must be sacrificed and sacrificed, as it were, by His Father, for thus is it written, It pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. Thus, there is one point of resemblance between the offering of Isaac and the propitiatory Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christit was the Father who had to offer up His son whom He loved so dearly. But there are many more similarities between these two offerings.

In the 22nd chapter of the Book of Genesis, we read that, Abraham rose up early in the morning. God also rose early to make this great propitiation for our sins. In the Everlasting Covenant, before the earth was, He ordained the Sacrifice which should tear His heart. God Himself had done as Abraham did when he cut the wood for the burnt offering, that is, the Lord prepared everything for the coming, the life and the death of His Son. All that went before in the arrangements of Providence was like the chopping of the wood and the laying of it in ordereven from eternity the great Father contemplated the Sacrifice on Calvary and went on with all that was necessary for its completion.   
Then there was the lifting of the sacrificial knifeAbraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. That lifting of the knife in the case of Jesus was, first, when in Gethsemanes garden, the Father permitted His Son to sweat, as it were, great drops of blood. And next, when on the Cross He allowed Him to say, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? This was the knife for the sacrificing of the Son. Then came the crushing of our Redeemers soul beneath the mass of human sin. The great upper and nether millstones of Almighty Wrath pressed and bruised the heart of the Son of God! Omnipotence put forth all its power to deal out the vengeance due to sin! It cried to Justice to be stern, sterner than everAwake, O sword. Not, Let Me use the sword, but, Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is my Fellow, says the Lord of Hosts. And into the very dust of death the well-beloved Son of God was crushed!   
Remember, also, that touching little sentence about Abraham and IsaacThey went both of them together. This was true of Jesus and His FatherJesus a willing Sacrificeand God as willingly surrendering His dear Son for our sakes. Never forget the Fathers love in giving up His Son! It used to be laid down in theology that God has no feeling, neither parts nor passions. Others may worship a dead, unfeeling God, if they will, but I do not! The God whom I worship can feel far more than any of His creatures can! And what He felt when He gave up His Son to die, it is not for human lips to tell. This is among the things which it were unlawful and impossible for a man to utter. Just what you would have felt if you had given your only son. Just what you would have felt if you had been Abraham and you had offered up your beloved Isaac. Just that multiplied by infinitydid the Eternal Father feel when He gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sins! Herein is love. Rightly did we sing just now

*O love of God, how strong and true! Eternal, and yet always new, Uncomprehended and unbought,*

*Beyond all knowledge and all thought.   
We read You best in Him who came   
To bear for us the Cross of shame;   
Sent by the Father from on high,   
Our life to live, our death to die.*

When you get home, sit down, say nothing to anybody, but just try, if you can, to realize that God actually did give up His only-begotten Son that you might live through Him, if you are a Believer in that dear Son of God and you live through Him! If He bore your griefs and carried your sorrows. If He was wounded for your transgressions and bruised for your iniquities. If He put away all your sins, then fall down at His dear feet and weep yourself away. No, rise and sing yourself away! And when you have done that, come back, again, and go forth to work for Him with all your mightand try to love your fellow men at something like the rate at which God loved you! You will never reach that climax of love, but aim at getting as near to it as you canand God bless you in the effort!

It seems to me so sad that there should be anybody in the world who does not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. And very sad that there should be any poor sinner, here, who does not lay hold on eternal life as it is set forth in the Gospel. You self-righteous people, you who never did any wrong, I do not expect you to take any notice of this discourseyou are so wretchedly wrapped up in yourselves that you care nothing for my blessed Master! You are like the self-made man, of whom I have heard, who used to adore his own makerhis maker being himself.

But you who are poor and needy, burdened with sin and full of guilt, this is the God for you! This is the Christ for you! Come and have Him, come and trust Him and then sing with all of us who have believed in HimHerein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins!

May His blessing rest on you all, for Jesus Christs sake! Amen. EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:   
**1 JOHN 4; PHILIPPIANS 4:1-9.**

1 John 4:1. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. If John had need to say that in the early morning of Christianity, I am sure we ought to say it with greater emphasis today! It is certainly true in these days that, many false prophets are gone out into the world. Therefore we, also, must, try the spirits whether they are of God.

2. Hereby know you the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. If the doctrine of the Incarnation of God in Christ is denied, as it was by the first heretics, we may conclude that the Spirit of God is not in such teaching. Any doctrine which dishonors Christwhether in His Person, or His offices, or His Atonement, or in any other wayyou may at once conclude is not of God, for that which comes from the Spirit of God glorifies Christ. Did not our Lord, Himself, say, concerning the Holy Spirit, He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you?

3. And every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. The devil is up early at his evil work! We may sleep, but he never does. This is that spirit of antichrist, whereof, you have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

4. You are of God, little children, and have overcome them. How? By argument? No, but   
4. Because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world. If Gods own Spirit is in you, you need not fear any of these enemies. Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world. If it were a conflict between you and others who had the Spirit of God within them, the conflict would be grievous and the issue of it would be doubtful. But now that the struggle is between the Spirit of God who is in you and the spirit of error that is in the world, you need have no question about the ultimate result of the battle!   
5, 6. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God: he that knows God hears us; he that is not of God hears not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. If Apostolic teaching is denied, those who deny it are not of God, for the Spirit of God was in the Apostles, as He is also in all the Lords true children. By this test we may try many of the spirits of the present dayHe that knows God hears us; He that is not of God hears not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. The Apostle now gives us another Infallible test by which we may try the spirits.   
7, 8. Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loves is born of God, and knows God. He that loves not knows not God; for God is Love. Where there is the spirit of enmity, of envy, of pride, of contention, there is not the Spirit of God! That which makes towards love, we may depend upon itit came forth from love! But that which makes towards division, contention, emulation and strife, is not of God, for God is Love.   
9-12. In this was manifested the Love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that some might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought, also, to love one another. No man has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us. We cannot see God, but we can love God, and love, therefore, takes the place of eyes to us. When we love God, it is because He dwells in us! That is better than seeing Himto have Him resident within our spirit, although He is not discernible by these mortal eyes!   
13-16. Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in Him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God has to us. God is Love; and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him. These words are very simple, but the lesson they convey is a very deep one. Most of them are monosyllables, but, oh, what marvels of meaning the Holy Spirit enabled the Apostle John to put into them!   
17, 18. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear has torment. That is a servile fear, of course, but there is a fear which has no torment in itthat holy fear which even angels feel when they veil their faces in the Presence of the Most high. There is no torment in that reverent awe and, the more we have of love towards God, the more of that filial fear shall we have! But that slavish dread, that awful terror which begets within itself dislike, cannot live where true love is planted within the soul **Perfect love casts out fear.**   
18-20. He that fears is not made perfect in love. We love Him, because He first loved us. If a man says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God, whom he has not seen? God looked upon us with an eye that saw all our sin and misery, yet He loved us, and He wants us to have a love which, while it sees all the imperfection and all the faults in our fellow men, yet loves them notwithstanding all. If we do not love those whom we see, the Apostle says that we do but lie when we talk of loving God whom we have not seen.

21. And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loves God love his brother, also. Now let us read what another Apostle has to say, under the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, upon this subject of Christian love. Turn to Pauls Epistle to the Philippians, the fourth chapter. Philippians 4:1. Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. It is a great joy to a minister, as it was to the Apostle Paul, to have converts. But that joy is greatly diminished when they do not stand fastthen, indeed, every supposed joy becomes a sorrow and, instead of the roses which yield a sweet perfume to the Lords servantthorns begin to prick and wound his heart.   
2. I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. Only two women and we do not know who they were, yet Paul gives each of them a, beseechI beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. If there are only two of the most obscure Sisters in the Church who are quarrelling, their differences ought to be brought to an end at once. There should be no disagreements among Christians! Love should reign, peace should predominate. If there is anything contrary to such a state as that, God grant that it may soon be brought to an end!   
3. And I entreat you, also, true yoke fellow, help, those women which labored with me in the Gospel, with Clement, also, and with other of my fellow laborers, whose names are in the Book of Life. Brother, do all the good you can to help everybody else to do good! Help those whose names are in the Book of Life, even if they are not known anywhere else. Also help the Clement whose name is knownbe sure to help him. Indeed, help everybody! There is an office in the Church of Christ which we do not sufficiently recognize, but which ought to be abundantly filled. Paul mentions it in writing to the Corinthians. He says, And God has set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. It is the office of certain Christians to be helps. May we always have many such helps among us! Did you ever notice that almost every time that Bartholomew is mentioned in Scripture, we read, and Bartholomew? He is never spoken of alone, but it is written, Philip, and Bartholomew, or, Bartholomew and Matthew. It is good to have some Bartholomews who are always helping somebody else, so that when there is any good work to be done, Bartholomew is always ready to share in it, for he shall also have a part in the reward at the last.   
4. Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. The very word, rejoice, seems to imply a reduplication. It is joy, and re-joy, joy over again! But here, you see, it is a fourfold rejoicing; joy, and re-joy; and again I say, joy, and re-joy! And this is to be the Christians continual experience, for the Apostle says, Rejoice in the Lord always.  
5, 6. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. Have no care, but much prayer. Prayer is the cure for care! If you are in trouble, Let your requests be made known, not to your neighbors, but, unto God.   
7, 8. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think on these things. Be on the side of everything that is good and right, everything that helps true human progress, everything that increases virtue and purity. As a Christian, take an interest in everything that helps to make men true, honest, just, pure, and lovely.   
9. Those things, which you have both learned, and received, and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you. May the Lord fulfill that gracious Word to all of us, The God of peace shall be with you! Amen.

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HEREIN IS LOVE   
NO. 2448

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, JANUARY 19, 1896.   
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 1 John 4:10.

As there not scenes and circumstances which, now and then, transpire before us that prompt an exclamation like that of the Apostle, Herein is love? When we have seen the devotedness of a mother to her children. When we have marked the affection of friend for friend and caught a glimpse in different human relationships of the kindness that exists in human hearts, we have said, Herein is love! Yesterday these words seemed to rise up and float upon my tongue, although I did not use them, for they seemed to be consecrated to something higher than creature affection. I had the painful duty of attending the Abney Park Cemetery, to bury a beloved Sister in Christ, one of the most useful women we had among usand as I stood there to commit her body to the grave, I was pleasedI cannot tell you how I was beyond measure pleased, on that dark foggy day, at that distance from town, to find nearly a hundred, mostly poor people, gathered there to show their respect to their friend who had helped, in many cases, to feed them and clothe them and, in every instance, had tried to point them to Christ.

There were thousands of tears shed of the sincerest and most heavenly kind. While conducting the service, I could not help feeling not only a sympathy with her bereaved husband, but with those who had been the objects of our Sisters caremen and women who, perhaps, had given up a days work and walked long dreary miles in the unpropitious weather of yesterday, that they might come and mingle their tears over the dust of one who, as a Christian woman, had served them well. I could not help thinking, and it suggested the text to me, Herein is love! Seeing what love had done and seeing how love comes back in return, I said within myself, when love has learned its way into one bosom, it scatters its seed and fructifies in the hearts of hundreds more! Love begets lovelet it once begin and none can tell its end!

But the words were too sacred for me to use, even at that solemn service, though they came up so suddenly to the surface of my mind. The Apostle had consecrated them to another love, still higher, more profound, more perfect and more celestial. I shall ask you, tonight, to look at and consider the wonder which the Apostle discovered and made him, with uplifted hands, exclaim, Herein is love!

The wonder, he tells us, which astonished him was not that we loved God, for suppose that all men had loved Godwhat wonder would there have been in it? God created us. We are wonderful specimens of His power and wisdom. The various devices for securing our comfort and maintaining us in lifethe devices within the body and outside the body, the way in which the whole world is made to be the servant of man, so that, as George Herbert says

*Man is one world, and has another to attend him,* these tokens of benevolence ought to have made all men love God! If every creature who sprang from the loins of Adam had lived a perfect life of obedience and had continually reverenced the God who made him and supplied his needs, there would not have been anything so very remarkable in the fact, for God deserves the love of all His creatures. Making His sun to shine upon us and giving us fruitful seasonskeeping us in life and preserving us from going down into the Pit we ought to love Him. And if we did, it would not be anything to excite astonishment.

And, beloved Brothers and Sisters, when the Grace of God comes into the human heart, casts Satan out of it and renders us capable of loving God, there is nothing very surprising in our loving Him. I shall not ask you to think of the ordinary love which there is in common Christians. Indeed, the wonder about it is that it should be so ordinary, so little, so faint! It is a great wonderto be spoken of with tearsthat God should do so much for us and that we should love Him so little in return. Watts did well to pen those lines

*Dear Lord! And shall we ever lie   
At this poor dying rate?   
Our love so faint, so cold to You,   
And Yours to us so great?   
Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove   
With all Your quickening powers,   
Come, shed abroad a Saviors love,   
And that shall kindle ours.*

But now, think of the truly earnest missionary. Think of such men as Carey, or Moffat, or John Williamsmen who give up all the comforts of life, all the hopes of wealthand go forth among a barbarous people to suffer insult, perhaps to meet with death for Christs sake! They brave the terrors of fever and pestilence! They pass through jungles! They dare tempestuous seasno mountains are too high, no weathers are too stern to deter them! They force their way into the center of Africa, or high up among the Esquimau if they may but tell of the love of Jesus to dying men! It may seem very amazing to us, but if you come to think of it, compared with what Christ has done for them, they may, and they usually do, sit down and confess that they have done nothing whereof to glory! They have done only what it was their duty to have done and they all confess that they fall short of the service which Christ deserves. Though we might say, in a modified sense, Herein is love, yet, after all, it is but faintly spoken, for it is but comparatively true.

As we have read Foxes Book of Martyrs, or some other history of the saints, and marveled at the stories of their confessing Christ before the Inquisitors, singing joyful hymns when their bones were put out of joint upon the rack, or standing boldly up upon the blazing fire while their flesh was being consumed, still testifying to the preciousness of Christ, have we not said, Herein is love? Well might we say so as we contrasted our love with theirs, but, after all, if you will but think a minute, it is a little thing for a man to be willing to burn to death for One who saved him from everlasting burning! Tis sharp work, but it is soon over, and the reward makes up for it all while Divine Grace sustains the sufferer under the fiery trial! There is nothing, even in the love of martyrs, worthy of praise when compared with the exceeding love of Christ! These are starslet them hide their heads in the Presence of the Sun! These are all sweet flowers, yet compare them not with the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley, whose fragrance fills both earth and Heaven! Those whose spiritual senses are qualified to judge, forget all else while they stand entranced before this one gathering up of everything that is lovely and cry, Herein is love!

Oh, this love of Christit is beyond all degree, standard, or compass! In comparison with it, other love, high and noble as that other love may be, dwindles into insignificance! Then let me ask you now, somewhat more in detail, to think of the love of God in Christ Jesus towards us as the text sets it forth.

I. The love of God is LOVE TO THOSE WHO DO NOT LOVE HIM. Not that we loved God, but that He loved us. When God loves those who love Him, it seems to be according to the law of nature, but when He loves those who do not love Him, this must be above all lawsit is according, certainly, to the extraordinary rule of Divine Grace, and Grace alone! There was not a man on earth who loved God. There was none that did goodno, not one. And yet, the Lord fixed the eye of His electing love upon sinners in whom there was no thought of loving Him! There is no more love to God in an unrenewed heart than there is of life within a piece of granite. No more of love to God is there within the soul that is unsaved than there is of fire within the depths of the oceans waves! And here, indeed, is the wonder, that when we had no love to God, He should have loved us!

This is a mild way of expressing it, for instead of loving God, my Brothers and Sisters, you and I withheld from Him the poorest tribute of homage. We were careless and indifferent. Days and weeks passed over our heads in which we hardly thought of God. If there had not been any God, it would not have made much difference to us as to our thoughts, habits and conversation. God was not in all our thoughts and, perhaps, if somebody could have informed us that God was dead, we would have thought it a fine piece of news, for then we could live as we liked and need not be under any fear of being judged by Him! Instead of loving Godthough now we rejoice that He loves uswe rebelled against Him. Which of His Laws have we not broken? We cannot put our finger upon one command without being compelled to acknowledge that we have violated its claims, or come short of its demands.

I do not want to dilate upon a general doctrine, tonight. I rather want to press home to the conscience of every child of God here that God loves him. You know very well that God did not love you because you loved Him, for there was notyou will confess it painfullyanything like love to God in you, but much, very much, that sprang from natural enmity and aversion to Him. Why, then, did He love you? Men do not generally love those who hate them, those who spite them, those who give them ill namesand yet God loved us! Why, there are some of the Lords people that God loved who, before conversion, used to curse Him to His face! The Sabbath was the day they took for sensual pleasure. They were drunks; they were unclean; they were everything that is vileand yet He loved them! Oh, the wonder of this! When they were reeking in the kennels of sinwhen there was no sin too black and too vile for them to commitGod loved them! Oh, never dream that He began to love you when you began to love Him! Oh, no! But it was because He loved you hard and fast, when you were reveling in your sin, that His love put its arms around you, lifted you out of your sin and made you what you are!

Oh, but this is good tidings to some of you! Perhaps you are still, as all Gods people once were, living in sin. You hardly know why you have strayed in here, but perhaps, while you sit and listen, you may hear that God has loved you. Oh, that it may come to be true, that you may prove to be one of His chosen people whom He loves even though in sin and whom He will love till you come out of sin and turn to Christ and get pardon for it! Pray, dear Christian people, pray that it may be so! God hears prayer. Put up the prayer silently nowLord, attract some of Your chosen people to Christ tonight! Let some who never thought of Him, but were bent on sinning rather than of being brought to God, see Jesus and find salvation though Him. Herein is love! God loved the unlovely, the hateful, the vile, the depravedand loved them though they did not love Him!

II. Another part of the wonder lies in this, THAT THIS LOVE SHOULD COME FROM SUCH AN ONE AS GOD IS. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us. What does God want in loving us? You never saw a fly on the dome of St. Paulsit would have been too small an object for you to see when walking round the Cathedral! Now, a fly on the dome of St. Pauls is a monstrous being, a marvelous individual compared with you crawling about this world. Why, it bears a much larger proportion to St. Pauls than you do to this globe! What an insignificant little creature you are! Supposing you could love that flyit would seem a strange thing. Or that an angel could love that flyit were stranger still! But that God should love us is much more a wonder! Lift up your eyes to the heavens and count the stars. Listen to the astronomer, as he tells you that those little specks of light are mighty worlds, some of them infinitely superior to this world of ours. And that there are millions upon millions of such worlds glittering in the sky and that perhaps all these millions that we can see are only like one little corner, one little sand hill of the worlds that God has madewhile throughout boundless space there may be long leagues of worldsif I may use the expression, innumerable as the sands that belt the shore around the great and mighty deep!

Now, one man in a worldhow little! But one man in myriads of worlds, one man in the universehow insignificant! And herein is love, that God should love so insignificant a creature! For what is God compared with the worlds, their number and their probable extent of space? God is infinitely greater than all the ideas we suggest by such comparisons! God Himself is greater than all space! No conception of greatness that ever crossed a mind of the most enlarged faculties can enable us to apprehend the grandeur of God as He really is! Yet this great and glorious Being who fills all things and sustains all things by the word of His power, condescends to rivet upon usnot His pity, mark you, not His thoughts, but the very love of His soul which is the essence of Himself, for He is love. Herein is love! An insignificant creaturevile, filthy and pollutedloved by the august Creator and loved with all the infinite affection of Jehovahs heart! Stand still and wonder! You cannot fathom this depth! You cannot scale this height, for imaginations utmost stretch dies away at the effort!

III. And is it not a point of wonder THAT THIS LOVE SHOULD BE UNSOUGHT? Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent His Son. We never went to HimHe came to us. Suppose that, after we had all sinned, we had fallen on our knees and cried importunately, Oh, Father, forgive us!? Suppose that day after day we had been, with many piteous tears and cries, supplicating and entreating forgiveness of God? It would be great love, then, that He should devise a way of pardoning us. But noit was the very reverse! God sent an ambassador of peace to uswe sent no embassage to Him. Man turned his back on God and went farther and farther from Him and never thought of turning his face toward his best Friend! It is not man that turns beggar to God for salvation! It is, if I may dare to say it, as though the Eternal God, Himself, did beg of His creatures to be saved! Jesus Christ has not come into the world to be sought for, but to seek that which is lost. It all begins with Him! Unsought, unbidden by the object of His compassion, Jesus came into the world.

Now, I wonder if it may come true, tonight, that some here shall be found of God, after whom they have never sought? Such things have happened. When John Williams was convertedI think you know the storythere had been an agreement made to go out with a little party of youths to commit sin. It was very foul sin, tooand they sent John Williams into Whitefields Tabernacle to look at the clock. The clock happened to be over the door, so that young Williams was obliged to go a little way up the aisle to see it. There was a crowd and something that was being said by the preacher caught his ear and he stood and listened. His companions outside began to be vexed with him for keeping them so long, but he kept them still longerand the deed of darkness that was to have been done that night was never donefor God had found John Williams who had never sought after Him!

I do not say this to encourage any of you to put off seeking the Lord, for the command is, Seek you the Lord while He may be found; call you upon Him while He is near. But still, here is the mercy! It is written, I am found of them that sought Me not; I said, Behold Me, behold Me, unto a nation that was not called by My name. The Grace of God sometimes comes in like a sheriffs officer, takes a man by the collar and says to him, You must turn tonight. Jesus Christ sometimes comes to men as He did to Zacchaeus, who was up in the sycamore tree. He says, Come down, for today I must abide at your house. It is not, If you will, but, I must! I must! It must be so! So, O Lord, make a must of it tonight! Oh, make a must of it to many here, that You must abide in their house! Then they must give up their sins and they must turn to You!

But herein is love, the wonderful love of God in condescending thus, not only to wait for us, but to wait upon us and come to us with His effectual Grace and save us. Though I speak but feebly on these points, I hope that your hearts will not beat feebly. I trust the children of God will be praising and magnifying the Lord as they say to themselves, That is just how He dealt with me! That is precisely how He showed His favor to me! Herein is love.

IV. How, too, may THE THOUGHTFULNESS OF DIVINE LOVE raise our admiration. Not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Now observe the consideration and counsel this implies. We had sinned against Gods Law, but His Law was not an arbitrary despotismit was the embodiment of a constitution equitably and benevolently adapted for the government of the universe. It was framed in such wisdom that obedience involved

happiness and violation entailed misery! And punishment for breaking Gods Laws was not in any respect irrelative or unconnected with the harmony of reciprocal interests. Not to punish the guilty was to exact the penalty of suffering from the innocent! Think what an injury and injustice would be inflicted upon all the honest men in London if the thieves were never punished for their roguery. It would be making the innocent suffer if you allowed the guilty to escape. God, therefore, not out of arbitrary choice, but from very necessity of rightness, must punish us for having done wrong. How was this to be avoided? His mighty love suggested the plan! Had it not done so, a parliament of angels could not have devised a scheme! The assembled senate of all the intellects that God had ever made could not have sketched a plan by which the eternal Laws of right and wrong should stand unshaken, Gods honor should be untarnished and yet He should be able to forgive us. But Gods love thought out a plan, a wondrous plan, by which Jesus came to be a Substitute to stand in our place, that we might go free! But I will not pause over the design, because there is the open manifestation of that kindness and love for us now to look at.

V. Herein is loveSELF-DENYING LOVE, AMAZING LOVE, UNEXAMPLED LOVElanguage fails me. I know no words by which to set forth the excellence of this love. Tis Divine love, love beyond degreeGod sent His Son to be propitiation for our sins. It was necessary that this only-begotten Son of the Father should suffer in the flesh, that He should be delivered up into the hands of sinners, cruelly treated, spit upon, nailed to a tree and put to death! Who among us would give up his son? Dear, unspeakably dear to us are the children of our loins. Well, we might give them up for our country in the day of battle. We might say, For our hearths and for our homes let the young men go, but it would be difficultas many a widowed mother has known when she has read the list of the killed in battle and seen that her brave boy has fallen. The blood-stained drapery of war has had but little glory in her eyes.

But who among us would think of giving up his son to die for his enemy, for one who never did him a service, but treated him ungratefully, repulsed a thousand overtures of tenderness and went on perversely hardening his neck? No man could do it! Ah, think, then, what manner of love it is that Gods only-begotten Son should be willing to die, that the Holy One should be willing to become a man, willing to take our sins upon Him, willing to suffer for those sins, willing to endure the bloody sweat, willing to bare His shoulders to the lictors scourge, willing to give up Himself, body and soul, to the pangs of such a death as was never known before or since! Herein is love! If ever I have coveted powers of speech such as God has committed to some men, powers of thrilling the soul and moving the heart, I covet them tonight, for how can I speak of the wondrous tragedy of the Cross? How can I set forth the death-throes of my blessed Lord and Master?

Instead of attempting what I must certainly fail to accomplish, I do but ask you to let your mental vision look for a minute at the spectacle, itself. He who is the Lord of Glory is mocked by rough soldiers. They spit in His face! They pluck His hair; they call Him king and they bow with mimic homage before Him. He is scourged and the scourging is no childs play. He is made to carry His Cross upon His shoulders through the streets of Jerusalem! He is brought to a rising knoll outside the city gatesthe Old Bailey, the Tyburn of Jerusalem. He is thrown upon His backthe iron is driven through His hands and feet! He is lifted upthe Cross is fixed into its place with a jar that dislocate His bones! He cries, I am poured out like water; all My bones are out of joint! He suffers fever through the irritation of the nerves of the hands and feet till His mouth is dried up like an oven and His tongue cleaves to His jaws. He cries, I thirst! and they give Him vinegar mingled with gall.

Meanwhile, His soul is in tortures such as no man has ever felt! His spirit, lashed by a hurricane of Divine wrath, is like a sea when it boils as a pot, seething and tossing to and fro. Oh, the unknown depths of Jesus griefs! And all this for His enemiesfor us who loved Him not! For us who never asked it at His hands. For us who refused to have it. For us who, when we are brought to accept the mercy, do not understand it. For us who, even when we somewhat understand it, do not feel anything like a corresponding gratitude. For us who, even if we feel the gratitude, do not show it, but go our way and forget it! For us who are utterly unworthy of anything like such affection! Herein is love! Oh, stand and wonder! I can do no more than ask you to wonder with me and God grant that our wondering may end in something reciprocal by way of love to Him and something practical by means of love put into action!

VI. With this question I shall concludeWHAT OUGHT TO BE THE EFFECT OF LOOKING UPON THIS GREAT WONDER?   
As the Apostle tells us in the next verse, Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. Christian, by the love which God has manifested to you, you are bound to love your fellow Christians! You are to love them though they have many infirmities. You have some, yourself, and if you cannot love one because he has a crusty temper, perhaps he may reply that he cannot love you because you have a lethargic spirit. Jesus loved you with all your infirmitiesthen love your infirm brethren! You tell me you cannot love because you have been offended by such a Brother, but you also offended Christ. What? Shall Christ forgive you all your myriad offenses and you not forgive your Brother? What was it, after all? Well, he did not treat me respectfully. Ah, that is ita poor worm needs to be treated respectfully! But he spoke disparagingly of me and there is a Sister, hereshe may be a Christian woman, but she said a very unkind thing of me.   
Well, yes, but what does it matter? I have often thought when people have spoken ill of me and they have been very, very false in it, perhaps, if they had known me better, they might have found something true to sayand so I must be like we sometimes say of a boy when he is beaten and does not deserve it, Well, he did deserve it, some time or other, for something else. Rather than get angry, smile over the offense. Who are we that we should expect everybody to honor us when nobody honored our Lord? Oh, let us be ready, at once, to forgive even to seventy times seven! A beautiful spirit worthy of a Christian was that of a man who found his horse in the pound one day and the farmer who put it in said, I found your horse in my field and I put it in the pound. And if ever I catch it there again, Ill put it in again. Well, replied the other, I found six of your cows in my farmyard the other night eating my hay. I just drove them out and put them into your farmyard. I didnt pound them and if ever I catch them in my yard again, Ill do the same.   
Ah, the farmer said, you are a better man than I am. And forthwith, he went and paid the fees and let his neighbors horse out of the pound, ashamed of himself. Such a generosity of disposition becomes you, especially to your Christian Brothers and Sisters. If God has such wonderful love to us, let us love those who offend us and show hearts of compassion toward the Lords poor people. It is easy to be courteous to those who are better off than ourselves and show deference to those who wear respectable attirebut the thing is to love the Lords people who are pooryes, and to love them all the more tenderly for their poverty, for they have, in some respects, more of the image of Christ than we have. Christ was poor and so are they.   
And let us cleave close to Gods persecuted ones. Some people always run away from a man as soon as anybody flings a handful of dirt at him. But if God so loved us when we were sinners, we ought to love our fellow Christians when they are under a cloud. Are they persecuted for righteousness sake? Then every brave spirit ought to say, I am for that manI am for that man! I was pleased with the remark of a Brother I met, the other day. Alluding to the love he felt for his minister, he said, The first reason why I came to hear him and love him was that I saw him abused in all the newspapers. And I said, There is something good in that man, I am sure of it, and as he is the weaker one, and all are against him, I am on his side till I find something against him. Oh, take care to rally round the persecuted Christian! Whenever the child of God is evilly spoken of, say, My place shall be at his side! I will share in such an honor as that, that I may share in the honor which awaits the saints hereafter.   
I have tried to speak to some here who are not converted and to put a few very comforting thoughts before them. If they go home and seek the Lord, He will be found of them. Yes, and if they trust Jesus Christ at once, they shall be saved! A young lady was reading a newspaper and her mother said, Have you done with it? She said, Yes, I have done with it. I was only looking at it to see the death of Jane \_\_\_\_\_. Poor girl, she used to be a Sunday school teacher with me. Well, she said she had done with it, but you may depend upon it, she had not, for the fact that one was dead who had been her companion had not done with herit would speak to her and impress herand if she shook it off, the responsibility would not have done with her.   
You have heard a sermon, tonight, and you may think, Now I have done with it. Well, it may be so, but it has not done with you! You will be called to account for every Truth of God it contains, for every reminder to your conscience and every affectionate invitation that reaches your heart. Very few sermons, alas, are ever done! The most of them are listened to and forgotten, but if they were all donethat is, if their counsels and admonitions were carried into effectwhat a blessing it would be! No, you have not done with it and this text has not done with you!

I thinkno, I seem to knowthat there are some who never will have done with this text, neither in this life nor in the life to come, for the text is saying to you, tonight, Though you love not God, now, yet you shall love Him, for He has loved you, loved you with an everlasting love. And the thought of this text will entice you to go and seek Jesus to see if it is so. And when you find it so, you will say to your children, There is no text in the Bible more beautiful to me than this one, Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us. And you may tell to your childrens children that on such an evening that text seemed to get into your soul, and to be set a ringing there like the old bell on the Inchcape Rockthe higher the storm, the louder it rang! And you shall hear it ring, ring, ring till it rings you to Christ and rings you into Heaven! And then in Heaven it will make sweet music in your ears and you will say, even there, Herein is love, not that I loved God, but that He loved me, and gave His Son to be a propitiation for my sins.

HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK 454, 23 (VERSION III), 782. EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**PSALM 23.**

I hope we all know this Psalm by heart. May we also know it by heart experience! It is a sweet pastoral song just suited to our Sabbath evening worship. There is here no din of arms, no noise of war, but there is a delicious hush, only broken by the gentle tinkling of the sheep-bell. God give us that sweet rest tonight!

Verse 1. The LORD is my shepherd. All true rest begins with Jesus, as all the comfort of the sheep is provided for them by their shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd. Is it so? Can you look up, poor defenseless sheep, and say, The Lord is my shepherd? Then comes the blessed inference

1. I shall not want. I do not want, I cannot want. I shall never want with such a Shepherd as I have. He will provide for me. No, more, God Himself is my provision! All I need I have, for, The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. I cannot provide for myself, but I shall not want. Famine may come and others who have no God to go to may pine and perish, but in the worst season I shall not want, for, The Lord is my shepherd.

2. He makes me to lie down in green pastures. I am so weak that I even need Gods help to enable me to lie down, but He makes me to lie down. Yes, the rest of the soul is so hard to attain that nobody ever reaches it except by the power of God. He who made the heavens must make us to lie down if we are really to rest. What delightful rest it is when we lie down in His pastures which are always green! Did you ever find them dry? Our Shepherd makes us not only to feed, but so to feed that we lie down in the midst of the pastures. There is more than we can eat, so the Lord makes a couch of it for usHe makes me to lie down in green pastures.

2. He leads me beside the still waters. There is, first, contemplation He makes me to lie down. Then there is activity. He leads me. There is also progress and there is provision for our advance in the heavenly wayHe leads me. He leads me beside the waters of quietness, not by the rushing torrents of excitement, nor by the place of noisy strife. He shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. He leads me beside the still waters. Not, He drives, or drags, but He, Himself, leads, going first to show the way. It is for me to follow, happily to follow, where He leads me beside the still waters.

3. He restores my soul. He can do it at once. He restores now. He is a restoring God. He restores my soul. He brings my wandering spirit back when I forsake His ways and, having done that, He leads me, even more carefully than before. For a second time we have the Psalmists declaration, He leads me.

3, 4. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His names sake. Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. Though deaths shadow hovers all around me and dampens my spirit. Though I feel as though I must die and cannot bear up under present trial any longer, Yes, though I walk, for I do walkI will not quicken my pace, I will not be in a flurry, I will not run for it. Though death, itself, shall overshadow me, I will keep up my walk with God. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. There is none, therefore I will not fear any. We often feel more afraid through our fear, itself, than through any real cause for fear. Some people seem to be always on the lookout for fear where there is none. Do not see any, nor let any enter your heartsay with the Psalmist, I will fear no evil.

4. For You are with me. Should a sheep fear when the shepherd is with it? What cause has it to fear if that Shepherd is Omniscient, Omnipotent and full of tenderness?

4. Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. Your rule and Your correctionYour rod, with which I sometimes am made to smartYour staff, with which I am supported. These are my comforts, why should I fear? Are you drinking in all this precious Truth of God, dear Friends? Are you feeling it in your souls deepest experience? This Psalm is very good to read, but it is far better to write out from your own experience! Make it a song of your ownnot merely a song in the Book, but a song for yourselves!

5. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. There is a fight going on and there are enemies all around. You do not generally have tables set in the hour of battle, but God keeps His people so calm amid the bewildering cry, so confident of victory, that even in the presence of their enemies, a table is spread with all the state of a royal banquet. You prepare a table. There is a cloth on the table. There are the ornaments on it and there are all the accompaniments of a feastYou prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. They may look on if they like. They may grin, they may wish they could devour, but they cannot sit down at the table and they cannot prevent me from sitting down at it! Let them blow their trumpets, let them fire their gunsYou prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. It is the very acme of security and repose that is here described. I know of no expression, not even that of lying down in green pastures, that is more full of restfulness than thisYou prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

5. You anoint my head with oil. At some feasts, they poured perfumed oil on the heads of the guests, so God will leave out nothing that is for the joy and comfort of His people. You anoint my head with oil. You shall have delicacies as well as necessities. You shall have joy as well as safety. You shall be prepared for service as well as preserved from destruction.

5. My cup runs over. I have not only what I wish, but I have more! Not only all I can hold, but something to spareMy cup runs over. If this is the case with your cup, dear Friend, let it run over in thankful joy! And if you have more of this worlds substance than you need, ask the poor and needy to come and catch that which flows over.

6. SurelyThis is another of the Psalmists inferences, and a very sure one. He does not say, Perhaps, but, Surely.   
6. Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. Here is a prince of the blood royal of Heaven attended by two body guards goodness and mercywhich keep close behind him. These are the grooms that ride on the horses of salvationSurely goodness and mercy shall follow me. Goodnessto provide for me. Mercyto blot out my sin. Goodness and mercy shall follow menot only now and then, but, all the days of my life. When I get gray-headed and feeble and have to lean heavily upon my staff, these twin angels shall be close behind to bear me up and bear me through.   
6. And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. Even while I am here in this world, I will be   
**No more a stranger or a guest   
But like a child at home,**   
dwelling with God! And, by-and-by, in the fullest sense, I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. I always compare this Psalm to a lark. It begins on the ground among the sheep, but up it goes till you may hear its blessed notes echoing among the stars! I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. It has its nest in the grass of the green pastures, but it flies up like the strains of sweetest music rising even to the skiesI will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. God grant that this may be the portion of every one of us, for His great names sake! Amen.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1707 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

HEREIN IS LOVE   
NO. 1707

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 18, 1883, BY C, H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought, also, to love one another.   
1 John 4:10, 11.

THE Law commands love, indeed, all its precepts are summed up in that one word, love. More widely read it runs thusYou shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself yet all this amounts only to, You shall love. But the Law, by reason of our depravity, never produced love. We were commanded to love, but we did no such thing. The spirit that is in us is selfish and it lusts to envy and to enmity. Why do wars and fights come among us? Come they not from our lusts? Since the Fall, man has become mans bitterest foe upon the earthand the world is full of hate, slandering, struggles, fighting, wounding, and slayingall that the Law can do is to show the wrong of enmity and threaten punishment. It cannot supply an unregenerate heart with a fountain of love.

Man remains unloving and unlovable till the Gospel takes him in hand and, by Grace, accomplishes that which the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh. Love is winning many hearts to the Kingdom of God and its reign shall extend till love shall rule over the whole earth. And so the Kingdom of God shall be set up among men and God shall dwell among them. At the present moment love is the distinguishing mark of the people of God. Jesus said, By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love, one to another. And John said, We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the Brethren. The man whose spirit is selfish has not the spirit of Christ and, if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of His.

The man whose spirit is that of envy and contention is evidently no follower of the lowly and loving Jesusand those who do not follow Jesus are none of His. They that are Christs are filled with His love. Everyone that loves is born of God, and knows God. He that loves not knows not God; for God is Love. God is the center of the Believers love. The saints are an inner circle specially beloved and all mankind are embraced within the circumference of the ring of love. He that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in Him and he, alone, is a child of God whose spirit is kindly and affectionate and who seeks, wherever he is, to promote peace, goodwill towards men.

The saints begin with love to God. That must always hold the highest place, for God is the best and noblest Being, and we owe Him all our hearts. Then comes, for Jesus sake, love to all who are in Christ. There is a peculiarly near and dear relationship existing between one child of God and all the rest. Loving Him that begat, we love all them that are begotten of Him! Should not a child love his brothers with a tender, peculiar affection? This principle of love, once implanted, induces in the heart of the converted man a love towards all mankind. Not that he can take any complacency in the wickedGod, Himself, cannot do that, for His holiness abhors all iniquity. The love desired is not the love of complacency, but the love of benevolence, so that we wish well and, to the utmost of our power, would do well unto all those that dwell upon the face of the earth. In this holy charity, this unselfish love, be you imitators of God as dear children.

Our heavenly Father is kind to the unthankful and to the evil, and so must we be, desiring that even the most abandoned may yet be rescued and made right and good. Love desires to create that which is lovable even in the most unlovable of mankind and, God helping the effort, she succeeds. I hear one say, This is a vast idea. Are we to love at this rate? Where is the love to come from? Our hearts are narrow, men are unworthy, provocations are numerous, another spirit is abroad in the world where is this love to come from? Where is this flood of love which is to cover the tops of the mountains of mans unworthiness to come from?

Have you entered into the springs of the sea? Or have you walked in search of the depths? Yes, by the leadings of Gods Spirit, we will search out the springs of the sea of love! Only in one place shall we find love enough for our supreme purpose, which is also the purpose of the Lord, Himself. There is one shoreless ocean into which we may be baptized and out of which we may be filled until we overflow! Where is the unfailing motive of Love? For Love is tried and hardly put to it to hold her own! Can we find a motive that will never fail, even towards the most provoking of mankind? Can we find an argument for affection which shall help us in times of ingratitude, when base returns threaten to freeze the very heart of charity? Yes, there is such a motive! There is a force by which even impossibilities of love can be accomplished and we shall be supplied with a perpetual constraint moving the heart to ceaseless charity!

Come with me, then, in the first place, to notice the infinite spring of loveHerein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us. Secondly, let us observe the marvelous outflow of that loveGod sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. And then, thirdly, let us notice the overflow of that love in us, when it fills our hearts and runs over to others. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought, also, to love one another.

I. First, THE INFINITE SPRING OF LOVE. Our text has two words upon which I would place an emphasisnot, and but. The first is, not. Herein is love, not not that we loved God. Very naturally many conclude that this means, not that we loved God first. That is not exactly the Truth of God taught here, but still it is a weighty Truth, and is mentioned in this same chapter in express wordsWe love Him because He first loved us (v. 19). The cause of love in the universe is not that man loved God first! No being in existence could love God before God loved him, for the existence of such a being is due to Gods previous love!

His plans of love were all laid and many of them carried out before we were born. And when we were born, we, none of us, loved God first so as to seek after God before He sought after usso as to desire reconciliation with God before He desired reconciliation with us. No, whatever may be said about free will as a theory, it is never found as a matter of fact that any man, left to himself, ever woos his God, or pines after friendship with his Maker. If he repents of sin, it is because the Spirit of God has first visited him and shown him his sin! If he desires restoration, it is because he has, first of all, been taught to dread the wrath of God and to long for holiness

*No sinner can be beforehand with Thee!   
Your Grace is most sovereign,   
Most rich, and most free.*

We inscribe a negative in black capital letters upon the idea that mans love can ever be prior to the love of God. That is quite out of the question. Not that we loved God.

Take a second sensethat is, not that any man did love God at all by nature, whether first or second; not that we, any one of us, ever did or ever could have an affection towards God while we remained in our state by nature. Instead of loving God, man is indifferent to God. No God, says the fool in his heart and, by nature, we are all such fools. It is the sinners wish that there were no God. We are atheistic by nature and if our brain does not yield to atheism, yet our heart does. We wish that we could sin according to our own will and that we were in no danger of being called to account for it. God is not in all our thoughts, or, if He does enter there, it is as a terror and a dread.

No, worse than thatman is at enmity with God by wicked works! The holiness which God admires, man has no liking for! The sin which God abominates has about it sweetness and fascination for the unrenewed heart, so that mans ways are contrary to the ways of God. Man is perverse. He cannot walk with God, for they are not agreed. He is all evil and God is all goodness and, therefore, no love to God exists in the natural heart of man. He may say that he loves God, but then it is a god of his own inventing and not Jehovah, the God of the Bible, the only living and true God. A just God and a Savior, the natural mind cannot endurethe carnal mind is enmity against God, is not reconciled to God and, neither, indeed, can be! The unregenerate heart is, as to love, a broken cistern which can hold no water.

In our natural state, there is none that does good, no, not one. So is there, also, none that loves God, no, not one! We come nearer to Johns meaning when we look at this negative as applying to those who do love God. Not that we loved Godthat is, that our love to God, even when it does exist, and even when it influences our lives, is not worthy to be mentioned as a fountain of supply for love. The Apostle points us away from it to something far more vast and then he cries, Herein is love. I am looking for the springs of the sea, and you point me to a little pool amid the rocks which has been filled by the flowing tide. I am glad to see that poolhow bright! how blue! how like the sea from where it came! But do not point to this as the source of the great water floods, for if you do, I shall smile at your childish ignorance and point you to you great rolling main which tosses its waves on high.

What is your little pool to the vast Atlantic? Do you point me to the love in the Believers heart and say, Herein is love? You make me smile. I know that there is love in that true heart, but who can mention it in the Presence of the great rolling ocean of the love of God, without bottom and without shore? The word, not, is not only upon my lips but in my heart as I think of the two thingsNOT that we loved God, but that God loved us. What poor love ours is at its very best when compared with the love with which God loves us! Let me use another figure. If we had to enlighten the world, a child might point us to a bright mirror reflecting the sun. And he might cry, Herein is light! You and I would say, Poor child, that is but borrowed brightness. The light is not there, but yonder, in the sun!

The love of saints is nothing more than the reflection of the love of God! We have love, but God IS Love. When I think of the love of certain saints to Christ, I am charmed with it, for it is a trait of the Spirit not to be despised. When I think of Paul the Apostle counting all things but loss for Christ. When I think of our missionaries going, one after another, into malarious parts of the African coast and dying for Christ. And when I read the Book of Martyrs and see confessors standing on the firewood, burning quick to the death, still bearing witness to their Lord and MasterI rejoice in the love of saints to their Lord! Yet this is but a stream! The unfathomable deep, the eternal source from which all love proceeds infinitely exceeds all human affection and it is found in God, and in God alone! Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us.

Let us contrast our love to God with His love to us. Dear Brothers and Sisters, we do love God and we may well do so, since He is infinitely lovable. When the mind is once enlightened, it sees everything that is lovable about God. He is so good, so gracious, so perfect that He commands our admiring affection. The spouse in the Song, when she thought of her Beloved, mentioned all manner of beauties and then cried, Yes, He is altogether lovely! It is natural, therefore, that one who sees God should love Him. But, now, think of Gods love to usis it not incomparably greater, since there was nothing lovely in us whatever, and yet He loved us? In us there is, by nature, nothing to attract the affection of a holy God, but quite the reverseand yet He loved us. Herein, indeed, is love! When we love God, it is an honor to us! It exalts a man to be allowed to love a Being so glorious!

A philosopher once wrote that for a man to speak of being the friend of God was too daring and, in the reverence of this thoughtful heathen, there was much to admire, for, indeed, there is an infinite difference between the glorious God and the sinful creature, man! Though God, in condescension, allows us to call Him, Friend, and Jesus says, You are My friends, yet this is beyond reason, and is a sweet Revelation of the Holy Spirit. What an uplifting there is in it for us! On the other hand, Gods love to us can add nothing to Him. It gives, but receives not. Divine Love can have no recompense. That He, the Infinite, should stoop to love the finitethat He, the infinitely pure, should love the guiltythis is a vast condescension.

See, moreover, what it involved, for this love rendered it necessary that in the Person of His dear Son, God should be despised and rejected of men, should make Himself of no reputation and should even be numbered with the transgressors. Herein is love. When we love God, we are gainers by the deed. He that loves God does, in the most effectual manner, love himself. We are filled with riches when we abound in love to Godit is our wealth, our health, our might and our delight! But God gains nothing by loving us. I hardly like to set the two in contrast, for our love is so poor and pitiable a thing as compared with the immeasurable love of God. It is our duty to love Godwe are bound to do it. As His creatures we ought to love our Creator! As preserved by His care, we are under obligation to love Him for His goodness! We owe Him so much that our utmost love is a mere acknowledgment of our debt.

But God loved us to whom He owed nothing at all! Whatever might have been the claims of a creature upon his Creator, we forfeited them all by our rebellion! Sinful men had no rights towards God except the right of being punished. Yet the Lord manifested boundless love to our race, which was only worthy to be destroyed. Oh words! How you fail me! I cannot utter my heart by these poor lips of clay! Oh God, how infinite was Your love which was given without any obligation on Your partfreely and unsoughtand all because You will to love! Yes You love because You are Love! There was no cause, no constraint, no claim why You should love mankind except that Your own heart led You to do so What is man that You are mindful of him? Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us.

I have thus pointed out the wellhead of lovelet us draw from it and from none other! If you go into the world and say, I am to love my fellow men because I love God, the motive is good, but it is questionable, limited and variable. How much better to argueI am to love my fellow men because God loves me. When my love grows cold towards God, and when, by reason of my infirmity and imperfection, I am led, even, to question whether I love God at all, then my argument and my impulse would fail me if it came from my own love to God. But if I love the fallen because God loved me, then I have an unchanging motive, an unquestionable argument and a forcible impulse not to be resisted! Therefore the Apostle cried, The love of Christ constrains us. It is always well for a Christian to have the strongest motive and to rely upon the most potent and perpetual force and, therefore, the Apostle bids us look to Divine Love and not to our own. Herein is love, he says, not that we loved God, but that God loved us.

So far the not. Let us turn to the, but. But that He loved us. I have nothing new to say, nor do I wish to say anything new. But I would like you to meditate on each one of these wordsHe loved us. Three words, but what weight of meaning! He, who is infinitely holy and cannot endure iniquityHe loved us He, whose glory is the astonishment of the greatest of intelligent beingsHe loved us. He, whom the Heaven of heavens cannot contain, loved us. He who is God all-sufficient and needs nothing of usneither can, indeed, receive anything at our hands He loved us. What joy lies sleeping here! Oh, that we could wake it up! What hope, too, for hopeless sinners because, God loved us.

If a man could know that he was loved of all his fellow men, if he could have it for certain that he was loved by all the angels, doted on by cherubim and seraphim, yet these were but so many drops and all put together could not compare with the main ocean contained in the fact that, God loved us! Now ring that second silver bellHe loved us. I do not think the Apostle is, here, so much speaking of Gods special love to His own elect as of His love to men in general. He saw our race ruined in the Fall and He could not bear that man should be destroyed. Lord, what is man that You visit him in love? Yet He did so visit him. The Lords love made Him lament mans revolt and cry, I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against Me! And He bade Heaven and earth witness to His grief.

He saw that sin had brought men into wretchedness and misery and would destroy them forever, but He would not have it so. He loved them with the love of pity, with the love of sweet and strong benevolence and He declared it with an oathAs I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but that he turn unto Me and live. Herein is love. But if you and I are reconciled to God, we can lay the emphasis, each one for himself, upon this word, love, and view it as special, effectual, electing love. Let each Believer say, He loved me, and gave Himself for me. Then what force is in my text, He loved usit is not enough that He pitied us, or spared us, or helped us, but, He loved us.

It has often made me rise from my seat to think that God loves me! I could not sit still and hear the thrilling Truth! Such knowledge is too wonderful for me! It is high, I cannot attain unto it. It is sweet to be loved even by a dog. It is sweet to be loved by a babe. It is sweet to be loved by a friendit is sweet to be loved by Gods peoplebut, oh, to be loved by God and to know it! This is paradise! Would a man need any other Heaven than to know for certain that he enjoyed the love of God? Note the third word. He loved ususthe most insignificant of beings. There is an anthill somewhereit is no matter to you where it is. It teems with ants. Stir the nest and they swarm in armies. Think of one of them. No, you do not need to know anything about him! His business is no concern of yours, so let him go. But that ant, after all, is more considerable to you than you are to God. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing.

What are you, even, in this great city?One man, one woman in London, in England, in the population of the worldwhat a cipher you are! Yet what is the population of this world compared with the universe? I suppose that all these stars which we see at night, all the countless worlds within our range of vision, are but as a little dust in a lone corner of Gods great house! The whole solar system and all the systems of worlds we have ever thought of, are but as a drop in a bucket compared with the boundless sea of creation! And even that is as nothing compared to the infinite God! And yet, He loved usthe insignificant creatures of an hour!

What is more, He loved us though in our insignificance we dared to rebel against Him! We boasted against Him. We cried, Who is Jehovah? We lifted up our hand to fight with Him. Ridiculous rebellion! Absurd warfare! Had He but glanced at us and annihilated us, it would have been as much as we could merit at His hands! But to think that He should love uslove us, mark youwhen we were in rebellion against Him. This is marvelous! Observe that the previous verse speaks of us as being dead in sin. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Then we were dead, dead to all goodness, or thought or power of goodness criminals shut up in the condemned celland yet God loved us with a great love even when we were dead in trespasses and sins!

Child of God, Gods love to you today is wonderful! But think of His love to you when you were far gone in rebellion against Him. When not a throb of holy, spiritual life could be found in your entire beingyet He loved you and sent His Son that you might live through Him! Moreover, He loved us when we were steeped in sin. Does not our text tell us so? For He sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins and this implies that we needed to be reconciled! Our righteous Judge was angry with us. His righteous wrath smoked against our evil and yet, even then, He loved us. He was angry with us as a Judge, but yet He loved us! He was determined to punish and yet resolved to save! This is a world of wonders! I am utterly beaten by my text! I confess myself mastered by my theme!

But who among us can measure the unfathomable? Herein is love, that God freely, out of the spontaneous motion of His own heart, should love us! This is the argument for love! This is the inexhaustible Fountain out of which all love must come. If we desire love, may we come and fill our vessels here and bear it out to others. Love springing from our own bosoms is feeble and scantbut the love of God is a great deep, forever fresh, full and flowing. Here are those springs of the sea of which we spoke

*Herein is love!*

II. I need your attention a little longer while I speak as best I can upon THE MARVELOUS OUTFLOW OF THAT LOVE. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, the love of God is seen in creation! He that studies the mechanism of the human frame and of its surroundings will see much of Divine kindness there. The love of God is to be seen in Providence! He that watches the loving hand of God in daily life will not need to look far before he sees tokens of a Fathers care. But if you want to know when the great deep of Gods love was broken up and arose in the fullness of its strength to prevail over all. If you would see it revealed in a deluge, like Noahs flood, you must wait till you see Jesus born at Bethlehem and crucified on Calvary, for His mission to men is the most Divine manifestation of love!

Consider every wordHe sent His Son. God sent. Love caused that mission. If there was to be reconciliation between God and man, man ought to have sent to Godthe offender ought to be the first to apply for forgiveness! The weaker should apply to the greater for help. The poor man should ask of him who distributes alms. But, Herein is love, that God sent. He was first to send an embassy of peace. Today we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christs stead, be you reconciled to God. Oh, the wonder of this, that God should not wait till rebellious men had sent to His throne for terms of reconciliation, but should commence negotiations Himself!

Moreover, God sent such a OneHe sent His Son. If men send an embassy to a great power, they select some great one of their nation to wait upon the potent prince. But if they are dealing with a petty principality, they think a subordinate person quite sufficient for such a business. Admire, then, the true love of the infinitely gracious God, that when He sent an embassy to men, He did not commission an angel nor even the brightest spirit before His Throne, but He sent His Sonoh, the love of God to men! He sent His equal Son to rebels who would not receive Him, would not hear Him, but spat upon Him, scourged Him, stripped Him, slew Him! Yes, He spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all. He knew what would come of that sending of Him and yet He sent Him!

*Jesus, commissioned from above,   
Descends to men below,   
And shows from where the springs of love In endless currents flow.   
He whom the boundless Heaven adores,   
Whom angels long to see,   
Quit with joy those blissful shores,   
Ambassador to me!   
To me, a worm, a sinful clod,   
A rebel all forlorn:   
A foe, a traitor, to my God,   
And of a traitor born.*

Note further, not only the grandeur of the Ambassador, but the tenderness of the relationship existing between him and the offended God. He sent His Son. The previous verse says, His only-begotten Son. We cannot speak of God except after the manner of men, for God, in all His Glory is incomprehensible. But speaking after the manner of men, what must it have cost Jehovah to take His only Son from His bosom to die? Christ is the Fathers Selfin essence they are Onethere is but one God. We do not understand the mystery of the Trinity in unity, but we believe it. It was God Himself who came here in the Person of His dear Son! He underwent allfor we are the flock of God which He has purchased with His own blood.

Remember Abraham with the knife unsheathed and wonder as you see him obey the Voice which says, Take, now, your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and offer him for a sacrifice. Remember yet again that the Lord actually did what Abraham, in obedience, willed to doHe gave up His Son! It pleased the Father to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. Christs death was, in fact, God in human form suffering for human sin! God Incarnate bleeding because of our transgressions! Are we not, now, carried away with the streams of love? I speak my best, my Brothers and Sisters, but if my words were what they ought to be, they would set your souls on fire! Is not all Heaven still astounded at the death of the Only-Begotten? It has not recovered from its amazement that the Heir of all things should bow His head to death! How can I fitly tell you how much God loved the world when He gave His Only-begotten to die that sinners might live?

Go a step further. God sent His Son to be a propitiation, that is, to be not only a reconciler, but the Reconciliation! His sacrifice of Himself as the Atonement through which mercy is rendered possible in consistency with justice! I have heard men say with scorn that God required a sacrifice before He would be reconciled, as if that were wrong on the part of the Judge of All! But let me whisper in their earsGod required it, it is true, for He is just and holy. But God found it Himself! Remember thatJehovah found the Ransom which He demanded! It was Himself, His own Son, one with Himself, that became the Propitiation and the Reconciliation!

It was not that God the Father was unkind and could not be placated unless He smote His Sonbut that God the Father was so kind that He could not be unjust! So supremely loving that He must devise a way by which men could be justly saved! An unjust salvation would have been none at all. The Lord found the ReconciliationI will not say in the sufferings of Christ, though that is true! I will not say in the death of Christ, though that is true! But I will put it in Scriptural wordsand here we have it in 1 John 2:2! Hethat is, Jesus, Himselfis the propitiation for our sins. The Sent One, in Himself, as well as in all that He did and all that He suffered, is the Reconciliation between God and man! Herein is love! In order that there might be peace and love between man and God, God finds the Sin-Offering! He becomes, Himself, the Atonement, that love might reign supreme!

What seems to me the most wonderful thing of all is that the Lord Jesus should deal, not only with our sorrow, but with our sin, for, He is the propitiation for our sins. That God should deal with us as to our virtues, if we had any! That He should deal with us as to our love, if we had any, might not seem so difficult. But that He should send His Son to dwell with us as sinnersyes, and to come into contact with our sins, and thus to take the sword, not only by its hilt, but by its blade, and plunge it into His own heart, and die because of itthis is a miracle of miracles! O Friends, Christ never gave Himself for our righteousness, but He laid down His life for our SINS! He viewed us as sinners when He came to save us. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

If I had not found Christ till this very minute, I hope I should find Him, now, as my mind drinks in this doctrine! By Gods Spirit there seems to me to be such a window opened that even despair may see the light, for if the thing which God sent His Son to deal with was the sin of man, then I, even though I am nothing but a mass of loathsomeness and sin, may yet enjoy the infinite love of God! Oh, guilty ones, hear these words which are more sweet than music and more full of delight than all poetry! Even the harps of angels never rise to higher measures than these which I do so poorly and simply rehearse in your ears! Hear these glad tidings, that God, who made the heavens and the earthwhom you have offended wills not that you die, but loves you so greatly that He opens up a road of reconciliation through the body of His own dear Son!

There was no other way by which you could be reconciled to God, for had He reconciled you to a part of Himself and not to His justice, you had not been, in very truth, at all reconciled to God. It is now to God completely just, holy, whose anger burns against sin! It is to Him that you are reconciled by faith in Christ Jesus, through the laying down of His life for men! Oh that God would bless this to all who hear the glad tidings!

III. We come at last to think of the CONSEQUENT OUTFLOW OF LOVE FROM USBeloved, if God so loved us, we ought, also, to love one another. Our love, then, to one another is simply Gods love to us, flowing into us and flowing out again. That is all it is! Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and then we love others. You have seen a noble fountain in a continental city adorning a public square. Look how the water leaps into the air! And then it falls into a circular basin which fills and pours out its fullness into another, lower down, and this, again, floods a third. Hear the merry splash as the waters fall in showers and cataracts from basin to basin!

If you stand at the lower basin and look upon it and say, Herein is water, that is true, and will be true of the next higher one and so forth. But if you would express the truth as to where the water really is, you may have to look far away, perhaps upon a mountains side, for there is a vast reservoir from which pipes are laid to bring these waters and force them to their height that they may descend so beautifully. Thus the love we have to our fellow creatures drops from us like the descending silvery cataract from the full basinbut the first source of it is the immeasurable love of God which is hidden away in His very essencethe love which never changes and never can be diminished! Herein is love!

If you and I desire to love our fellow Christians and to love the fallen race of man, we must be joined on to the aqueduct which conducts love from this eternal source, or else we shall soon fail in love. Observe, Brothers and Sisters, then, that as the love of God is the source of all true love in us, so a sense of that love stimulates us. Whenever you feel that you love God, you overflow with love to all Gods people! I am sure you do. It is when you get to doubt the love of God that you grow hard and cold. But when you are fired with the love of a dying Savior who gave Himself for you, you feel as if you loved every beggar in the streetand you long to bring every harlot to Christs dear feetyou cannot help it!

Man, if Christ baptizes your heart into His love, you will be covered with it and filled with it! Your love will respect the same persons as Gods love does, and for the same reasons. God loves men! So will you. God loves them when there is no good in them, and you will love them in the same way. Sometimes the wickedness of men kindles in the heart of a true Christian a stronger affection for them. The deeper down they are, the more they need a Savior. Did not our Moravian Brothers and Sisters feel, when they went out as missionaries, that they would prefer to go, first, to the most barbarous tribes? They said, The more degraded they are, the more they need a Savior. And should not the missionary spirit make Believers feel that if men are sunk until they are as low as brutes, and as savage as devils, that this is the stronger reason for our being eager to bring them to Christ?

I hope that abominable spirit which used to come in among Christian people has been kicked away to its father, the devil, where it ought to be I mean the spirit which despises the poor and the fallen! When I have heard people say, What is the good of looking after such riff-raff? I have been saddened. The Church of God feels that the souls of the meanest are preciousthat to save the most foul, the most ignorant, the most degraded, the most brutalized man or woman that ever lives is an objective worthy of the effort of the whole Churchsince God thought it worthy of the death of Jesus Christ that He might bring sinners, dead in sin, to Himself! Brothers and Sisters, we will not have grasped the Truth of God unless we feel that our love to men must be practical, because Gods love to us is so. His love did not pent up like the waters in the secret caverns of the earth, but it welled up like the waters in the days of Noah, when we read that the fountains of the deep were broken up.

In the gift of the Lord Jesus we behold the reality of Divine love. When we see the poor, we must not say Be you warmed; be you filled; I am sorry for you. But we must let our love relieve them from our funds! If we see the ignorant, we must not say, Dear me, the Church is neglecting the masses. The Church must wake up. No, but we must bestir ourselves and struggle, ourselves, to warn sinners. If there are any near you who lie degraded, do not say, I wish somebody would go after them. Go yourself! Our love ought to follow the love of God in one point, namely, in always seeking to produce reconciliation! It was to this end that God sent His Son. Has anybody offended you? Seek reconciliation. Oh, but I am the offended party. So was God and He went straight away and sought reconciliation. Brothers and Sisters, do the same! Oh, but I have been insulted. Just so! So was Godall the wrong was towards Him, yet, He sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Oh, but the party is so unworthy. So are you. But God loved you and sent His Son. Go and write according to that copy.

I do not mean that this love is to come out of your own heart, originally, but I do mean that it is to flow out of your heart because God has made it to flow into it. You are one of those basins of the fountainlove has poured into you from abovelet it run over to those who are below. Go forth at once and try and make reconciliation, not only between yourself and your friend, but between every man and God. Let that be your objective! Christ has become mans Reconciliation and we are to try and bring this Reconciliation near to every poor sinner that comes in our path. We are to tell him that God in Christ is reconciled. We are to say to him, He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours, only, but for the sins of the whole world. Mark that word! It tallies with that other, Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world. God is now able to deal on Gospel terms with the whole race! We need never think that we shall meet with men to whom God will not consent to be reconciled. The propitiation is such that whoever comes to God shall be received through it. God is always within to receive every soul that comes to Him by Jesus Christ. God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Your work and mine is reconciliation and everything that tends that way!

When we have done all, what then? We shall have nothing to boast of! Suppose a man should become so loving that he gave himself wholly up for his fellow creatures and actually died for themwould he have anything to boast of? Read my text over again. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought, also, to love one anotherso that if you get to the highest point of self-sacrifice, you will never be able to boast, for you have only, then, done what it was your duty to have done! Thus you see the highest grade of Christianity excludes all idea of salvation by works, for when we come up to its utmost pitch, if we give our body to be burned for love, yet, still, we have done no more than it was our duty to have done, considering the tremendous obligations under which the love of God has laid us.

If you had to manage the waterworks for the distribution of water all over this city and there was a certain pipe into which you poured water, but none ever came out at the other end, do you know what you would do? You would remove it and say, This does not suit my purpose. I need a pipe that will give out as well as receive. That is exactly what the Lord desires of us. Do not selfishly say, I want to sit down and enjoy the love of God. I shall never say a word to anybody about Christ. I will never give a poor creature so much as a brass farthing, but I want to sit down and be solaced with the love of God.

If you think thus, you are a plugged up pipe! You are of no useyou will have to be taken out of the system of the Churchfor the system of love for the world requires open pipes through which Divine Love may freely flow. May the Lord clear you and fill you, so that out of you there may continually flow rivers of living water. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON-1 John 4.**   
HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK199, 782, 803.

[ *A History of Spurgeons Tabernacle*, by Eric Hayden (1919-2001). The author pastored the Tabernacle when it was rebuilt the third time, necessitated by the damage from Nazi bombs. His own grandfather was a member under Spurgeons ministry. He updated Spurgeons own little history of the Tabernacle and added valuable appendixes, making this the best source of information on Spurgeon printed in the 20th Century. Write Pilgrim Publications, P.O. Box 66, Pasadena, TX 77501 or go to http://members.aol.com/pilgrimpub/spurgeon.htm (near bottom of the page, for ordering information.]

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SEEING AND TESTIFYING   
NO. 2383

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS DAY, OCTOBER 21,1894.   
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, JULY 29, 1888.

And we have seen and testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.   
1 John 4:14.

THERE are two things joined together in the text which must never be partedWe have seen and testify. In the first place, never let any man testify what he has not seen. If you are not personally aware of it, do not tell itit is the personality of the testimony that is the power of the testimony. That Truth of God which you have never experienced, you had better leave to somebody else to preach. This is the cause of the failure of a great many ministersthere is no personal conversion at the back of their ministry and, consequently, no Christian life within them. Their preaching is the testimony of a man who says that he heard such and such a thing and you know how a judge will stop a witness when he begins to say what others have told him. No, no, he says, what did you see, yourself, my good man? What do you know about this business on your own account? I do not want to know what others said to you about it. So is it with the message delivered from the pulpitwhat is needed is that the preacher should bear testimony of what he has seen, tasted, felt and handled. When you try to bring others to Christ, you must do it by bearing witness of what Christ has done for you. If He has never done anything for youpersonally for youyou cannot testify for Him and must not pretend to do so.

In the next place, what you have seen you should testify. If you have seen those things for yourself, do what Mary did when she had seen the risen Christshe ran to bring His disciples the news! What right have you to see for yourself, alone? No, no, tell the glad tidings! The Light of God is not put to your candle for the candles sake, aloneit is that men may be enlightened by its beams. If you have received Light from God, let your Light so shine before men that they may see it and glorify God for it! I am afraid that this observation ought to trouble a great many professing Christians. They say that they have seen the Lord. I have no reason to doubt the truth of what they say, but, having seen, why do they not testify? In our text, it is written, We have seen and testify, but in many cases, nowadays, it might be written, We have seen and do not testify, for some who profess to have seen Christ by faith do not even come forward to confess Him in Baptism, according to His Wordand many do not unite with the visible Church and do not occupy themselves in the Sunday school, or in any form of Christian usefulness! What will become of you who, having a talent, never put it out to interest? O slothful ones, who have wrapped your talent in a napkin, how will you answer for it in the day when the Master calls your servants to give in their reckoning? If we are what we ought to be, we shall first make sure of the seeing and then we shall make equally sure of the testifying! What God has joined together, let no man put asunder. We have seen and testify. There can be no divorce in this case, no breaking of the marriage bondWe have seen and testify.

I am going to dwell upon these two topics, seeing and testifying, and first, I shall speak to you about Apostolic seeing, for doubtless John may be understood as referring to himself and his brother-Apostles when he says, We have seen and testify. That will be our first themeApostolic seeing. And then, secondly, our seeing, or, how far Christian men and women can say, We have seen. And then, thirdly, Apostolic testifying and our testifying, for they ought to be alike in a great many particulars.

I. First, then, dear Friends, let me speak a little about APOSTLIC SEEING. John and his fellow-Apostles say, We have seen and testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

Note that this saying was, in their case,

eminently clear. Let me read to you the beginning of this Epistle That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life; that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you. These men, who were chosen to dwell with Christ, to see His miracles, and to hear His teaching, come forward with a very clear witness. They tell us that which they had seen, that which they had heard, that which they had looked upon and that which their hands had handled.

In the first place, they had heard Christ. This was a high privilege, for, Never man spoke like this Man. Never was there such hearing as when Christ preached! The Apostles had heard their Masters voice in private as well as in public, when He expounded to them Truths of God which He did not fully explain to the multitude. What marvelous sweetness there must have been in the voice of Jesus! I have no doubt that the melody of it would ring out in the Apostles ears as long as they lived. They knew, from what they heard from His lips, that the Son of God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, was really before them, for they heard Him say things which no mere man could have uttered. They heard Him declare wonderful Truths such as never fell from the lips of anyone but the longpromised Messiah, the Divine Messenger, who was sent of God. They had heard from Him that which made them know that He was sent by the Father to save men!

John also says that the Apostles had seen Christ. For more than three years, they had seen Him daily, constantly. They had also looked upon Him, the Apostle adds, apparently meaning that sometimes they had gazed upon Him with fixed attention. You know what it is to merely see a person, but it is a different thing to look earnestly at him, to feel so struck by his appearance that you cannot help looking him up and down from head to foot. You are fascinated by him, your eyes are held captive by him, they seem to drink him in and to photograph him on your soul! Now, John says that the Apostles did that with their Lord. They saw Him and their eyes looked upon Him. They could not be mistaken about their Lord. John had seen Him on the Mount of Transfiguration and He had also seen Him on the Cross. He says, in his Gospel, when writing of the soldier piercing Christs side, He that saw it bares record, and his record is true: and he knows that he says true.

The Apostles, therefore, were hearers of Christ and seers of Christ. Besides that, they had handled Him. One of them had laid his head on his Lords bosom. After He had risen from the dead, Jesus said to them, Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I, Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see I have. They were not in any doubt that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among them! They could not doubt itall their senses testified to the real Incarnation of the Son of God. They knew that He was a real Person, clothed in real flesh and blood. Thus, they had heard, seen and handled the Christ of God!

Well now, perhaps some of you will say, We wish we had their evidence. If we had been alive, then, we could speak, now, with much greater confidence. Listen to methe mere hearing of Christ would not convince anybody! There were thousands and tens of thousands who heard Him, yet they heard nothing remarkable in His teaching and even turned away loathing and hating Him because of the Truth of God which they could not bear! There was not much advantage in merely seeing Him. Did not myriads see Him? Yet they saw not His Glory and did not understand that He was the Redeemer of men! Even when He hung on the Cross, many who saw Him only jeered, sneered, turned their backs and went their way. As to handling Him, did not the soldiers handle Him when they scourged Him? Did they not handle Him when they laid the Cross upon Him and when they laid Him upon the Cross? Oh, yes, there was more than enough of handling, and rough handling, too, but they were convinced of nothing even by touching the precious body of Jesus.

The fact is, Brothers and Sisters, genuine faith comes not merely by the ear, or the eye, or the hand, but it is flashed into the soulperhaps, through the earbut always directly by the Spirit of God operating upon the heartand if these Apostles had not had another sense, a spiritual sense, they would have remained unbelievers! So, after all, they had no great advantage over you. And you, Beloved, who know the Lord spiritually, may also be able to truly say, We have seen and testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

But mark you, next, granting that the Apostles were spiritually enlightened, their seeing was eminently conclusive as to the mission of Christ. What they saw was not only Christ, but, that the Father sent the Son. Now, Beloved, this was seen in Christs miracles. It is specially recorded of our Lords first miracle, when He turned the water into wine, This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His Glory; and His disciples believed on Him. It was rather a simple miracle, the turning of water into wine, but Jesus did it in such a marvelous manner that the thought flashed upon the Apostles as He did it, This is the Son of God! This is the Messiah! A greater miracle which followed further on, is said to have had the same effect upon those who witnessed it. When our Lord Jesus came to the grave of Lazarus, before He raised him, you remember that He said to Martha, Said I not unto you that if you would believe, you should see the Glory of God? And when He had called Lazarus back from the dead, those who were round about saw the Glory of God beaming out in that miracle, and we read, Many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on Him. If any of you had been with Christ during His earthly life and had been spiritually enlightened, you would have seen, in His walking the waves, or in His opening the eyes of the blind, or in His healing all manner of sick folk who were brought to Him, something of His Glory, and you would have felt that the evidence as to His mission was very conclusive.

But, Beloved, the Apostles, also, had conclusive evidence as to the Saviors mission in His life. What a life that was! I can admire the life of Elijah without wishing to imitate it. I can admire all the lives of the saints of the Old Testament and of the New, as I find them recorded, and I can even forget their failings. But there is not one, even of the purest and best lives that we have ever read in the sacred page, that leaves upon us the impression that the life of Jesus does! It is not only perfectit is Divine! Singularly enough, it is more worthy of imitation than any other life and yet it cannot be imitated! It is the most human of all lives, but it is superhuman to a very high degreeand yet in no one respect superhuman in the sense that it cannot be copied by our humanity. It was, indeed, an extraordinary life! One who could have seen it in its different phases and learned, by the Spirits teaching, what it all meant, must have been convinced that none but the Son of God could have lived like this. What the Centurion said about His death, the enlightened observer would have said about His life, Truly this was the Son of God.

I cannot stay to go into all the other proofs of this point, but I am sure of this, that those gracious men, with the Spirit of God instructing them, must have felt that Jesus Christ was sent of God when they saw His miracles and when they saw His life, which was a greater marvel than all His miracles!

Still, I have not quite hit the nail on the head until I say that what they saw was eminently conclusive as to His being sent to save menWe have seen and testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. There was nothing about Christs life that was contrary to that declaration. He cursed no man. He called no fire from Heaven upon any man. Even when wicked men had nailed Him to the tree, He breathed a prayer for them! In every way, He was not a destroyer, but a Savior. These men were, themselves, savedsaved from known sin, saved from groveling occupations, saved from themselvesand they knew it. They knew that the Father must have sent the Son to be the Savior of the world, for He had saved them!

They had also seen Him heal the sick. What a sight it must have been to see Him going through the crowd, as He often did, when the people were laid on their beds in the streets and others came thronging about Him! When they saw Him laying a hand on one, here, and healing another, there, and another, there, and yet others, yonder, as though He marched through a regiment of devils and cleared a pathway for Himself, not with sword and spear, but with His own gentle glance and with a touch of His loving, yet mighty hands, what a wonder! He came not to destroy mens lives, but to save themand those innumerable cures, which He so freely dispensed, were clear proofs to the Apostles that the Father had sent His Son to be the Savior of the world!

But they knew it still better after they had seen Him die, after they had beheld His empty sepulcher, after they had felt the descending Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Then, when the tongues of fire were given them and they went out to speak in His name and 3,000 felt the mighty touch of Grace, they knew that the Father had sent the Son to be the Savior of the world! And when the bonds were broken which held them in as preachers to the Jews and they went throughout all Asia and boldly crossed to Europe, going everywhere preaching the Wordand Parthians, Medes and Elamites heard the Gospel, and Greeks and Romans bowed in penitence, and Philippians and Colossians flocked to Christ then the Apostles understood that the Father had sent the Son to be the Savior of the world! All along their lives there was this clear line of evidence of which they were quite certainand they came forth to testify that it was so!

Thus I have brought before you the first point, that is, Apostolic seeing.   
II. The second thing is OUR SEEING. Let me put a few matters very plainly and personally, and let each person ascertain how far he can follow me.   
Brothers and Sisters, some of us have seen that Jesus is sent of God to be the Savior of the world. HOW have we seen it? Well, first, by the power of His Word. You have noticed, I daresay, that singular incident concerning the woman of Samaria. The woman told the men of Sychar that she had met a Man who had told her all that she ever did, and she believed that He was the Messiah. They listened to her words and then they went out to hear the Savior, Himself. He preached to them and what was the result? The Samaritans said to the woman, Now we believe, not because of your saying, for we have heard Him, ourselves, and know that this is, indeed, the Christ, the Savior of the world. Do you not think that when John was writing this Epistle, the record of what the woman of Samaria said was in his mind and that he unconsciously repeated the words, The Savior of the world, using the very same phrase as the men of Sychar had done? They were convinced of Christs Messiahship simply by the power of His Word!   
Brothers and Sisters, there are many of us who have the same evidence as these Samaritans had! We have experienced the power of Christs Word! I do not mean that we have felt the force of human eloquence, or that we have known the weight of human argument, but we have proved the might of the Word of the Lord. There is a certain something which goes with the Word of God which is altogether independent of the mannerisms of the preacher. It is the Truth of God, itself, which thrills us, conquers us, holds us in chains, leads us captive, sets us free, puts a new song into our mouths and makes us dance with holy joy! You know that experience, do you not? I believe that often, in this House of Prayer, my Brothers and Sisters, you have felt a power far beyond any force that human lips can possessyou know it has been so! You have gone home saying, God has spoken to my soul, today, and I know that the Gospel is true, and that the Christ is Divine. The Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world, for I have felt the matchless power of His Holy Word.   
Then there are three evidences, mentioned by John in the latter part of this Epistle, each of which is a present power to us. He says, in the 8th verse of the last chapter, There are three that bear witness in earth: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. Have you not felt the influence of the Holy Spirit as well as the power of the Word? Did not the Spirit come and wither your righteousness, as the Sirocco of the desert destroys the flowers of the field? Did not the Spirit of God come and put life into you when you lay like the dead? Did He not come and point you to the Savioreven giving you eyes with which to look to Him? Has not the Spirit of God often illuminated you, quickened you, comforted you, guided you? Has He not been to you as the fire, the dew and the wind? Then, if you know the operations of the Spirit of God and, you do, unless your profession is a lie, you, also, have seen that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world!   
The next witness is concerning the purging by the water. Now, has not the water, which flowed from Christs riven side, operated upon you? If you are what you profess to be, my dear Brother, you are a clean man. Once you were foul enough, but you have been washed and now you are a different man. The things you then loved are now horrible to you, and you hate them, for a great change has come over you. You have been washed from your love of filthiness and your delight in sin! Yes, and the washing process goes on every dayyou are daily helped to leave off one sin and anotheryou are made not only to see the evil within you, but to conquer it. Is it not so, dear Brothers and Sisters? You know that if the Grace of God has not sanctified you, you are without one great evidence of its powerbut if it has changed your character, then depend upon it, you have an evidence that it came from God. Thus, we also, have seen and testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world, because He has cleansed us and made us to love holy things, and to hate everything which God hates.   
The third witness tells of the cleansing by the blood. Do you know anything about cleansing by the blood of Jesus, the blood that speaks to a conscience all in a tempest through sin? The blood that gives access to God to sinners far off from Him by wicked works? The blood which we plead in prayer? The blood which has become the foundation of all our hope? I can truly say that when I first learned the Doctrine of the Substitution of Christ, His dying in my place, and understood that I had nothing to do but to look to Him and live, it was with me as when the sun shines in Lapland after months of midnight! Oh, what a blessed dawning was that to my soul! Now, if you know the power of the blood of Jesus upon your conscience and your heart, then you, also, can say, We have seen. And I hope you may truly be able to add, and testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world!   
Besides all thisthe power of the Word, the influence of the Holy Spirit, the purging by the water and the cleansing by the blood of Jesuswe have other evidence, namely, the aspirations of our souls. Are there not, within you, longings and desires for which you never can account if there were not a Savior for men? When God gave to humanity the appetite of hunger, you might have inferred from it that He meant to provide food to satisfy it. When He gave to us the capacity for thirst, we might be sure that, somewhere, there would be rippling rills from which that thirst might be slaked. When the Lord gave to us, as He has given, a sighing after holiness, a longing after nearness to Himself, a devout hope that we shall be caught up to be with Him where He is, these Heavengiven longings are proofs that they will be gratifiedbut they cannot be unless there is a Savior of men! Thank God there is such a Savior who will give us all that for which we are sighing! It does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is.   
But I need not talk of mere aspirations. As far as I am concerned, I can speak about matters of fact which prove to me the power of my Lord and Master, for I have seen the triumphs of Christ. I saw some of them last Tuesday. I am always seeing them and, God willing, I shall see some more of them next Tuesday! I have seen men who used to live in sin and drunkenness, made honest and sober! And I have seen fallen women brought to Jesus feet as penitents! All along what is growing to be a long ministry, the chariot of the Gospel, in which I have ridden, has had captives to grace Christs triumphs! All along, multitudes have decided to quit the ways of sin and have turned to the living God! And I must believe in the power of Divine Grace, I cannot doubt it! The proof of what the tree is, surely, is found in the fruit, and the fruit is most abundant. Ask the missionaries what Christ has done in the Southern Seas and they will tell you of islands, once inhabited by naked cannibals, where now men are clothed and in their right mind, sitting at the feet of Jesus! The whole world teems with trophies of Christ and shall yet more fully teem with them. We have seen and testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world, and we preach with the full conviction that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.   
III. So now I come to my last point and that is a practical one. Thirdly, let me speak about APOSTOLIC TESTIFYING AND OURS.   
I trust that many of you can join in what the Apostle John said, We have seen that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Now let us bear our testimony concerning it as the Apostles did and, first, we should do it in the same manner. What was the Apostolic manner of testifying? Well, I would say that it was very fervent and ardent. Those first preachers of the Gospel never preached cold sermons. Why, some sermons hang like icicles upon the lips of the speaker, but the Apostles preached as if they were all on fire! Their lips were like the mouth of Mount Aetna when it vomits lavaevery word burnt its way into the hearts and consciences of men! Never talk coldly of Christ who was on fire with love to youpreach the Gospel ardently!   
The Apostles also proclaimed their message very simply. I do not believe there ever was an Apostolic sermon in which the preacher tried to show himself off. There is no record of any display of oratorical fireworks, no grand closing peroration. I always tell my students that this is the 12th Commandment, You shall not perorate. [Speak at great length, in a grand manner.] Yet many preachers will do itthere must be something very splendid at the end of the discourse to impress people with the idea of how wondrously they can do it! Do not do it, Brothers, do not do it! Tell the people the way to Heaven and point it out to them as plainly as you canand if there are two or three little words of plain Saxon that will do it, use them, and fling the long Latin words on the dunghill where they ought to rot! They are no good, whatever, in the pulpit, for we need speech that can be easily understood by the peoplethe plain speech of the common folk of our day. So the Apostles spoke and so should we.   
But they also spoke very boldly. You never meet with any timidity in them. We read in the Acts of the Apostles, Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. Do not some preachers appear to apologize for what they are about to say? They trust that they will be excused for venturing to intrude their opinion. I would ask your pardon if I intruded my opinion, but in proclaiming the Gospel of Christ I have not any opinion of my own! I preach Gods Word to you, and at your peril do you reject it! You are bound to receive it as it comes from Him and no apology is to be made by the man whom God sends. So the Apostles spoke boldly in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, and Jesus Christ of Nazareth backed up their words. If God has not sent you, my Brother, go home! But if He has, in Gods name, do not apologize for His message! There is an honor put upon you by your Lord who sent you, and you must put honor upon your Master by being faithful to Him.

Thus, like the Apostles, we have to bear testimony for Christ, and we should do it in the same power. What was the power with which the Apostles testified? Was it the power of their superior education? They had not any, with, perhaps, the exception of Paul. They could manage a boat better than most of us can, but that was their principal attainment. Did they speak in the power of being (what is the word, now?) en rapport with the spirit of the age? I may as well use a fine expression sometimes! Did they speak as men keeping themselves abreast of the times? Not a bit of it! They hated the spirit of the age in which they lived and struggled against it with all their might! What was the source of their power? Their only power was the Holy Spirit and, Brothers, we, also, must come to see that there can be no power in us to win a soul for Christ but the supernatural energy of God the Holy Spirit! If we have that, the work will be done. If we are without it, we shall be as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.   
Then, again, if we are to testify as the Apostles did, we should do it with the same message. What was that message? The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Then, the world is lost. We must not stammer in saying that! And every man in the world is lost by nature and by practice, lost, with a great loss, a loss from which he cannot recover himself, a loss from which only God can save him! We must bear our testimony to that Truth of God. Then we must dwell upon the Sender of the SaviorThe Father sent the Son. That great Father against whom we have rebelled, who will bring His wandering children home, again, The Father sent the Son. We must also testify much about the Sent One. the Father sent the Son, not an angel, not a man prepared by education or training, but He sent the Son out of His own bosom, the Son out of the glories of Heaven! The Eternal Son of God, commissioned by the Father, came to earth!   
And with what design did Jesus come? He came to save, to save by making such a propitiation for sin that God could be justified, and also the Justifier of him that believes. He came to save by delivering us from the dominion of sin, that henceforth we should not serve sin, but should be lifted above it, right away from the power of everything that held us as slaves to Satan. And what was the scope of Christs work? The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. He did not come to condemn the world, but to save it, that the world, through Him, might be saved. His one mission here was to be the Savior. He will come a second time to be the Judge of allbut in His first coming, He came to be a Savior, and only a Savior. He has gone up into Heaven, but He is still the Savior, able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Himand He is the only Savior.   
In a certain district there may be many who pretend to cure the sick, but only one who is qualified to act as surgeon. And there are many who pretend to save, but there is only one qualified Savior beneath the cope of Heaven, and He is the Lord Jesus Christ, who is here styled, the Savior of the world, because He is the only Savior in the world. As a man may be said to be the doctor of a district because he is the only doctor in the district, so is Christ the Savior of the world because He is the only Savior who ever was or ever will be in this world!   
He is the Savior of the world, that is to say, of all ranks, classes and conditions of man. No difference of color, no difference of race, no difference of wealth, no difference of talent, no difference of standing and rank, no difference of education and attainment makes any difference to Him. Jesus Christ has come to be the Savior, not of the rich, nor of the poor. He has come to be the Savior, not of the learned, nor of the ignorant, but, of the world. He comes to save men as sinners. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, not merely great sinners or little sinners, open sinners or secret sinners, but plain sinners. This is the sort of people for whom He laid down His life. He has come to seek and to save that which was lost, not that which was lost in one particular way or in another special way, but that which was lost any waylost to itself, lost to God, lost to goodness, lost to hope, lost to Heavenyes, if lost to morality, Jesus Christ has come to seek and to save that which was lost!   
He was sent to be the Savior of the world because no man, believing in Him, is excluded from the merit of His death. God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He will ultimately, as a matter of fact, save none but His elect. This will be the end of all His coming, and living, and dyingbut that does not conflict, for a single moment, with the universal invitation that is to be given to you and to every creature under Heaven Whoever will, let Him take the water of life freely. Whoever believes in Jesus has everlasting life. Come unto Me, says Christ, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out. Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.   
What I am saying is the result of what I have seen and of what many here have seen. We have seen and testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Will you, dear HearersI speak to some who have never heard me beforewill you accept our testimony? If you judge us to be false, you will not receive it, but if you have judged us to be honest and true men, accept what we declare to you!   
I pray you, receive our message, for to what end do we bear our testimony? I should like John to say a final word to you and then I will have done. This is why we bear our testimony, we do it with the same design that led John to write concerning the life of Christ, and many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this Book: but these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name. There is salvation! There is Christ ready to save! Look to Him, blind eyes! Look to Him, dead souls! Look to Him! Say not that you cannotHe in whose power I speak will work a miracle while yet you hear the command and blind eyes shall look, and dead hearts shall spring into eternal life by His Spirits effectual working! God grant that it may be so, for His dear names sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
**1 John 4.**

Verse 1. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. It was so in Johns day. It is so in these days. If there were only one false prophet, we should have need to be on our guard, but, many false prophets are gone out into the world. If false prophets were all shut up in a cage, and we had to go to seek them, there might be some danger to be apprehended from them, but there is so much more danger, now that we can truly read, Many false prophets are gone out into the world.

2. Hereby know you the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. Where the Godhead and the Manhood of Christ are truly and properly confessed, so far, at any rate, the confession is of God.

3. And every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, of which you have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. So that there were deadly errors very early in the history of the Christian Church! The loving Apostle John did not handle them with gloved hands, but he dealt with them honestly and sought to destroy them. We must not wonder if, in our days, the Church has many heresies in itbut they are not to be tolerated, but to be cut uproot and branch!

4. You are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world. The people of God are few, feeble, and weak, but there is a Spirit in them mightier than the spirit of the world! And, as the ultimate victory will depend upon the strength of the indwelling Spirit, the Church of God will yet overcome the world that lies in the Wicked One.

5. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world hears them. These false prophets teach doctrines that suit carnal menThey are of the world, therefore speak they of the world. They take their cue from the spirit of the age. They speak according to the fashion of the world and, therefore, it is no wonder that the world hears them.

6. We are of God: He that knows God hears us; he that is not of God hears not us. Here is an Inspired answer to those who say that they attach no importance to the Apostles. They profess to be the followers of Christ, but they say that they do not agree with Paul and with John. Very well, John speaks in the name of all the Apostles when He says, He that knows God hears us; he that is not of God hears not us.

6. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. If you reject any part of the Word of God, the spirit of error is within you. Truth is one, and the Revelation of God is onelet us not rend it, let us hold fast by it alland so prove that the Spirit of truth is in us.

7. Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loves is born of God, and knows God. The spirit of love, kindness, selfsacrifice, holy charitythis is of God. This is the distinguishing mark of the Christian dispensation, the distinguishing mark of the Christian that he abounds in love, not in malice, anger, revenge, bitterness. Let us love one another: for love is of God.

8. He that loves not knows not God; for God is Love. I have known men, professing to be Christians, at enmity with their brothers. I have heard of a father and a son who have not spoken to one another for months. Did I hear of a mother and a daughter who would not speak to each other, and of sisters who had fallen out? This will not do! You must either give up your Christian profession or give up your hatred! The very attempt to combine enmity and Christianity is a sin against GodHe that loves not knows not God; for God is Love.

9-10. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Sometimes people say, How can we love a person who is not lovable, one who will not love us in return? Yet God did soHe loved us when we loved Him not! He loved us when there was nothing lovable in us and we ought to take God as our Pattern in all things.

11-12. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought, also, to love one another. No man has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us. Though we cannot see God, yet if we love one another, that is a proof that we have Him dwelling within us.

13-16. Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in Him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God has to us. The two things go together, knowing and believing.

16-18. God is Love; and he that dwells in love dwells in God and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts off fear. There is no slavish dread, no spirit of bondageperfect love casts it all out. May we all have that love and get rid of all fear!

18-20. Because fear has torment. He that fears is not made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us. If a man says I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar. That is very plain language! John does not mince matters. He is all love, but he is also all truth. Some people think that if you love, you will never use strong language, but that is not the case. Sometimes, because a surgeon loves the patient, he cuts the more deeply.

20, 21. For he that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loves God, loves his brother, also. Now I do not know to whom this message may specially apply in all this great congregation, but there is the Word of God as plain as a pike-staff! If you do not live in love, you do not live in God! and if any of you are harboring any animosities, ill-feelings and unkindnesses, get rid of them, get rid of them at once! The sun has well near gone downremember the Apostle Pauls injunction, Let not the sun go down upon your wrath, but, as God has forgiven you, forgive all others for Christs sake, and dwell in a lovinghearted Christ-like spirit toward all mankind.

HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK 551, 408, 561.  
Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #253 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

A PSALM OF REMEMBRANCE   
NO. 253

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MAY 22, 1859, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

We have known and believed the love that God has to us. 1 John 4:16.

It is very pleasant to read descriptions of the Holy Land from observant travelers, who, in glowing language, have depicted its interesting scenes. I must confess that all books which speak of the land where Jesus lived and died have an attraction for me. But how much more delightful must it be to journey there ones selfto stand on the very spot where Jesus preached and prayedand to kneel upon that blood-stained garden of Gethsemane in which He sweat that sacred sweat of blood! I can scarcely imagine what must be the sensation of a true Christian when he stands on Calvary, that spot of all others most dear to the Believers soul. All the descriptions that the traveler can possibly give can never awaken the emotions which would be felt if we were really there ourselves.

Now, this law of nature I would transfer to matters of grace. Let me tell you this day what I may concerning the acts of Gods goodness in the souls of His people. My description will be dullness itself compared with the glorious reality. If God should lend me help, so that I could, in glowing pictures, portray the amazing love of Christ Jesus to those who believe in Himif I could tell you of their matchless experience, their Divine drinking at the fountain of life and bliss, their heavenly feastings in the banqueting-houseall this would be nothing compared with what you would feel if you yourself could taste and handle and see and know and believe.

Let me add another figure to render this truth yet more apparent. Suppose an eloquent foreigner, from a sunny clime, should endeavor to make you appreciate the fruits of his nation. He depicts them to you. He describes their luscious flavor, their cooling juice, their delicious sweetness. But how powerless will be his oration, compared with your vivid remembrance if you have yourself partaken of the dainties of his land. It is even so with the good things of God. Describe them as we may, we cannot awaken in you the joy and delight that is felt by the man who lives upon them, who makes them his daily food, his manna from Heaven and his water from the rock. Tis feeling, tis tasting, tis actually receiving and enjoying, which is, after all, the highest oratory with which we can possibly

explain to you the sweet and precious things of God,

Now, do you not see that John could specially speak with power, for he spoke from his own experience? And do you not perceive that his language cannot be understood except we put ourselves in his position and are able to echo His Words, when he said, We have known and believed the love that God has to us? There are many here, I doubt not, who can join in this declaration of the Apostle. And may the Holy Spirit help me, while I endeavor to draw out an expression of grateful thanks from those who have believed and known the love which God has to them.

First, then, I shall look upon my text as being an abstract of Christian experience. Secondly, I shall view it as the summary of Christian testimony. And after that, I shall regard it as the groundwork of Christian encouragement.

I. First of all, we use here THE ABSTRACT OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE. Some will object to this. If you should bring some Christians up and say, Come now, just tell us in a few words what you think of the Christian life, they would begin with a deep fetched groan and then with the slightest possible allusion to mercy they would pass on to describe their continual exercises of soul, their deep afflictions, their desperate adversities and their tremendous corruptions. Then they would end with another groan. But I think the healthy Christian, if he is asked this questionCan you possibly give in one short sentence a statement of your Christian experience? would come forward joyously and say, I will say nothing about myself but I will speak to the honor of my God and I am sweetly constrained to affirm that I have known and have believed the love that God has to note. That would be his abstract of experience and the very best, I am sure, that any child of God can present. It is true that we have our trials, but it is just as true that we are delivered out of them. It is true that we have our corruptions and mournfully do we know this to be the fact. But it is just as true that we have an all-sufficient Savior who overcomes these corruptions and enables us to tread the dragon beneath our feet.

In looking back we dare not say that we have not passed the den of leopards. It would be wrong if we were to deny that we have floundered through the Slough of Despond and have crept along the Valley of Humiliationbut we can say we have been through them. We have not remained in them. We have not left our bones bleaching in the burning sun, nor our bodies to be the prey of the lion. Our sorrows have been the heralds of mercies. Our griefs cannot mar the melody of our praise for we reckon them to be the deep bass notes of our song. The deeper our troubles the louder our thanks to God, who has assuredly led His servants through all and has preserved us until now. Our past troubles are no disturbers of our happy worship. They do but swell the stream of our grateful affection. We put down all our trials into the account, but still we declare our one uncontradicted avowal, that we have known and believed the love that God has to us.

You will observe the distinction which the Apostle makes. I may not be able clearly to bring it out, but it struck my mind as being a very beautiful description of the Christians two-fold experience. Sometimes he knows the love that God has to him and at other times he believes it. There is a difference hereI hope I shall be able to make it plain.

1. Sometimes the Christian knows the love of God to him. I will mention two or three particular ways in which he knows it.   
Sometimes he knows it by seeing it. He goes to his house and he finds it stored with plentyhis bread is given him and his water is sure. The secret of God is upon his tabernacle, the Almighty is with him and his children are about him. He washes his steps with butter and the rocks pour him out rivers of oil. His root is spread out by the river and the dew lies all night upon his branch. His glory is fresh in him and his bow is renewed in his hand. He is blessed in his going out and in his coming in. He has the blessings of Heaven above and of the deep which lies under. He is like Job. The Lord has set a hedge about him and all that he possesses. Now, truly, he can say, I know the love of God to me, for I can see it. I can see a gracious Providence pouring forth out of the cornucopia of Providencean abundance of all that my soul can desire. This, however, might not completely convince him of Gods love if it were not that he has also a consciousness that these things are not given him as husks are cast to swine, but they are bestowed on him as love-tokens from a tender God.

His ways please the Lord and therefore He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. The man at such a time has a joyous spirit. When he reads the Scripture it is one great transparency from beginning to end. When he meditates upon its pages it is like a bracelet set about with the rarest jewels. He goes about his Masters service and the Lord makes him successful. He sows and he reaps, he plows and the furrows team with plenty. The sower overtakes the reaper and the reaper overtakes the sower. God gives him many harvests in a year. The work of his hands is established and his labor of love is accepted. The Lord has made him exceedingly rich, He has blessed him and his cup runs over. He has all that heart can desire. Now, he says, I know the goodness of God. This, truly, is very easy work and yet easy though it is, we ought not to forget that we have had such seasons. We have had many trials, but, in the desert of our trial, we have had sometimes an oasis like this. We can look back to some sunny spot when we could say, Surely the arms of love are round about me both temporally and spiritually. He has set me upon a rock and established my goings. Then the Christian knows the love of God.  
Another time in which he knows his Fathers love is when he sees it after coming out of affliction. He has been sick and while he has been on his bed he has been vexed with anxious thoughts concerning those he might leave behind or even about himself. In the hour of languishing he cried to the Lord for deliverance. And at last he felt the young blood leaping through his veins anew. New health was restored to him and he trod the green sward again with light, elastic steps, singing, The Lord has heard my cry, like Hezekiah and has lengthened my days. Now I know the love which God has to me. Or else he has incurred great losses in business. One after another the curtains of his habitation were rent, the cords were cut in two and all the tent pins pulled up by the invading enemy. He thought, at last, that nothing would be left him, Surely I shall die in poverty, says he, for bankruptcy stares him in the face. But now and then the tide is changed, the keel of his ship almost grated on the gravel, but now it begins to float and boldly he spreads his sails and gallantly he rides the billows. Now can he exclaim, I know the love that God has to me. He has brought His servant out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay and has again appeared to him in mercy and chased away his doubts and fears.   
So also has it been with many a man when he has for years been laboring under a heavy trial and at last escapes from it. Look at old Jacob. I believe that all his life he would have put in a demurrer against what I have just declaredthat this is a summary of Christian experience. He would have said, No, young man. I tell you it is notmy experience has been one of trouble and trial ever since I left my Fathers house. And we could tell him the reason of it, too, if he particularly wished to know. But surely when at last he put his aged arms round the neck of his son Joseph, when at last he saw him ruler over all Egypt and when his two grandchildren were brought to kneel before him to receive his blessing, the old man might have reversed what he said and no more have exclaimed, Few and evil, but, Now I know the love that God has towards me. As it was he did end his life with a song and finished by praising the angel who had blessed him and kept him from all evil. Even Jacob is no exception to the great rulethat the life of Gods people is a proof of the text. We know and believe the love that God has to us.   
There are other ways in which Gods children know their Fathers love. Besides what they see there are some things which they feel. There are times when the Father takes His child into His arms, presses him to His bosom and kisses him with the kisses of His lips. These are the fond expressions to set forth the tender communing which God has with His children. John could say, We have known, for he had laid his head on Jesus bosom. He had been with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane, he had been with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration. He had been with Him, too, when He worked His special miracles, and therefore, from the fact that he had communion with Christ at the supper and in His sufferings and His miracles, John might say, We know the love that He has to us.   
And have not you and Ilet us now speak from personal experience have not we had fellowship with Christ? There have been times when we were not nearer to ourselves than we were to Godwhen we were as assured that we were having fellowship with Him as a man talks with his friend. As sure, I say, as we were of our own existence. Bitter though we sometimes think that our lives have been, yet have there been periods in them akin to Heaven, when we could say, If this is not Glory it is next door to it. If I am not on the other side of Jordan, at least my Master is on this side of it. If I have not yet been permitted to walk the golden streets, yet these very streets on earth have been trod by heavenly footsteps while I have walked with God. Times there have been when a Christian would not have changed his blest estate for an angels wing of fire. He has felt that he was with Christ and was as certain of it as if he had seen His pierced hands and His feet. Then could he say, Now I know the love that God has towards me.   
And at times, too, there has been another knowledgenot so high, perhaps, as communion, bringing with it less of rapture and ecstasybut not less of solid consolation. I mean the infallible testimony of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God witnessing with our spirit, that we are born of God. I am no Believer in those dreams and visions which many persons mar their experience. I do not believe in those tales I hear people tell about hearing a voice, or seeing an angel. Such things happen now and thennow and then but when we are overdone with them, we begin to suspect them to be utterly false. But I speak not as a fanatic or enthusiast when I testify that there is such a thing as an express revelation made by the Holy Spirit to the individual man. This written Word of God, which is that on which we rely as a sure word of testimony, whereunto you do well to take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place.   
There is, besides this, I say, another, a distinct, decided, infallible utterance of the Holy Spirit in the soul of manwhen He bears witness with our spirit that we are born of God and at such timesand I will not stop to explain how it isthe natural man would not understand me and the spiritual man knows alreadyat such times the Believer says, Now I know the love that God has to me. If the devil himself in person should meet the Believer when he has this witness and tell him that God did not love him, he would call him a liar to his face and say, The Spirit of God has told me so and I will believe the Spirit of God and I will not believe you, you liar from the beginning, you father of lies. Now this is a very joyous part of the Believers experience, that both by sight and by feeling and by distinct inward witnessing, he can often say, I know the love that God has towards me.   
2. But there are times of thick darkness, when neither sun nor moon appear for many days, when the tempest rages exceedingly and two seas meet in dread collision. There are seasons when the Christian, dismasted and dismantled, drifts before the storm a miserable hulk, unable to grasp the rudder or to man the yards. All strength and hope are gone. He looks upward, but he sees no Helper, downward and he beholds nothing but the uttermost depths of despair. Around him there is nothing but terror and all about him everything frowns with dismay. At such a time, noble is the Christian who can say, Now it may be I do not know the love that God has to me, but I believe it. Now I believe it, says he. Yes, roll on, waves tell me that you shall engulf mebut I believe you not. He who has promised to preserve meHim I believe and on His love will I rely, even though now I see no proof of it. Now, poor vessel, drift before the storm; and you, you rocks, roar yonder with your sounding breakers. But I do not fear you, for I believe the love of God towards me. I cannot be wrecked completely. Driven before the storm I may be. Half a wreck and tempesttossed I ambut wholly lost I never can be. And now this day, in the teeth of evidence, in opposition to everything which goes against it, now I believe the love which God has for me.   
The first position, that of knowing Gods love is the sweetest, but that of believing Gods love is the grandest. To feel Gods love is very precious, but to believe it when you do not feel it is the noblest. He may be but a little Christian who knows Gods love, but he is a great Christian who believes it when the visible contradicts itand the invisible withholds its witness. No one is so grand as that Prophet who sees the olive wither, the fig-tree blasted, the vines devoured by the caterpillar, the stalls emptied and the flocks destroyedwho sees famine staring him in the faceand yet rejoices in the Lord. Oh, that is honoring God! You that believe Him in the sunshine, you offer Him pence. But you that believe Him in the storm, you pay Him pounds. No revenue is so rich as that which comes from the fat, yet seemingly barren, land of affliction. God gets no honor greater than that which He receives from the trustful faith, of a cast down but not destroyed Believer. Blessed is he who is perplexed but not in despair, persecuted but not forsaken, who is poor, yet, by his faith, makes many rich who has nothing yet possesses all things, who cries, I can do nothing, and yet can add, I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me.   
And now, do not these two states make up a summary of Christian experience? We know and believe the love that God has to us. Ah, says one we have sometimes doubted it. No, I will leave that. You may insert it in your confession, but I will not put it into my song. Confess your doubts, but write them not in this our Psalm of praise. I am sure, in looking back, you will say, Oh, how foolish I was ever to doubt a faithful and unchanging God. Bring all your doubts and fears this day. Hew them in pieces like Agag before the Lord, let not one escape. Take them and hang them up upon a tree till evening and then take a great stone and set it at the mouth of their sepulcher that they may rise no more. Oh, for grace from this day forward to say, When I know not my Fathers love, I will believe it and when I have His presence, then will I sing aloud I know that love which He has towards me. This, then, is my first head.

II. The second isthis text is A SUMMARY OF THE BELIEVERS TESTIMONY. Every Christian is to be a testifier. Everything that God has made speaks of Him. One speaks of His power, another of His majesty. The rolling sea and the bespangled sky, both tell of His power and of His strength. Others tell of His wisdom. Some of His goodness. But the saint has a peculiar testimony. He is to be a witness with heart and lips. All the other creatures speak not with words. They may sing as they shine, but they cannot sing vocally. It is the Believers part in the great eternal chorus to lift up voice and heart at once and as an intelligent, living, loving, learning witness, to testify to God.   
Now I think I can say, or rather I will speak, for the thousands of Israel gathered here this morningwe can say our testimony to a believing world and to poor despairing sinners, is just thiswe know and have believed the love that God has towards us. This is our testimony and we desire to tell it everywhere as long as we live. And, dying, we hope we shall be enabled to repeat it with our last laboring breath. We will say, when life is finished and eternity begins, We have known and have believed the love that God has towards us.   
Let me enlarge, however, upon this testimony. And in the presence of many who know nothing of God, let me give an outline of the full testimony of every Believer.   
In the first place we have known that Gods love to us is undeserved. This we can tell you with the tears in our eyes   
*There was nothing in us that could merit esteem, Or give the Creator delight.   
Twas even so Father, we ever must sing, For so it seemed good in Your sight.*

Our astonishment increases every hour when we think of His love to us, for there was nothing in us that could have caused it. Often have we asked ourselves the question

*Why was I made to hear Your voice,   
And enter while theres room;   
When thousands make a wretched choice, And rather starve than come?*

And our only answer is   
*Twas the same love that spread the feast, That sweetly forced us in  
Else we had still refused to taste.*

You poor Sinners, you think that there must be something in you before God can love you. Our testimony is that God has loved us. We are sure of this and we do not speak half-heartedly when we declare that we are equally sure that there never was anything in us by nature that He could love. We may doubt a great many doctrines, but we cannot doubt this. This is a matter of fact, that in us, that is, in our flesh, there dwells no good thing. We have known and have believed that the love of God towards us is free, sovereign, undeserved and springs entirely from the overflowing love of His own heart and is not caused by anything in us.

Another thing we can bear testimony to is thisthat the love of God is unconquerable. This is my witness and the witness of all the thousands here today. We strove against Gods love at firstJesus knocked at the door, but we would not open to Him. He invited, but we would not come. He called, but we would not hearken. We can say with deepest grief we treated our best Friend most shamefully. He knocked at our door in the night with His hair wet with dew and His locks filled with the drops of the night, but we regarded Him not. In sloth and pride we still kept the bed of indolence and self-confidence and we would not rise to let Him in. And we can testify that if His love could have been conquered, we should have conquered it, for we shot out the envenomed shafts of ingratitude. We held up against Him perpetually the shield of our hard-heartedness and if He could have been overcome, if He were not an Almighty Savior, we should have defeated Him and have been still His enemies. You Sinners, we can affirm that love Divine is a love which many waters cannot quench and which the floods cannot drown.

We can yet again bear another testimony to Gods love. We can say concerning His love that it has never been diminished by all the sins we have ever committed since we believed. We have been verily guilty and we blush to say it. We have often revolted, but we have never found Him unwilling to forgive. We have gone to Him laden with guilt, but we have come away with our burden removed. Oh, if God could ever cast away His people, He would have cast away me. I am sure God never turns his children out of doors, or this had been my lot long ago. I am certain of the doctrine of final perseverance, because I have persevered as long as I have.

If God meant to take my name out of the Covenant, He has had mighty reasons enough long before this   
*If ever it should come to pass,  
That sleep of Christ should fall away,   
My fickle feeble soul, alas,   
Would fall a thousand times a day.   
Were not Your love as firm as free,  
You soon would take it, Lord, from me.*

No, we have known, we have believed the love of God to us is not to be cut asunder by our sins, nor diminished by our unworthiness.   
And yet another thing we may say. We have known and we have believed the love of God to us to be perfectly immutable. We have changed, but He has changed never. We have doubted Him. But when we believed not He has remained faithful. We have sometimes been in the greatest depths, but never too low for His long arm to reach. We have sometimes, it is true, run so far from Him that we could not see Him, but He could always see us. We have never found an end to His All-sufficiency, or a limit to His Omnipotence. We have never found a change in His love *Immutable His will,   
Though dark may be my grave.   
His loving heart is still   
Unchangeably the same.  
My soul through many changes goes  
His love no variation knows.*   
We have known this. We have tasted and handled this. We are not to be argued out of it. We are sure it is true. God is immutable. Because He has been immutable. To us, so far, we have known and believed the love that God has to us.   
I will make but one other remark here and that is we can bear our willing witness that the love of God to us has been an unfailing support in all our trials. I cannot speak as a gray-headed man of the storms and troubles which many of you have endured. But I have had more joys and more sorrows in the last few years than any man in this placefor my life has been compressed as with a Bramah pressa vast mass of emotion into one year. I have gone to the very bottoms of the mountains, as some of you know, in a night that never can be erased from my memory, a night connected with this place. I have had to pass also through severe suffering and trial from the calumny and scorn of man, with abuse hailed pitilessly on my head. And I have had to pass through severe personal bodily pain. But as far as my witness goes, I can say that He is able to save unto the uttermost and in the last extremity and He has been a good God to me.   
Unfaithful I have been. He has forgiven that and will forgive. But unfaithful to me He never has been. And if I had the choosing of the rest of my life I would not choose, but let Him map my way to the end as He has done until now, for surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. As for you gray-headed men now present, what tales you could tell! You remember the many deliverances you have had under your sharp afflictions. You have seen a wife buried, but you have seen your God living. You have seen your children carried one after another to the tomb, but you have been able to say, The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away and blessed be His name. You have had your dearest friends sundered from you, but still have said   
*How can I bereaved be   
Since I cannot part with You?*  
You have had attacks of Satan, you have had doubts and fearsyou have been assailed by men, by earth and by Hell, but you can say *When trouble like a gloomy cloud   
Has gathered thick and thundered loud; He near my soul has always stood,   
His loving kindness, O how good.*   
Your testimony is without a flaw. Not one good thing has failed of all that the Lord God has promised, he has never left you, never forsaken you. But to this day you can say, glory be unto the name of an unchanging God, the same yesterday, today and forever.   
III. And now the last point isthe practical use of this great Truth of God. It is THE GROUND WORK OF CHRISTIAN ENCOURAGEMENT. Will you just think that I am coming down out of the pulpit now to you. I cannot perform much pastoral visitation in going from house to house and so let us do it wholesale this morning and may the Spirit of God make it a reality.   
Dear Brothers and Sisters, there are some of you here today who have been very much and very sorely tried, for your path has been through fire and through water. You are servants of God and in looking back you can say that you have been helped up to now. Just now your health and your spirits are failing you. You are brought very low, indeed. Permit your minister to take hold of your hand and look you in the face. My dear Brother, will you dishonor your God now? You say, No, God forbid that I should dishonor Him. My dear Friend, you have now before you a noble opportunityan opportunity which an angel might well envy you. You have a noble opportunity of honoring God in the fire. I will not speak lightly of your troubles. I will suppose them to be just as great as you say they are. But will you glorify him in them all? Come, you have trusted Him many times, will you trust Him now?   
Perhaps Satan has a commission from on high to try you and sift you in his sieve. He has been before God and your Lord has said to him, Have you considered my servant Job? Ah, says Satan, he serves You now, but You have set a hedge about him and blessed him, let me but touch him. And he has come down to you and he has afflicted you in your estate, afflicted you in your family and at last he has afflicted you in your body. Shall Satan be the conqueror? Shall grace give way? O, my dear Brother, stand up now and say once more, once and for all, I tell you Satan, the Grace of God is more than a match for you. He is with me and in all this I will not utter one word against the Lord my God. He does all things wellwell, even now and I do rejoice in Him.

The Lord is always pleased with His children when they can stand up for Him when circumstances seem to belie Him. Here come the witnesses into court. The devil says, Soul, God has forgotten you, I will bring in my witness. First he summons your debtsa long bill of losses. There, says he, would God suffer you to fall thus, if He loved you? Then he brings in your childreneither their death, or their disobedience, or something worse and says, Would the Lord suffer these things to come upon you, if He loved you? At last he brings in your poor tottering body and all your doubts and fears and the hidings of Jehovahs face. Ah, says the devil, do you believe that God loves you now? Oh, it is noble, if you are able to stand forth and say to all these witnesses, I hear what you have to say, let God be true and every man and everything be a liar. I believe none of you. You all say God does not love me. But He does and if the witnesses against His love were multiplied a hundredfold, yet still would I say, I know whom I have believed.  
*I know that safe with Him remains,   
Protected by His power,   
What Ive committed to His hands,   
Till the decisive hour.*   
He will bring me safe to Heaven at last, unhurt by the way.   
I have but one other use to make of my text. In this large assembly, composed of so great a multitude of men, there is doubtless some who are saying, I cannot think that God would have mercy on such a sinner as I am. I cannot conceive, says another one, though I know my guilt, I cannot conceive that the love of God can blot out such iniquity as mine. Permit me to take your hand and if mine is not enough I could take you around these galleries and down here and I could give you hundreds of hands and hundreds of lips should speak and say, Sinner, never think that the love of God can be exceeded, or destroyed, by your sin, for I obtained mercy. And round the gallery the sound would go if this were a Gospel chorusand I, and I, and I, and you might go up to the Brother and say, What were you? I was a drunkard, says one. I was a swearer, I cursed God, says another, I loved the boxing ring and the skittle ground, says another. I was a whoremonger, an adulterer and yet God has forgiven me. And O, how sweetly would we all sing in chorus, concerning the power of Christ to save, for we have all in our measure felt its might.   
Now, my dear Friend, I take your hand and I say, We have known and have believed the love that God has to us, and we are the very chief of sinners ourselves. Will you honor God by believing that He is able to save you through the blood of Christ? For if the Lord now enables you to honor Him in believing, depend upon it, He has begun a good work in you and has set His heart upon you. Sinners, believe that God is love. O trust Him who gave His Son to die. He will deny you nothing. If you ask with humble faith, you shall assuredly receive. Our witness is given. Reject it not, We have known, we have believed the love that God has to us.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1008 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

LOVES LOGIC   
NO. 1008

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 27, 1871, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

We love Him because He first loved us.   
1 John 4:19.

THIS is a great doctrinal Truth, and I might with much propriety preach a doctrinal sermon from it, of which the sum and substance would be the Sovereign Grace of God. Gods love is evidently prior to oursHe first loved us. It is also clear enough from the text that Gods love is the cause of ours, for, We love Him because He first loved us. Therefore, going back to old times, or rather before all time, when we find God loving us with an everlasting love, we gather that the reason of His choice is not because we loved Him, but because He willed to love us. His reasons, and He had reasons (for we read of the counsel of His will), are known to Himself. But they are not to be found in any inherent goodness in us, or which was foreseen to be in us. We were chosen simply because He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy. He loved us because He would love us.

The gift of His dear Son, which was a close consequent upon His choice of His people, was too great a sacrifice on Gods part to have been drawn from Him by any goodness in the creature. It was not possible for the highest piety to have deserved so vast a benefit as the gift of the OnlyBegotten. It was not possible for anything in man to have merited the Incarnation and the passion of the Redeemer. Our redemption, like our election, springs from the spontaneous self-originating love of God. And our regeneration, in which we are made actual partakers of the Divine blessings in Jesus Christ, was not of us, nor by us.

We were not converted because we were already inclined that way, neither were we regenerated because some good thing was in us by nature. But we owe our new birth entirely to His potent love which dealt with us effectually, turning us from death to life, from darkness to light and from the alienation of our mind and the enmity of our spirit into that delightful path of love in which we are now traveling to the skies. As Believers on Christs name we were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. The sum and substance of the text is that Gods uncaused love, springing up within himself, has been the sole means of bringing us into the condition of loving Him.

Our love to Him is like a trickling stream, speeding its way to the ocean because it first came from the ocean. All the rivers run into the sea, but their floods first arose from itthe clouds that were exhaled from the mighty main distilled in showers and filled the water brooks. Here was their first cause and prime origin. And, as if they recognized the obligation, they pay tribute in return to the parent source. The ocean love of

God, so broad that even the wings of imagination could not traverse it, sends forth its treasures of the rain of Grace which drop upon our hearts, which are as the pastures of the wilderness. They make our hearts to overflow, and in streams of gratitude the life imparted flows back again to God.

All good things are of You, Great God. Your goodness creates our good. Your infinite love to us draws forth our love to You. But, dear Friends, I trust after many years of instruction in the doctrines of our holy faith, I need not keep to the beaten doctrinal trackbut may lead you in a parallel pathin which the same Truth of God may be seen from another point. I purpose to preach an experimental sermon, and possibly this will be even more in accordance with the run of the passage and the mind of its writer than a doctrinal discourse.

We shall view the text as a fact which we have tested and proved in our own consciousness. Under this aspect the statement of the text is thisa sense of the love of God to us is the main cause of our love to Him. When we believe, know, and feel that God loves us, we, as a natural result, love Him in return. And in proportion as our knowledge increases, our faith strengthens and our conviction deepens that we are really Beloved of God, we, from the very constitution of our being, are constrained to yield our hearts to God in return. The discourse of this morning, therefore, will run in that channel. God grant it may be blessed to each of us by His Holy Spirit!

I. At the outset we will consider THE INDISPENSABLE NECESSITY OF LOVE TO GOD IN THE HEART. There are some graces which in their vigor are not absolutely essential to the bare existence of spiritual life, though very important for its healthy growth. But love to God must be in the heart, or else there is no Grace there whatever. If any man loves not God, he is not a renewed man. Love of God is a mark which is always set upon Christs sheep, and never set upon any others.

In enlarging upon this most important Truth, I would call your attention to the connection of the text. You will find in the seventh verse of this chapter, that love to God is set down as being a necessary mark of the new birth. Everyone that loves is born of God, and knows God. I have no right, therefore, to believe that I am a regenerated person unless my heart truly and sincerely loves God. It is vain for me, if I love not God, to quote the register which records an ecclesiastical ceremony, and say that this regenerated me. It certainly did no such thing, or the sure result would have followed.

If I have been regenerated I may not be perfect, but this one thing I can say, Lord You know all things, You know that I love You. When by believing we receive the privilege to become the sons of God, we receive also the nature of sons, and with filial love we cry, Abba, Father. There is no exception to this rule. If a man loves not God, neither is he born of God. Show me a fire without heatthen show me regeneration that does not produce love to God. For as the sun must give forth its light, so must a soul that has been created anew by Divine Grace display its nature by sincere affection towards God. We must be born again, but you are not born again unless you love God. How indispensable, then, is love to God.

In the eighth verse we are told also that love to God is a mark of our knowing God. True knowledge is essential to salvation. God does not save us in the dark. He is our light and our salvation. We are renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created us. Now, he that loves not knows not God, for God is Love. All you have ever been taught from the pulpit, all you have ever studied from the Scriptures, all you have ever gathered from the learned, all you have collected from the librariesall this is not knowledge of God at all unless you love God. For in true religion, to love and to know God are synonymous terms. Without love you remain in ignorance, stillignorance of the most unhappy and ruinous kind.

All attainments are transitory, if love is not as a salt to preserve them, tongues must cease and knowledge must vanish awaylove alone abides forever. This love you must have or be a fool forever. All the children of the true Zion are taught of the Lord, but you are not taught of God unless you love God. See, then, that to be devoid of love to God is to be devoid of all true knowledge of God, and so of all salvation.

Further, the chapter teaches us that love to God is the root of love to others. The eleventh verse says, Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. If we love one another, God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us. Now no man is a Christian who does not love Christians. He, who, being in the Church, is yet not of it heart and soul is but an intruder in the family. But since love to our Brethren springs out of love to our one common Father, it is plain that we must have love to that Father, or else we shall fail in one of the indispensable marks of the children of God. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the Brethren.

But we cannot truly love the Brethren unless we love the Father. Therefore, lacking love to God, we lack love to the Church, which is an essential mark of Grace. Again, keeping to the run of the passage, you will find by the eighteenth verse, that love to God is a chief means of that holy peace which is an essential mark of a Christian. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. But where there is no love there is no such peace, for fear, which has torment, distresses the soul.

Therefore love is the indispensable companion of faith, and when they come together, peace is the result. Where there is fervent love to God there is set up a holy familiarity with God, and from this flows satisfaction, delight, and rest. Love must co-operate with faith and cast out fear so that the soul may have boldness before God. Oh, Christian, you can not have the Nature of God implanted within you by regenerationit cannot reveal itself in love to the brotherhood, it cannot blossom with the fair flowers of peace and joyexcept your affection be set upon God! Let Him, then, be your exceeding joy. Delight yourself also in the Lord. O love the Lord you, His saints!   
We also see, if we turn again to St. Johns Epistle and pursue his observations to the next chapter and the third verse, that love is the spring of true obedience. This is the love of God, that we keep His Commandments. Now a man who is not obedient to Gods Commandments is evidently not a true Believer. Although good works do not save us, yet, being saved, Believers are sure to produce good works. Though the fruit is not the root of the tree, yet a well rooted tree will, in its season, bring forth its fruits. So, though the keeping of the Commandments does not make me a child of God, yet, being a child of God, I shall be obedient to my heavenly Father.

But this I cannot be unless I love God. A mere external obedience, a decent formal recognition of the Laws of God, is not obedience in Gods sight. He abhors the sacrifice where the heart is not found. I must obey because I love, or else I have not in spirit and in truth obeyed at all. See then, that to produce the indispensable fruits of saving faith there must be love to God. For without it, they would be unreal and, indeed, impossible. I hope it is not necessary for me to pursue this argument any further. Love to God is as natural to the renewed heart as love to its mother is to a babe. Who needs to reason a child into love?

As certainly as you have the life and nature of God in you, you will seek after the Lord. As the spark, because it has in it the nature of fire, ascends aloft to seek the sun, so will your new-born spirit seek her God from whom she has derived her life. Search yourselves, then, and see whether you love God or not. Put your hands on your hearts, and as in the sight of Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire, answer Him. Make Him your Confessor at this houranswer this one questionDo you love Me? I trust very many of you will be able to say

*Yes, we love You and adore!*

*Oh, for Grace to love You more.*   
This much was necessary to bring us to the second step of our discourse. May the Holy Spirit lead us onward.

II. You see the indispensable importance of love to Godlet us now learn THE SOURCE AND SPRING OF TRUE LOVE TO GOD. We love Him because He first loved us. Love to God, wherever it really exists, has been created in the bosom by a belief of Gods love to us. No man loves God till he knows that God loves him. And every Believer loves God for this reason first and chiefly, that God loves him. He has seen himself to be unworthy of Divine favor, yet he has believed Gods love in the gift of His dear Son, and he has accepted the Atonement that Christ has made as a proof of Gods love. And being satisfied of the Divine affection towards him, he of necessity loves his God.

Observe, then, that love to God does not begin in the heart from any disinterested admiration of the Nature of God. I believe that after we have loved God because He first loved us, we may so grow in Grace as to love God for what He is. I suppose it is possible for us to be the subjects of a state of heart in which our love spends itself upon the loveliness of God in His own Personwe may come to love Him because He is so wise, so powerful, so good, so patient, so everything that is lovable. This may be produced within us as the ripe fruit of maturity in the Divine life, but it is never the first spring and fountain of the Grace of love in any mans heart.

Even the Apostle John, the man who had looked within the veil and seen the excellent Glory beyond any other man, and who had leaned his head upon the bosom of the Lord, and had seen the Lords holiness and marked the inimitable beauty of the Character of the Incarnate Godeven John does not say, We love Him because we admire Him, but, We love Him because He first loved us. For see, Brethren, if this kind of love which I have mentioned, which is called the love of disinterested admiration, were required of a sinner, I do not see how he could readily render it.

There are two gentlemen of equal rank in society, and the one is not at all obliged to the other. Now, they, standing on an equality, can easily feel a disinterested admiration of each others characters and a consequent disinterested affection. But I, a poor sinner, by nature sunk in the mire, full of everything that is evil, condemned, guilty of death so that my only desert is to be cast into Hell, am under such obligations to my Savior and my God that it would be idle for me to talk about a disinterested affection for Him since I owe to Him my life, my all.

Besides, until I catch the gleams of His mercy and His loving kindness to the guiltyHis holy, just, and righteous Character is not loveable to meI dread the purity which condemns my defilement, and shudder at the Justice which will consume me for my sin. Do not, O Seeker, trouble your heart with nice distinctions about disinterested love, but be content with the beloved disciple to love Christ because He first loved you.

Again, our love to God does not spring from the self-determining power of the willI greatly question whether anything does in the worldgood or bad. There are some who set up the will as a kind of deityit does as it wills with earth and Heaven. But in truth the will is not a master but a servant. To the sinner his will is a slave. And in the saint, although the will is set free, it is still blessedly under bonds to God. Men do not will a thing because they will it, but because their affections, their passions, or their judgments influence their wills in that direction. No man can stand up and truly say, I, unbiased and unaided, will to love God and I will not to love Satan.

Such proud self-assuming language would prove him a liar! The man would be clearly a worshipper of himself. A man can only love God when he has perceived some reasons for doing so. And the first argument for loving God, which influences the intellect so as to turn the affections, is the reason mentioned in the text, We love Him because He first loved us.

Now, having thus set the text in a negative light, let us look at it in a more positive manner. It is certain, Brethren, that faith in the heart always precedes love. We first believe the love of God to us before we love God in return. And, oh, what an encouraging Truth of God this is! I, a sinner, do not believe that God loves me because I feel I love Him. But I first believe that He loves me, sinner as I am, and then having believed that gracious fact, I come to love my Benefactor in return. Perhaps some of you Seekers are saying to yourselves, Oh, that we could love God, for then we could hope for mercy.

That is not the first step. Your first step is to believe that God loves you, and when that Truth is fully fixed in your soul by the Holy Spirit, a fervent love to God will spontaneously issue from your soul, even as flowers willingly pour forth their fragrance under the influence of the dew and the sun. Every man that ever was saved had to come to God not as a lover of God, but as a sinner, and to believe in Gods love to him as a sinner. We all wish to take money in our sacks when we go down hungry to this Egypt to buy the bread of life. But it must not beHeavens bread is given to us freely, and we must accept it freelywithout money and without price.

Do you say, I do not feel in my heart one good emotion, I do not appear to possess one good thought. I fear I have no love to God at all. Do not remain in unbelief until you feel this love, for if you do, you will never believe at all. You ought to love God, it is true, but you never will till you believe Him, and especially believe in His love as revealed in His onlybegotten Son. If you come to God in Christ, and believe this simple messageGod was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, you shall find your heart going out after God. Whoever believes in Jesus Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

Do you believe this? Can you now believe in Jesus, that is, trust Him? Then Christ died for you! Christ, the Son of God, in your place, suffered for your guilt. God gave His only Son to die for you. Oh, says one, if I believed that, how I would love God! Yes, indeed, you would, and that is the only consideration which can make you do so. You, a sinner, must take Christ to be your Savior, and then love to God shall spring up spontaneously in your soul, as the grass after showers. Love believed is the mother of love returned. The planet reflects light, but first of all it receives it from the sun. The heliotrope turns its face to the orb of day, but first the sunbeams warm and woo it. You shall turn to God, and delight in God, and rejoice in Godbut it must be because you first of all believe, and know, and confide in the love of God to you.

Oh, says one, it cannot be that God should love an unloving sinner, that the pure One should love the impure, that the Ruler of all should love His enemy. Hear what God saysMy thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are My ways your ways, for the heavens are higher than the earth. So are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. You think that God loves men because they are godly, but listen to thisGod commends His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. While we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

Think of His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins. God has love in His heart towards those who have nothing in them to love. He loves you, poor Soul, who feel that you are loveableloves you who mourn over a stony heart which will not warm or melt with love to Him. Thus says the LordI have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and, as a cloud, your sins. Return unto Me, for I have redeemed you. O that Gods gracious voice this morning might so call some of His poor wandering ones that they may come and believe His love to them, and then cast themselves at His feet to be His servants forever!

Brethren, rest assured that in proportion as we are fully persuaded of Gods love to us, we shall be affected with love to Him. Do not let the devil tempt you to believe that God does not love you because your love is feeble. For if he can in any way weaken your belief in Gods love to you, he cuts off or diminishes the flow of the streams which feed the sacred Grace of love to God. If I lament that I do not love God as I ought, that is a holy regret. But if I, therefore, conclude that Gods love to me is less because of this, I deny the light because my eye is dim, and I deprive myself also of the power to increase in love.

Let me rather think more and more of the greatness of Gods love to me, as I see more and more my unworthiness of it. The more a sinner I am, let me the more fully see how great must be that love which embraces such a sinner as I am. And then, as I receive a deeper sense of the Divine mercy, I shall feel the more bound to gratitude and constrained to affection. O for a great wave of love to carry us right out into the ocean of love! Observe, Beloved, day by day the deeds of Gods love to you in the gift of food and raiment, and in the mercies of this life, and especially in the Covenant blessings which God gives you! Note the peace which He sheds abroad in your hearts, the communion which He vouchsafes to you with Himself and His blessed Son, and the answers to prayer which He grants you.

Note well these things, and if you consider them carefully, and weigh their value, you will be accumulating the fuel on which love feeds its consecrated flame. In proportion as you see in every good gift a new token of your Fathers love, in that proportion will you make progress in the sweet school of love. Oh, it is heavenly living to taste Gods love in every morsel of bread we eat. It is blessed living to know that we breathe an atmosphere purified and made fragrant with Divine lovethat love protects us while we sleep, hanging like a silken curtain all around our bedand that love opens the eyelids of the morning to smile upon us when we wake.

Ah, even when we are sick, it is love that chastens us. When we are impoverished, love relieves us of a burden. Love gives and love takes, love cheers and love smites. We are compassed about with love, above, beneath, around, within, without. If we could but recognize this, we should become as flames of fire, ardent and fervent towards our God. Knowledge and observation are admirable nurses of our infant love. And, ah, the soul grows rich in love to God when she rests on the bosom of Divine loving kindness.

You who are tossed about with doubts and fears as to whether you are now accepted or shall persevere to the end, you can scarcely guess the ardors of heart which inflame those saints who have learned to cast themselves wholly upon Jesus, and know beyond a doubt His immutable love. Whether I sink or swim, I have no hope but in Christ, my Life, my All

*I know that safe with Him remains,   
Protected by His power,   
What Ive committed to His hands   
Till the decisive hour.*

And in proportion as I am thus Scripturally confident, and rest in my Lord, will my love to Him engross all my heart, and consecrate my life to the Redeemers Glory. Beloved, I desire to make this very clear. That to feel love to God we must tread along the road of faith. Truly, this is not a hard or perilous way, but one prepared by infinite wisdom. It is a road suitable for sinners, and, indeed, saints must come that way, too. If you would love God, do not look within you to see whether this Grace or that is as it ought to be, but look to your God, and read His eternal love, His boundless love, His costly love, which gave Christ for you. Then shall your love drink in fresh life and vigor.

Remember wherever there is love to God in the soul it is an argument that God loves that soul. I remember meeting once with a Christian woman who said she knew she loved God, but she was afraid God did not love her. That is a fear so preposterous that it ought never to occur to anybody. You would not love God in deed and in truth unless He had shed abroad His love in your heart in a measure. But on the other hand, our not loving God is not a conclusive argument that God does not love uselse might the sinner be afraid to come to God.

O loveless Sinner, with heart unquickened and chill, the voice of God calls even you to Christ! Even to the dead in sin, His voice says, Live. While you are yet polluted in your blood, cast out in the open field to the loathing of your person, the Lord of Mercy passes by and says, live. His mighty Sovereignty comes forth dressed in robes of love, and He touches you, the unlovable, the loveless, the depraved, degraded sinner, at enmity with GodHe touches you in all your alienation and He lifts you out of it and makes you to love Himnot for your own sake but for His names sake and for His mercys sake. You had no love at all to Him, but all the love lay in Him alone. And therefore He began to bless you, and will continue to bless you world without end, if you are a Believer in Jesus. In the bosom of the Eternal are the deep springs of all love.

III. This leads us, in the third place, to consider for a moment THE REVIVAL OF OUR LOVE. It is sadly probable that there are in this house some who once loved God very earnestly, but now they have declined and become grievously indifferent. Gods love to us never changes, but ours too often sinks to a low ebb. Perhaps some of you have become so cold in your affections that it is difficult to be sure that you ever did love God at all. It may be that your life has become lax, so as to deserve the censure of the Church.

You are a backslider and you are in a dangerous condition. Yet, if there is, indeed, spiritual life in you, you will wish to return. You have gone astray like a lost sheep, but your prayer is, seek Your servant, for I do not forget Your Commandments. Now, note well, that the cause which originated your love is the same which must restore it. You went to Christ as a sinner at first, and your first act was to believe the love of God to you when there was nothing in you that evidenced it. Go the same way again. Do not stop, my dear Brothers and Sisters, to pump up love out of the dry well within yourself!

Do not think it possible that love will come at your bidding. If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be abhorred. Think of the Lords unchanging Grace and you will feel the springtime of love returning to your soul. Still does the Lord reserve mercy for the sinful. Still He waits to be gracious. He is as willing to receive you now that you have played the prodigal, as He was to have retained you at home in the bosom of His love. Many considerations ought to aid you, a backslider, to believe more in the love of God than you ever did. For think what love it must be that can invite you, still, to returnyou who, after knowing so muchhave sinned against light and knowledge.

You, who after having experienced so much, have given the lie to your profession! He might justly have cut you down, for you have cumbered the ground long enough. Surely, when Israel went astray from God, it was a clear proof to her of Jehovahs love when He graciously said, They say if a man put away his wife, or she goes from him, and becomes another mans, shall he return to her again? Why, the answer in every bosom is No! Who would love a wife who had so polluted herself? But thus says the Lord, You have played the harlot with many lovers, yet return unto Me. What matchless love is this!

Hear yet more of these gracious words which you will find in the third chapter of Jeremiahs prophecy: Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, you backsliding Israel, says the Lord. And I will not cause My anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, says the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever. Turn, O backsliding children, says the Lord. For I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion. Return, you backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Can you hear these words without emotion? Backslider! I pray you take the wings of Gods love to fly back to Him!

But I hear you enquiring, Will He still receive me? Shall I be once more   
*To the Fathers bosom pressed,*

*Once again a child confessed?*   
It shall be so. Does He not declare that He is God and changes not, and therefore you are not consumed? Rekindled are the flames of love in the backsliders bosom when he feels all this to be true. He cries, Behold, we come to You, for You are the Lord our God. I pray you, then, any of you who are conscious of gross derelictions of duty, and wanderings of heart do not ask Moses to lead you back to Christhe knows the way to Sinais flames, but not to Calvarys pardoning blood. Go to Christ Himself at once!

If you go to the Law and begin to judge yourself. If you get the notion that you are to undergo a sort of spiritual quarantinethat you must pass through a mental purgatory before you may renew your faith in the Savioryou are mistaken! Come just as you are, bad as you are, hardened, cold, dead as you feel yourselves to be, come even so, and believe in the boundless love of God in Christ Jesus. Then shall come the deep repentance. Then shall come the brokenness of heart. Then shall come the holy jealousy, the sacred hatred of sin, and the refining of the soul from all her drossthen, indeed, all good things shall come to restore your

soul and lead you in the paths of righteousness.

Do not look for these firstthat would be looking for the effects before the cause. The great cause of love in the restored backslider must still be the love of God to him, to whom he clings with a faith that dares not let go its hold. But, says one, I think it is very dangerous to tell the backslider to believe in Gods love. Surely it will be gross presumption for him so to believe. It is never presumptuous for a man to believe the Truth of God whether a statement is comfortable or uncomfortable, the presumption does not lie in the matter itself, but in its untruthfulness.

I say again, it is never presumptuous to believe the Truth. And this is the Truththat the Lord loves His prodigal sons still, and His stray sheep still, and He will devise means to bring His banished back again, that they perish not. If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. Remember here that the motive power which draws back the backslider is the cord of love, the band of a man, which makes him feel he must go back to God with weeping and repentance, because God loves him still.

What man among you this morning has a son who has disobeyed him and gone from him, and is living in drunkenness, and in all manner of lust? If you have in anger told him so that he doubts it not, that you have struck his name out of your family, and will not regard him as a child any longer, do you think that your severity will induce him to return to you in love? Far from it! But suppose instead thereof, you still assure him that you love him? Suppose he knows that there is always a place at your table for him, and a bed in your house for himyes, and better stilla warm place in your heart for him?

Suppose he sees your tears and hears your prayers for himwill not this draw him? Yes, indeed, if he is a son. It is even thus between your God and you, O Backslider! Hear the Lord as He argues your case within His own heart: My people are bent to backsliding from Me. Though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt Him. How shall I give you up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver you, Israel? How shall I make you as Admah? How shall I set you as Zeboim? My heart is turned within Me, My repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of My anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim. For I am God, and not man.

Surely, if anything will draw you back, this will! Ah, says the wandering son, my dear father loves me, still. I will arise and go to him. I will not vex so tender a heart. I will be his loving son again. God does not say to you prodigals, who once professed His name, I have disowned you, I have cast you away, but He says, I love you still. And for My names sake will I restrain my wrath that I cut you not off. Come to your offended Father, and you shall find that He has not repented of His love, but will embrace you still.

IV. Time fails, but I must speak for a little, time or no time, upon the fourth pointTHE PERFECTING OF OUR LOVE TO GOD. Beloved, there are few of us who know much of the deeps of the love of God. Our love is shallowah, how shallow! Love to God is like a great mountain. The majority of travelers view it from afar, or traverse the valley at its basea few climb to a halting place on one of its elevated spurs from where they see a portion of its sublimities. Here and there an adventurous traveler climbs a minor peak, and views glaciers and alps at closer range. Fewest of all are those who scale the topmost pinnacle and tread the virgin snow.

So in the Church of God. Every Christian abides under the shadow of Divine lovea few enjoy and return that love to a remarkable degreebut there are few, in this age, sadly few, who reach to seraphic love, who ascent into the hill of the Lord to stand where the eagles eye has not seen and walk the path which the lions whelp has never trodthe high places of complete consecration and ardent self-consuming love. Now, mark you, it may be difficult to ascend so high, but there is one sure route, and only one, which the man must follow who would gain the sacred elevation.

It is not the track of his works, nor the path of his own actions, but this, We love Him because He first loved us. John and the Apostles confessed that thus they attained their love. For the highest love that ever glowed in human bosom there was no source but thisGod first loved that man. Do you not see how this is? The knowledge that God loves me casts out my tormenting dread of Godand when this is expelled, there is room for abounding love to God. As fear goes out, love comes in at the other door. So the more faith in God the more room there is for soul-filling love.

Again, strong faith in Gods love brings great enjoyment. Our heart is glad, our soul is satisfied with marrow and fatness when we know that the whole heart of God beats towards us as forcibly as if we were the only creatures He had ever made, and His whole heart were wrapt up in us. This deep enjoyment creates the flaming love of which I have just now spoken. If the ardent love of some saints often takes the shape of admiration of God, this arises from their familiarity with God, and this familiarity they never would have indulged in unless they had know that He was their friend. A man could not speak to God as to a friend unless he knew the love that God has toward him.

The more true his knowledge and the more sure, the more close his fellowship. Beloved Brothers and Sisters, if you know that God has loved you, then you will feel grateful. Every doubt will diminish your gratitude, but every grain of faith will increase it. Then as we advance in Grace, love to God in our soul will excite desire after Him. Those we love we long to be with. We count the hours that separate usthere is no place so happy as that in which we enjoy their society. And so love to God produces a desire to be with Hima desire to be like He isa longing to be with Him eternally in Heaven, and this breaks us away from worldliness.

This keeps us from idolatry and thus has a most blessedly sanctifying effect upon us, producing that elevated character which is now so rare, but which, wherever it exists, is powerful for the good of the Church and for the Glory of God. Oh that we had many in this Church who had reached the highest platform of piety! Would God we had a band of men full of faith and of the Holy Spiritstrong in the Lord and in the power of

His might! It may help those who aspire to mount high in Grace if they keep in mind that every step they climb they must use the ladder which Jacob saw. The love of God to us is the only way to climb to the love of God.

And now I must spend a minute in putting the truth of my text to the test. I want you not to listen to me so much as to listen to your own hearts. And to Gods Word, a minute, if you are Believers. What is it we have been talking about? It is Gods love TO US. Get the thought into your head a minuteGod loves menot merely bears with me, thinks of me, feeds me, but loves me. Oh, it is a very sweet thing to feel that we have the love of a dear wife, or a kind husband. And there is much sweetness in the love of a fond child, or a tender mother.

But to think that God loves methis is infinitely better! Who is it that loves you? God, the Maker of Heaven and earth, the Almighty, All in All. Does He love me? Even ME? If all men, and all angels, and all the living creatures that are before the Throne loved me, it were nothing compared to thisthe Infinite loves ME! And who is it that He loves? ME! The text says, us. We love Him because He first loved us. But this is the personal pointHe loves me, an insignificant nobody, full of sinwho deserves to be in Hell! I, who love Him so little in returnGod loves ME!

Beloved Believer, does not this melt you? Does not this fire your soul? I know it does if it is really believed. It must. And how did He love me? He loved me so that He gave up His only-begotten Son for me, to be nailed to the tree, and made to bleed and die. And what will come of it? Why, because He loved me and forgave meI am on the way to Heaven, and within a few months, perhaps days, I shall see His face and sing His praises! He loved me before I was born. Before a star began to shine He loved me, and He has never ceased to do so all these years.

When I have sinned He has loved me. When I have forgotten Him He has loved me. And when in the days of my sin I cursed Him, yet still He loved me. And He will love me when my knees tremble, and my hair is gray with age, even to hoar hairs He will bear and carry His servant. And He will love me when the world is on a blaze, and love me forever, and forever! Oh, chew the cud of this blessed thought! Roll it under your tongue as a dainty morsel. Sit down this afternoon, if you have leisure, and think of nothing but thisHis great love wherewith He loves you.

And it you do not feel your heart bubbling up with a good matter, if you do not feel your soul yearning towards God, and heaving big with strong emotions of love to God, then I am much mistaken. This is so powerful a Truth, and you are so constituted as a Christian as to be worked upon by this Truth, that if it is believed and felt, the consequence must be that you will love Him because He first loved you. God bless you, Brothers and Sisters, for Christs sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONJohn 4:1-5. Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
Sermon #1299 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

LOVES BIRTH AND PARENTAGE   
NO. 1299

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, JUNE 11, 1876, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

We love Him because He first loved us.   
1 John 4:19.

VERY simple words, but very full of meaning. I think I might say of this sentence what the poet says of prayerit is the simplest form of speech that infant lips can tryand yet it is one of the most sublime strains that reach the Majesty on high. Take a little believing child and ask her why she loves the Savior, and she will reply at once, Because He loved me and died for me. Then ascend to Heaven where the saints are perfect in Christ Jesus and put the same question and with united breath the whole choir of the redeemed will reply, He has loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood. When we begin to love Christ, we love Him because He first loved us. And when we grow in Grace till we are capable of the very highest degree of spiritual understanding and affection, we still have no better reason for loving Him than this, Because He first loved us.

This morning, in trying to preach from the text, I would pray the Holy Spirit that every person here may first feel it. It is wonderful, the difference between a text read and heard and a text felt within the soul. Oh, that you, this morning, may be able to say from your hearts because you cannot help saying it, We love Him. If I were to say no more, but sit down in silenceand if you were all to spend the next three quarters of an hour in exercising the emotion of love to Godit would be time most profitably spent! It is, beyond measure, beneficial to the soul to take her fill of love with the Lord Jesus. It is the sweet cure for an her ailments for her to have leisure to delight herself in the Lord and faith enough to dwell at ease in His perfections. Be sure, then, to let your hearts have room, scope and opportunity for indulging and inflaming the sacred passion of love to God.

If the second part of the text shall also be made equally vivid to you by the power of faithHe first loved usyour hearts will be satisfied as with marrow and fatness! If the exceeding love of God in Christ Jesus shall be shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Spirit, you will need no sermon from meyour inward experience will be better than any discourse! May your love, like a drop of dew, be exhaled and carried up into the boundless Heaven of Gods love. May your heart ascend to the place where your treasure is and rest itself upon the heart of God! Blessed shall you be if, in your hearts, Christs love and yours shall both be fully known and felt at this moment! O, blessed Spirit, cause it to be so!

Thus should we have the text in actionand that is a thousand times better than the mere quiet letter. If you have visited the picture galleries at Versailles, where you see the wars of France from the earliest ages set forth in glowing colors upon the canvas, you cannot but have been struck with the pictures and interested in the terrible scenes. Upstairs in the same palace there is a vast collection of portraits. I have traversed those galleries of portraits without much interest, only here and there pausing to notice a remarkable countenance. Very few persons linger there everybody seems to walk on as quickly as the polished floors allow.

Now, why is it that you are interested in the portraits downstairs and not by those upstairs? They are the same people. Very many of them are in the same dress. Why do you not gaze upon them with interest? The reason lies herethe portrait in still life, as a rule, can never have the attraction which surrounds a scene of stirring action. There you see the warrior dealing a terrible blow with his battle-ax, or the senator delivering an oration in the assembly, and you think more of them than of the same bodies and faces in repose. Life is impressive! Action awakens thought! It is just so with the text. Look at it as a matter of doctrinal statementWe love Him because He first loved usand if you are a thoughtful person you will consider it well. But feel the fact itself, feel the love of Godknow it within your own soul and manifest it in your lifeand how engrossing it becomes!

May it be so by the power of the Holy Spirit this morning! May you be loving God while you are hearing and may I be loving Him intensely while I am preaching! With this as an introduction, I shall use the text for four purposes. First, for doctrinal instruction. Secondly, for experimental information. Thirdly, for practical direction. And fourthly, for argumentative defense.

I. We shall use the text, briefly, for DOCTRINAL INSTRUCTIONand one point of doctrinal instruction is very clear, namely, that Gods love to His people is first. He first loved us. Now, be sure of this point of doctrine, because forgetfulness about it is connected with much error and with more ignorance. The love of God to us precedes our love to God. According to Scripture it must be first in the most eminent sense because it is eternal. The Lord chose His people in Christ Jesus from before the foundations of the world. And to each one of His people that text may be appliedYes, I have loved you with an everlasting love.

His mercy is from everlasting to them that fear Him. From all eternity the Lord looked upon His people with an eye of love and, as nothing can be before eternity, His love was first. Certainly He loved us before we had a being, for did He not give His Son to die for us nearly 1900 years ago, long before our infant cries had saluted our mothers ears? He loved us before we had any desire to be loved by Him, yes, when we were provoking Him to His face and displaying the fierce enmity of our unrenewed hearts! Remember His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in sin. God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. When we had not as yet one throb of spiritual feeling, one pulse of hope, or one breath of desire, the Lord loved us even then!

The love of God is before our seeking. He draws us before we run after Him. We do not seek that lovethat love seeks us. We wander further and further from it, resist it and prove ourselves unworthy of it. Our nature and our practice are such that they offer nothing congenial to Divine love. But the love of God arises in its freeness and stops our mad career by its power over the conscience and the will. You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, is the voice of Sovereign Grace! Let our response be, By the Grace of God we are what we are!

The Lords love is before any repentance on our part. Impenitent sinners never would repent if God did not love them first. The Lord hates sin, but yet He loves sinners. He compassionately loved us when sin was pleasant to us, when we rolled it under our tongue as a sweet morsel, when neither the thunders of His Law nor the wooing of His Gospel could persuade us to turn from it. When in our bosoms there were no convictions of sin, when there were no evangelical lamentations because of offenses against a gracious God, He loved us!

Today, Brothers and Sisters, we are possessors of faith in Jesus Christ, but our faith in Jesus Christ did not come before His love. On the contrary, our faith rests in what that love has done for us of old. When we were unbelieving and hard of heart. When we resisted the testimony of the Holy Spirit and put from us the Word of eternal life, even then the Lord pitied us and had mercy upon usand continued, still, to invite, to entreat, to persuadeuntil, at last, the happy hour came when we believed and entered into a sense of His love.

There are many things about you now, Beloved of the Lord, which are the objects of Divine approbation, but they were not there at first. They did not precede Divine love, but are the fruits of it. To use an old English word which has somewhat lost its meaning, the love of God is preventing loveit goes before any right motions of the souland in order of time it is first, before any desires, wishes, aspirations, or prayers on our part. Are you devout today? Yet He loved you not at the first because you were devout, for originally you were not so! His love was before your devotion. Are you holy today? Blessed be His name for it! But He loved you when you were unholy. Your holiness follows His loveHe chose you that you might be holy.

You are becoming like He by the sanctifying influences of His blessed Spirit and He loves His image in you, but He loved you when that image was not there. Yes, He looked on you with infinite compassion when you were heirs of wrath even as othersand the image of the devil was conspicuous, both upon your character and your nature. However early in life you began to love the Lord, His love was first. This is very amazing, but, blessed be His name, we know that it is true and we rejoice in it! The fact is that the love of God, as far as we know anything about it, had no reason derived from us upon which to ground itself. He loved us because He

would love us, or, as our Lord put it, Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.

He had reasons in His own Nature. Good reasons fetched from the best conceivable place, namely from His own perfections. But those reasons He has not been pleased to communicate to us. He bids us know that He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy and will have compassion on whom He will have compassion. Thus He tries the loyal submissiveness of our hearts and I trust we are able to bow in reverent silence to His righteous will. Divine love is its own cause and does not derive its streams from anything in us. It flows spontaneously from the heart of God, finding its deep wellsprings within His own bosom. This is a great comfort to us, because, being uncreated, it is unchangeable! If it had been upon us because of some goodness in

us, then when the goodness was diminished the love would diminish, too. If God had loved us second and not first, or had the cause of the love been in us, that cause might have altered and the supposed effect, namely, His love, would have altered, too.

But now, whatever may be the Believers condition todayhowever he may have wandered and however much he may be groaning under a sense of sinthe Lord declares, I do earnestly remember him, still. The Lord did not love you at first because you had no sinHe foreknow all the sin you would ever haveit was all present before His sacred mind and yet He loved you, and He loves you, still. I am God. I change not, therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed. O blessed love of God, since You are first, we will give you the first place in our thoughts, the highest throne in our hearts, the royal position in our souls! We glorify You, for You are first!

Another part of the doctrine of the text is this, that the love of God is the cause of our love to God. A thing may be first and another second, and yet the first may not be the cause of the second. There may be no actual link between the twobut here we have it unmistakablyWe love Him because He first loved us, which signifies not merely that this is the motive of which we are conscious in our love, but that this is the force, the Divine power, which created love in us. I put it to you, should we have loved God had He not first given His Son to die for us? Had there been no redeeming Sacrifice should we have had any love to God? Unredeemed men, left to go on like fallen angels in their sin, would have had no more love of God than fallen angels have. How could they?

The great foundation of love is the Son given to redeem. God gives His Son and so reveals His own love and creates ours. Is not His love seen to be the cause of ours when we remember Calvary? But He might have given His Son to die for men, Beloved, and yet you and I might not have loved Him because we might not have been aware of the great fact. It is no small Grace on Gods part that, to you is the Word of this salvation sent. While the heathen have never heard it, by the arrangement of His gracious Providence you have been favored with the good news! You have it in your homes in the form of the Holy Scriptures! You hear it every Sunday from the pulpit. How would you have ever come to love Him if He had not sent His Gospel to you?

The gift of His Son, Jesus, and the Providence which leads the herald of mercy to the saved ones door, are evident causes of mans love to God. But more than this, Christ died and the Gospel is preachedand yet some men do not love Him. Why not? Because of the hardness of their hearts. But others do love Himshall I trace this to the natural betterness of their hearts? I dare not and much less do they! There is no Believer who would ask me to do so in his own case. I must trace it to the influence of the Holy Spirit, going with the Revelation of the love of God in Christ Jesus, affecting the heart and creating faith and love and every Grace in the soul! Beloved, if you love God, it is with no love of yours, but with the love which He has planted in your bosom!

Unrenewed human nature is a soil in which love to God will not grow. There must be a taking away of the rock and a supernatural change of the barren ground into good soil. And then, as a rare plant from another land, love must be planted in our hearts and sustained by Divine power or else it never will be found there. There is no love to God in this world that is of the right kind except that which was created and formed by the love of God in the soul! Put the two Truths of God togetherthat the love of God is first, and that the love of God is the cause of our loveand I think you will be inclined, from now on, to be Believers in what are commonly called the Doctrines of Grace.

To me it is very wonderful that they are not received by all Churches because they are practically acknowledged by all Christians when on their knees! They may preach as they like, but they all pray according to the Doctrines of Grace and those doctrines are so consistent with the Christians experience that it is notable that the older a Believer becomesand the more deeply he searches into Divine Truths, the more inclined he is to give the whole of the praise of his salvation to the Grace of Godand to believe in those precious Truths which magnify, not the free will of man, but the free Grace of the Ever Blessed! I need no better statement of my own doctrinal belief than this, We love Him because He first loved us.

I know it has been said that He loved us on the foresight of our faith and love and holiness. Of course the Lord had a clear foresight of all thesebut remember that He also had the foresight of our absence of love, and our lack of faith, and our wandering, and our sins! And surely His foresight in one direction must be supposed to operate as well as His foresight in the other direction! Remember, also, that God Himself did not foresee that there would be any love to Him in us arising out of ourselves, for there never has been any and there never will be! He only foresaw that we should believe because He gave us faith. He foresaw that we would repent because His Spirit would work repentance in us. He foresaw that we should love because He worked that love within us!

Is there anything in the foresight that He means to give us such things that can account for His giving us such things? The case is self-evident His foresight of what He means to do cannot be His reason for doing it! His own eternal purpose has made the gracious difference between the saved and those who willfully perish in sin. Let us give all the glory to His holy name, for to Him all the glory belongs. His preventing Grace must have all the honor.

II. Secondly, we shall use the text FOR EXPERIMENTAL INFORMATION. First, we learn that all true Believers love God. We love Him and we all love Him for one reason, because He first loved us. All the children of God love their Father. I do not say that they all feel an equal love, or that they all feel as much love as they should. Who among us does? I will not say that they do not, sometimes, give cause to doubt their love. No, I will urge that it is well for them to examine, even as Christ examined Peter, and said, Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me? But there is love in the heart of every true-born child of Godit is as necessary to spiritual life as blood is to natural life.

Rest assured there has never been born into the kingdom of God one solitary individual destitute of love for God. You may be deficient in some virtues, (you should not be), but yet the root of the matter may be in you. But if you are without love, you are as a sounding brass and as a tinkling cymbal. Whatever your outer works, though you give your body to be burned and all your goods to feed the poor, yet, if there is no love to God in your soul, the mark of Gods sheep is not upon you and your lot is not the lot of His children. Rest assured that whoever is born of God loves God!

Observe carefully the kind of love which is essential to every ChristianWe love Him because He first loved us. Much has been said about disinterested love to God. There may be such a thing and it may be very admirable, but it is not mentioned here. I trust, Beloved, we know what it is to love God because of His superlative excellence and goodness. Surely the more we know Him the more we shall love Him for what He is. But unless we love Him because He first loved us, whatever other sort of love we may have or think we have, it does not prove us to be children of God. This is the love we must have! The other form of love, if it is true, will grow up in us afterwards. That, however, is not essential nor need we unduly exalt itloving God because He first loved us is sufficient evidence of Grace in the soul.

Gratitude has been vilified as a mean virtue, but, indeed it is a noble emotion and is one of the most forcible of spiritual motives! Let a man love God admiringly because of what He is, but yet there must run, side by side with it, this grateful love of God because He first loved him, or else he lacks that which John says is to be found in all the saints! Beloved, do not vex yourselves about any supposedly higher degrees, but see to it that you love Him because He first loved you. You may not be able to rise into those heights into which others of your Brethren have ascended because you are as yet only a babe in Grace, but you are safe enough if your love is of this simple characterthat it loves because it is loved.

Within this humble form of love, which is so essential, there dwells a gracious sense of unworthiness necessary to a true Christian. We feel that we did not deserve the love which God sheds upon us. This humility we must have or we lack one mark of a child of God. There is, also, in this lowly form of gracious affection, a clear recognition of the fact that the Lords love is graciously bestowedand this, also, is essential to a Christian and becomes to him the main source of his obedience and affection. If a man only loves me as much as I deserve to be loved, I do not feel under any very strong obligations and, consequently, do not feel any very intense gratitude. But because the Lords love is all of pure Grace and comes to us as utterly undeserving, therefore we love Him in return. See whether such a humble, grateful love towards God dwells in your hearts, for it is a vital point.

Love to God, wherever it is found, is a sure evidence of the salvation of its possessor. If you love the Lord in the sense described, then He loved you first and loves you now. You need no other evidence but this to assure yourself that you abide in the love of Godthat you love Him. I was told by a venerable Brother some little time ago a story of our famous preacher, Robert Hall. He charmed the most learned by the majesty of his eloquence, but he was as simple as he was greatand he was never happier than when conversing with poor Believers upon experimental godliness. He was accustomed to make his journeys on horseback and having been preaching at Clipstone he was on his way home when he was stopped by a heavy snowfall at the little village of Sibbertoft.

The good man who kept the Black Swan, a little village hostelry, came to him and besought the preacher to take refuge beneath his roof, assuring him that it would give him great joy to welcome him. Mr. Hall knew him to be one of the most sincere Christians in the neighborhood and, therefore, got off his horse and went into the little inn. The good man was delighted to provide him a bed, a stool and a candlestick in the prophets chamber, for that rustic inn contained such an apartment. After Mr. Hall had rested awhile by the fire, the landlord said. You must stay here all night, Sir, and if you do not mind I will call in a few of my neighbors, and if you feel that you could give us a sermon in my taproom they will all be glad to hear you.

So let it be, Sir, said Mr. Hall, and so it was! The taproom became his cathedral and the, Black Swan, the sign of the Gospel banner! The peasants came together and the man of God poured out his soul before them wondrously. They would never forget it, for to hear Mr. Hall was an event in any mans life! After all were gone, Mr. Hall sat down and there came over him a fit of depression out of which he strove to rise by conversation with his host. Ah, Sir, said the great preacher, I am much burdened and am led to question my own condition before God. Tell me now, what do you think is a sure evidence that a man is a child of God. Well, Mr. Hall, said the plain man, I am sorry to see you so tried. You doubt yourself, but nobody else has any doubt about you. I hope the Lord will cheer and comfort you, but I am afraid I am not qualified to do it.

Never mind, Friend, never mind, tell me what you think is the best evidence of a child of God? Well, I should say, Sir, said he, if a man loves God, he must be one of Gods children. Say you so, said the mighty preacher, then it is well with me! And at that signal he began to magnify the Lord at such a rate that his hearer afterwards said that it was wonderful to hear him, as for about an hour he went on with glowing earnestness, declaring the loveliness of God! O Sir, said he who told the tale, you should have heard him! He said, Love God, Sir? Why I cannot help loving Him! How could I do otherwise?

And then he went on to speak about the Almighty and His love and Grace, extolling the Lords greatness, goodness and glory in redemption, and all that He did for His people, till he said, Thank you, thank you, my Friend. If love to Him is an evidence of being Gods child, I know I have it, for I cannot help loving Him! I take no credit to myself. He is such a lovely Being and has done so much for us that I should be more brutish than any man if I did not love and adore Him. That which cheered that good and great mans heart may, perhaps, cheer yours. If you are loving God, you must have been loved of God! True love could not have come into your heart in any other conceivable way! And you may rest assured that you are the object of His eternal choice!

But oh, if you do not love God, dear Hearer, I invite you to think, for a minute, upon your state! Hear of God and not love Him? You must be blind! Know anything about His Character and not adore Him? Your heart must be like the heart of Nabal when it was turned into stone! See God in Christ, bleeding on the Cross, for His enemies and not love Him? O Hell, you cannot be guilty of a worst offense than this! Here is love, shall it have no acknowledgment? It is said that a man cannot feel that he is loved without, in some measure, returning the flame. But what shall I say of a mind which beholds Christs love but feels no love in return? It is brutish! It is devilish! God have mercy upon it! Breathe the same prayer, O unloving heart, and say, Lord, forgive me and by Your Holy Spirit renew me and give me, from now on, to be able to say, I, also, in my humble fashion, love God because He first loved me.

III. Thirdly, we shall use the text as a matter OF PRACTICAL DIRECTION. I earnestly trust that there are some here who, although they do not love God at present, yet desire to do so. Well, dear Friend, the text tells you how to love God. You say, perhaps, Oh, I shall love God when I have improved my character and when I have attended to the external duties of religion. But are you going to get love to God out of yourself? Is it there, then? No, you say. How, then, will you get it from where it is not? You may go often to an empty iron safe before you will bring a thousand pound note out of it! And you may look a long time to your own heart before you will bring out of it a love to God which is not there!

What is the way by which a heart may be made to love God? The text shows us the method of the Holy Spirit. He reveals the love of God to the heart and then the heart loves God in return. If, then, you are awakened, this morning, to desire to love God, use the method which the text suggestsmeditate upon the great love of God to man, especially upon this, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. See clearly that you, by faith, trust your soul with Christ, and perceive that it is vast love which sets before you such a way of salvation in which the only thing required of you is that you be nothing and trust Christ to be everything and even that faith He gives you as a gift of His Spirit, so that the plan of salvation is all of love.

If you want to repent, do not so much consider your sin as the love of Jesus in suffering for your sin! If you desire to believe, do not so much study the doctrine as study the Person of Jesus Christ upon the Cross! And if you desire to love, think over perpetually, till it breaks your heart, the great love of Jesus Christ in laying down His life for His worthless foes! The love of God is the birthplace of holy love! Not there in your hearts where you are attempting an absurdly impossible feat, namely, to create love in the carnal mind which cannot be reconciled to God! But there in the heart of Jesus must love be born and then it shall come down to you. You cannot force your mind into the condition of believing even a common thing, nor can you sit there and say, I will love So-and-So, of whom you know nothing.

Faith and love are second steps arising out of former steps. Faith comes by hearing, and love comes by contemplation. It flows out of a sense of the love of Christ in the soul even as wine flows from the clusters in the winepress. Go to the fragrant mystery of redeeming love and tarry with it till in those beds of spices your own garments shall be made to smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia! There is no way of sweetening yourself but by tasting the sweetness of Jesus Christ! The honey of His love will make your whole nature to be as a honeycombevery cell of your manhood shall drop sweetness.

Brothers and Sisters, if we wish to sustain the love we have received, we must do the same thing. At the present moment you are loving God and desire, still, to love Him. Be wise, then, and feed love on loveit is its best food. This is the honey which will keep your sweetness sweet. This is the fire which will keep your flame flaming. Could we be separated from the love of Christ, our love would die out like a lamp in yonder streets when cut off from the main. He who quickened us into the life of love must keep us alive or we shall become loveless and lifeless. And if, perhaps, your love has grown somewhat cold. If you long to revive it, do not begin by doubting Gods love to youthat is not the way of reviving, but of weakening love!

Believe in Divine love, my Brothers and Sisters, over the head of the coldness of your heart! Trust in Jesus Christ as a sinner if you cannot rejoice in Him as a saint, and you will get your love back. You see the flow

ing fountain, how it gushes with a constant stream? And here I bring a pitcher and set it down so that the stream rushes into it and fills it till it overflows. In this manner our souls ought to be filled with the love of Christ. But you have taken away your pitcher and it has become empty. And now you say to yourself, Alas, alas, there is nothing here! What shall I do? This pitcher is empty. Do? Why do what you did at firstgo and set it under the flowing stream and it will soon be full again! It will never get full by your removing it into a dry place.

Doubting is the death of love. Only by the hand of faith can love be fed with the Bread of Heaven. Your tears will not fill it. You may groan into it, but sighs and moans will not fill it. Only the flowing fountain can fill the vacuum. Believe that God still loves you, even if you are not a saint. Believe in the mighty love of Christ towards sinners and trust yourself with Him! And then His love will come pouring in till your heart is again full to overflowing. If you want to rise to the very highest state of love to Christ. If you desire ecstatic joy, or to be perfectly consecrated. If you aim at an Apostles self-denial, or at a martyrs heroism, or if you would be as like to Christ as the spirits are in Heavenno tool can engrave you to this image but love! No force can fashion you to the model of Christ Jesus but the love of Jesus Christ shed abroad in your soul by the Holy Spirit. Keep to this, then, as a matter of practical direction. Dwell in the love of God to you that you may feel intense love to God.

Once more, as a practical direction, if you love God show it as God showed His love to you. You cannot do so in the same degree, but you may in the same manner. God loved the worthless. You love the worthless. God loved His enemies. You love your enemies. The Lord loved them practically. Love not in word, only, but in deed and in truth. He loved them to self-sacrifice, so that Jesus gave Himself for us. You love to self-sacrifice, also. Love God so that you could die a thousand deaths for Him. Love Him till you make no provision for the flesh, but live only for His Glory. Let your heart burn with a flame that shall consume you till the zeal of Gods house shall have eaten you up. We love Him

because He first loved us, therefore let us love Him as He loved us! Let His love be both motive and model to us

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

IV. Our text suggests to us AN ARGUMENTATIVE DEFENSE. You will see what I mean when I observe, first, that our love to God seems to need an apology. We have heard of an emperor casting eyes of love upon a peasant girl. It would have been monstrous for her to have first looked up to him as likely to be her husband! Everybody would have thought her to be bereft of her senses had she done so. But when the monarch looked down upon her and asked her to be his queen, that was another thing. She might take leave to love from his love!

Often does my soul say, O God, I cannot help loving You, but may I? Can this poor heart of mine be allowed to send up its love to You? I polluted and defiled, nothingness and emptiness and sinfulnessmay I say, Yet do I love You, O my God, almighty as You are? Holy, holy, holy, is the salutation of the seraphim, but may I say, I love You, O my God? Yes, I may, because He first loved me! There is loves license to soar so high

*Yet I may love You, too, O Lord,   
Almighty as You are,   
For you have stooped to ask of me   
The love of my poor heart!*

Then, again, if any should enquire of us as they did of the spouse, What is your Beloved more than another beloved, O you fairest among women? What is your Beloved more than another beloved, that you do so charge us? What is this passion that you have for God, this love you bear to His Incarnate Son? We have a conclusive argument as against them, even as we had a quietus for our own fears. We reply, We love Him because He first loved us. And if you did but know that He loved you. If you did but know that He had done for you what He has done for us, you would love Him, too. You would not need to ask us whyyou would wonder why you do not love Him, too.

*His love, if all the nations knew,*

*Surely the whole world would love Him, too.* We shall not need, to all eternity, any other defense for loving God than this, Because He first loved us.

Here is, also, an argument for the lover of the old orthodox faith. It has been said by some that the Doctrines of Grace lead to licentiousness, but our text is a most excellent shield against that attack. Brothers and Sisters, we believe that the Lord loved us, first, and most freelynot because of our tears or prayers, nor because of our foreseen faith, nor because of anything in usbut first! Well, what comes out of that? Do we, therefore, say, If He loved us when we were in sin, let us continue in sin that Grace may abound, as some have wickedly said? God forbid! The inference we draw is, We love Him because He first loved us.

Some can be swayed to morality by fear, but the Christian is sweetly drawn to holiness by love. We love Him not because we are afraid of being cast into Hell if we do notthat fear is gonewe who are justified by God can never be condemned! Nor because we are afraid of missing Heaven, for the inheritance is upon as many of us as are joint heirs with Jesus Christ. Does this blessed security lead us to carelessness? No, but in proportion as we see the greatness and the infinity of the love of God, we love Him in return! And that love is the basis of all holiness and the groundwork of a godly character. The Doctrines of Grace, though often maligned, have proved in the hearts of those who have believed them, the grandest stimulus to heroic virtue! And he who affirms otherwise knows not what he says!

Last of all, here is a noble argument to silence a gainsaying world. Do you see what a wonderful text we have here? It is a description of Christianity! Men say they are weary of the old faith and beg us to advance with the timeshow shall we reply to them? They need something better, do they? The philosophers who pander to the age are going to give it a better religion than Christianity? Are they? Let us see. We shall, however, wait very long before their false promises will approximate to fulfillment. Let us rather look at what we have already.

Our text is a circle. Here is love descending from Heaven down to manand here is love ascending from man to Godand so the circle is completed. The text treats only of love. We love the Lord and He loves us. The text resembles Anacreons harp which resounded love. Here is no word of strife, selfishness, anger, or envy! All is love and love alone. Now, it comes to pass that out of this love between God and His people there grows, (see the context of my text), love to men, for, he that loves God loves his brother, also. The ethical essence of Christianity is love and the great master doctrine that we preach when we preach Jesus Christ is thisGod has loved us, we love Godand now we must love one another.

O you nations, what Gospel do you desire better than this? This it is that will put aside your drums, your cannons and your swords! When men love God and love each other, what need for all the bloodstained pageantry of war? And this will end your slavery, for who will call his brother his slave when he has learned to love the image of God in every man? Who is he that will oppress and domineer when he has learned to love his God and love the creatures God has made? Behold! Christianity is the Magna Charta of the universe! Here is the true, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, which men will seek for in vain in politics! Here is the sacred Communism which will injure no mans rights, but will respect every mans griefs and succor every mans needs! Here is, indeed, the birth principle of the golden age of peace and joy, when the lion shall eat straw like the ox and the weaned child shall play on the cockatrices den!

Spread it, then, and let it circulate throughout the whole earthGods love first, our love to Him, next! And then the universal love which shuts not out a man of any color, of any class, or of any namebut calls upon itself to love both God and man because God is loved! The Lord bless this meditation to you, by His Spirit, for Christs sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON1 John 4.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK19, 248, 810. Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.  
Sermon #229 The New Park Street Pulpit 1

LOVE   
NO. 229

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 19, 1858, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

We love Him, because He first loved us. 1 John 4:19.

DURING the last two Sabbath days I have been preaching the Gospel to the unconverted. I have earnestly exhorted the very chief of sinners to look to Jesus Christand have assured them that as a preparation for coming to Christthey need no good works, or good dispositions, but that they may come, just as they are, to the foot of the Cross and receive the pardoning blood and all-sufficient merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. The thought has since occurred to me that some who were ignorant of the Gospel might, perhaps, put this queryis this likely to promote morality? If the Gospel is a proclamation of pardon to the very chief of sinners, will not this be a license to sin? In what respects can the Gospel be said to be a Gospel according to holiness? How will such preaching operate? Will it make men better? Will they be more attentive to the laws which relate to man and man? Will they be more obedient to the statutes which relate to man and God?

I thought, therefore, that we would advance a step further and endeavor to show, this morning, how the proclamation of the Gospel of God, though in the commencement addresses itself to men who are utterly destitute of any good, is, nevertheless, designed to lead these very men to the noblest heights of virtue, yes, to ultimate perfection in holiness. The text tells us that the effect of the Gospel received in the heart is that it compels and constrains such a heart to love God. We love Him, because He first loved us. When the Gospel comes to us it does not find us loving God, it does not expect anything of usbut coming with the Divine application of the Holy Spiritit simply assures us that God loves us, be we ever so deeply immersed in sin. And then, the after effect of this proclamation of love is, that we love Him because He first loved us.

Can you imagine a being placed halfway between this world and Heaven? Can you conceive of him as having such enlarged capacities that he could easily discern what was done in Heaven and what was done on earth? I can conceive that, before the Fall, if there had been such a being, he would have been struck with the singular harmony which existed between Gods great world, called Heaven, and the little world, the earth. Whenever the chimes of Heaven rang, the great note of those massive bells was love. And when the little bells of earth were sounded, the harmonies

of this narrow sphere rang out their note, it was just the samelove. When the bright spirits gathered around the great Throne of God in Heaven to magnify the Lord, at the same time there was to be seen the world, clad in its priestly garments, offering its sacrifice of purest praise.

When the cherubim and seraphim did continually cry, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, there was heard a note, feebler, perhaps, but yet as sweetly musical, coming up from paradise, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts. There was no jar, no discord. The thunder peals of Heavens melodies were exactly in accord with the whispers of earths harmonies. There was glory to God in the highest, and on earth there was glory, too. The heart of man was as the heart of God. God loved man and man loved God. But imagine that same great Spirit to be still standing between the heavens and the earth, how sad He must be, when He hears the jarring discard and feels it grate upon the ear! The Lord said, I am reconciled to you, I have put away your sin. But what is the answer of this earth? The answer of the world is, Man is at enmity with GodGod may be reconciled, but man is not. The mass of men are still enemies to God by wicked works.

When the angels praise God, if they listen to the sounds that are to be heard on earth, they hear the trump of cruel war. They hear the bacchanalian shout and the song of the lascivious and what a discord is this in the great harmony of the spheres? The fact is thisthe world was originally one great string in the harp of the universe and when the Almighty swept that harp with His gracious fingers there was nothing to be heard but praise. Now that string is snapped and where it has been reset by Grace, still it is not wholly restored to its perfect tune and the note that comes from it has but little of sweetnessand very much of discord.

But, O bright Spirit, retain your place and live on. The day is hastening with glowing wheels and the axle thereof is hot with speed. The day is coming when this world shall be a paradise again. Jesus Christ, who came the first time to bleed and suffer, that He might wash the world from its iniquity, is coming a second time to reign and conquer, that He may clothe the earth with glory. And the day shall arrive, when You, O Spirit, shall hear again the everlasting harmony. Once more the bells of earth shall be attuned to the melodies of Heaven. Once more shall the eternal chorus find that no singer is absent, but that the music is complete.

But how is this to be? How is the world to be brought back? How is it to be restored? We answer the reason why there was this original harmony between earth and Heaven was because there was love between them and our great reason for hoping that there shall be at last reestablished a perfect harmony between Heaven and earth is simply thisthat God has already manifested His love towards usand that in return, hearts touched by His grace do even now love Him. And when they shall be multiplied and love reestablished, then shall the harmony be complete.

Having thus introduced my text, I must now plunge into it. We shall notice the parentage, the nourishment and the walk of love. And shall exhort all Believers here present, to love God, because He has first loved them.

1. In the first place, THE PARENTAGE OF TRUE LOVE TO GOD. There is no light in the planet but that which comes from the sun. There is no light in the moon but that which is borrowed and there is no true love in the heart but that which comes from God. Love is the light, the life and way of the universe. Now, God is Life, Light, the Way andto crown all God is Love. From this overflowing fountain of the infinite love of God all our love to God must spring. This must ever be a great and certain truth, that we love Him, for no other reason than because He first loved us.

There are some that think that God might be loved by simple contemplation of His works. We do not believe it. We have heard a great deal about admiring philosophers and we have felt that admiration was more than possible when studying the works of God. We have heard a great deal about wondering discoverers and we have acknowledged that the mind must be base, indeed, which does not wonder when it looks upon the works of God. We have sometimes heard about a love to God which has been engendered by the beauties of scenery, but we have never believed in its existence. We do believe that where love is already born in the heart of man, all the wonders of Gods Providence and creation may excite that love again, it being there already. But we do not and we cannot believe, because we never saw such an instance, that the mere contemplation of Gods works could ever raise any man to the height of love.

In fact, the great problem has been tried and it has been solved in the negative. What said the poet   
*What though the spicy breezes blow soft over Javas isle; Where every prospect pleases and only man is vile.*

Where God is most resplendent in his works and most lavish in his gifts, there man has been the vilest and God is the most forgotten. Others have taught, if not exactly in doctrine, yet their doctrine necessarily leads to it, that human nature may of itself attain unto love to God. Our simple reply is, we have never met with such an instance. We have curiously questioned the people of God and we believe that others have questioned them in every age, but we have never had but one answer to this question, Why have you loved God? The only answer has been, Because He first loved me.

I have heard men preach about free will, but I never yet heard of a Christian who exalted free will in his own experience. I have heard men say that men of their own free will may turn to God, believe, repent and love. But I have heard the same persons, when talking of their own experience, say that they did not so turn to God, but that Jesus sought

them when they were strangers, wandering from the fold of God! The whole matter may look specious enough, when preached, but when felt it is found to be a phantom. It may seem right enough for a man to tell his fellows that his own free will may save himbut when he comes to close dealing with his own consciencehe himself, however wild in his doctrine, is compelled to say, Oh, yes, I do love Jesus, because He first loved me.

I have wondered at a Wesleyan brother, who has sometimes railed against the doctrine of election in the pulpitand then has given out this very hymn and all the members of the Church have joined in singing it most heartilywhile at the same time they were tolling the death-knell of their own peculiar tenets. For if that hymn is true, Arminianism must be false. If it is the certain fact, that the only reason for our loving God is that His love has been shed abroad in our hearts, then it cannot be true, that man ever did or ever will love God, until first of all God has manifested His love towards him.

But without disputing any longer, do we not all admit that our love to God is the sweet offspring of Gods love to us? Ah, Beloved, cold admiration every man may havebut the warmth of love can only be kindled by the fires of Gods Spirit. Let each Christian speak for himself, we shall all hold this great and cardinal truth that the reason of our love to God is the sweet influence of His grace. Sometimes I wonder that such as we should have been brought to love God at all. Is our love so precious that God should court our love, dressed in the crimson robes of a dying Redeemer? If we had loved God, it would have been no more than He deserved. But when we rebelled and yet He sought our love, it was surprising indeed! It was a wonder when He disrobed Himself of all His splendors and came down and wrapped Himself in a mantle of clay.

But methinks the wonder is excelled yet, for after He had died for us, still we did not love Him. We rebelled against Him. We rejected the proclamation of the Gospel. We resisted His Spirit. But He said, I will have their hearts. And He followed us day after day, hour after hour. Sometimes He laid us low and He said, Surely they will love Me if I restore them! At another time He filled us with corn and with wine and He said Surely they will love Me now, but we still revolted, still rebelled. At last He said, I will strive no longer, I am Almighty and I will not have it that a human heart is stronger than I am. I turn the will of man as the rivers of water are turned, and lo, He put forth His strength and in an instant the current changed and we loved Him, because we then could see the love of God, in that He sent His Son to be our Redeemer. But we must confess, Beloved, going back to the Truth of God with which we started, that never should we have had any love towards God, unless that love had been sown in us by the sweet seed of His love to us. If there is anyone here that has a love to Christ, let him differ from this doctrine here, if he insists, but let him know that he shall not differ hereafter. For in Heaven they all sing praise to Free Grace. They all sing, Salvation to our God and to the Lamb.

II. Love, then, has for its parent the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. But after it is Divinely born in our heart it must be Divinely NOURISHED. Love is an exotic. It is not a plant that will nourish naturally in human soil. Love to God is a rich and rare thing. It would die if it were left to be frostbitten by the chilly blasts of our selfishness. And if it received no nourishment but that which can be drawn from the rock of our own hard hearts it must perish. As love comes from Heaven, so it must feed on heavenly bread. It cannot exist in this wilderness, unless it is nurtured from above and fed by manna from on High. On what, then, does love feed? Why, it feeds on love. That which brought it forth becomes its food. We love Him because He first loved us.

The constant motive and sustaining power of our love to God is His love to us. And here let me remark that there are different kinds of food, in this great granary of love. When we are first of all renewed, the only food on which we can live is milk, because we are but babes and as yet have not strength to feed on the higher Truths of God. The first thing, then, that our love feeds upon, when it is but an infant, is a sense of favors received. Ask a young Christian why he loves Christ and he will tell you, I love Christ because He has bought me with His blood! Why do you love God the Father? I love God the Father because He gave His Son for me. And why do you love God the Spirit? I love Him because He has renewed my heart. That is to say we love God for what He has given to us. Our first love feeds just on the simple food of a grateful recollection of mercies received. And mark, however much we grow in grace this will always constitute a great part of the food of our love.

But when the Christian grows older and has more grace, he loves Christ for another reason. He loves Christ because he feels Christ deserves to be loved. I trust I can say I have in my heart now a love to God. The Apostles did not merely love Christ because of what He had done for them. But you will find in their sonnets and in their lettersthat their motive of love was that He had

communed with them, He had showed them His hands and His side. They had walked with Him in the villages. They had lain with Him on the beds of spices. They had entered into the mystic circle of communion. They felt that they loved Christ because He was all over glorious and was so Divinely fair, that if all nations could behold Him, surely they must be constrained to love Him, too.

This, then, is the food of love. But when love grows richand it does sometimesthe most loving heart grows cold towards Christ. Do you know that the only food that ever suits sick love, is the food on which it fed at first? I have heard say by the physicians that if a man is sick there is no place so well adapted for him as the place where he was born. And if love grows sick and cold, there is no place so fit for it to go to as the place

where it was born, namely, the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Where was love born? Was she born in the midst of romantic scenery, and was she nursed with wondrous contemplations upon the lap of beauty? Ah, no. Was she born on the steeps of Sinai, when God came from Sinai and the Holy One from mount Paran and melted the mountains with the touch of His foot and made the rocks flow down like wax before His terrible presence? Ah, no. Was love born on Tabor, when the Savior was transfigured and His garment became whiter than wool, whiter than any fuller could make it? Ah, nodarkness rushed over the sight of those that looked upon Him then and they fell asleep, for the glory overpowered them.

Let me tell you where love was born. Love was born in the garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus sweat great drops of blood. It was nurtured in Pilates hall, where Jesus bared His back to the plowing of the lash and gave His body to be spit upon and scourged. Love was nurtured at the Cross, amid the groans of an expiring God, beneath the droppings of His bloodit was there that love was nurtured. Bear me witness, children of God. Where did your love spring from, but from the foot of the Cross? Did you ever see that sweet flower growing anywhere but at the foot of Calvary? No. It was when you saw love Divine, all loves excelling, outdoing itself. It was when you saw love in bondage to itself, dying by its own stroke, laying down its life, though it had power to retain it and to take it up again.

It was there your love was born. And if you wish your love, when it is sick, to be recovered, take it to some of those sweet places. Make it sit in the shade of the olive trees and make it stand on the pavement and gaze, while the blood is still gushing down. Take it to the Cross and bid it look and see afresh the bleeding lamb. And surely this shall make your love spring from a dwarf into a giant, and this shall fan it from a spark into a flame.

And then, when your love is thus recruited, let me bid you give your love full exercise. For it shall then grow. You say, Where shall I exercise the contemplation of my love, to make it grow? Oh, Sacred Dove of love, stretch Your wings and play the eagle now. Let us come! Open wide your eyes and look full into the Suns face and soar upward, upward, upward, far above the heights of this worlds creation, upwards, till you are lost in eternity. Remember, that God loved you from before the foundation of the world. Does not this strengthen your love? Ah, what a bracing air is that air of eternity? When I fly into it for a moment and think of the great doctrine of electionof

*That vast unmeasured love,   
Which from the days of old,   
Did all the chosen seed embrace,*

*Like sheep within the fold.*   
it makes the tears run down my cheeks to think that we should have an interest in that decree and council of the Almighty Three, when everyone that should be blood-bought had his name inscribed in Gods eternal book. Come, Soul, I bid you now exercise your wings a little and see if this does not make you love God!

He thought of you before you had a being. When as yet the sun and the moon were notwhen the sun, the moon and the stars slept in the mind of God, like unborn forests in an acorn cup. When the old sea was not yet born, long before this infant world lay in its swaddling bands of mistGod had inscribed your name upon the heart and upon the hands of Christ indelibly, to remain forever. And does not this make you love God? Is not this sweet exercise for your love? For here it is my text comes in, giving, as it were, the last charge in this sweet battle of love, a charge that sweeps everything before it. We love God, because He first loved us, seeing that He loved us before time began and when in eternity He dwelt alone.

And when you have soared backward into the past eternity, I have yet another flight for you. Soar back through all your own experience and think of the way whereby the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness. Think how He has fed and clothed you every dayhow He has borne with your ill mannershow He has put up with all your murmurings and all your longings after the fleshpots of Egypthow He has opened the rock to supply you and fed you with manna that came down from Heaven. Think of how His grace has been sufficient for you in all your troubleshow His blood has been a pardon to you in all your sinshow His rod and His staff have comforted you.

And when you have flown over this sweet field of love, you may fly further on and remember that the oath, the Covenant, the blood, have something more in them than the past, for though He first loved us, yet this does not mean that He shall ever cease to love, for He is Alpha and He shall be OmegaHe is First and He shall be Last. And therefore remember, when you shall pass through the valley of the shadow of death, you need fear no evil, for He is with you. When you shall stand in the cold floods of Jordan, you need not fear, for Death cannot separate you from His love. And when you shall come into the mysteries of eternity you need not tremble, for I am persuaded that neither principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And now, Soul, is not your love refreshed? Does not this make you love Him? Does not a flight over those illimitable plains of the ether of love inflame your heart and compel you to delight yourself in the Lord your God? Here is the food of loveWe love Him, because He first loved us, and because in that first love there is the pledge and promise that He will love

us even to the end.   
III. And now comes the third point, the WALK OF LOVE. We love Him.   
Children of God, if Christ were here on earth, what would you do for Him?  
If it should be rumored tomorrow that the Son of Man had come down   
from Heaven, as He came at first, what would you do for Him? If there   
should be an infallible witness that the feet that trod the holy acres of Palestine were actually treading the roads of Great Britain, what would you   
do for Him? Oh, I can conceive that there would be a tumult of delighted  
heartsa superabundance of liberal handsthat there would be a sea of   
streaming eyes to behold Him. Do for Him? says one, Do for Him? Did   
He hunger? I would give Him meat, though it were my last crust. Did He  
thirst? I would give Him drink, though my own lips were parched with fire.   
Was He naked? I would strip myself and shiver in the cold to clothe Him.  
Do for Him? I should scarcely know what to do. I would hurry away and I  
would cast myself at His dear feet and I would beseech Him, if it would   
but honor Him, that He would tread upon me and crush me in the dust, if   
He would but be raised one inch the higher thereby. Did He want a soldier, I would enlist in His army. Did He need that someone should die, I   
would give my body to be burned, if He stood by to see the sacrifice and   
cheer me in the flames.   
O you daughters of Jerusalem! Would you not go forth to meet Him?   
Would you not rejoice with the taboret and in the dance? Dance, then,   
you might, like Miriam, by the side of Egypts waters, red with blood! We,   
the sons of men, would dance like David before the ark, exulting for joy, if   
Christ were come. Ah, we think we love Him so much that we should do  
all that. But there is a grave question about the truth of this matter after  
all. Do you not know that Christs Wife and family are here? And if you   
love Him, would it not follow as a natural inference that you would love   
His Bride and His offspring? Ah, says one, Christ has no Bride on   
earth. Has He not? Has He not espoused unto Himself His Church? Is not  
His Church, the mother of the faithful, His own chosen Wife? And did He   
not give His blood to be her dowry? And has He not declared that He never  
will be divorced from her, for He hates to put away and that He will consummate the marriage in the Last Great Day, when He shall come to reign   
with His people upon the earth?   
And has He no children here? The daughters of Jerusalem and the   
sons of Zion who have begotten Me these? Are not they the offspring of   
the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, the Child born, the Son given?  
Surely they are. And if we love Christ, as we think we do, as we pretend  
we do, we shall love His Church and people. And do you love His Church?  
Perhaps you love the part to which you belong. You love the hand. It may  
be a hand that is garnished with many a brilliant ring of noble ceremonies   
and you love that. You may belong to some poor, poverty-stricken denominationit may be the footand you love the foot. But you speak   
contemptuously of the hand, because it is garnished with greater honors.  
While perhaps you of the hand are speaking lightly of those who are of the   
foot. Brethren, it is a common thing with us all to love only a part of   
Christs body and not to love the whole. But if we love Him we should love   
all His people.   
When we are on our knees in prayer, I fear that when we are praying  
for the Church we do not mean all that we say. We are praying for our  
Church, our section of it. Now, he that loves Christ, if he is a Baptist, he

loves the doctrine of Baptism, because he knows it to be Scriptural. But,  
at the same time wherever he sees the Grace of God to be in any mans   
heart, he loves him because he is a part of the living Church and he does   
not withhold his heart, his hand, or his house from him because he happens to differ on some point. I pray that the Church in these days may  
have a more loving spirit towards herself. We ought to delight in the advance of every denomination.   
Is the Church of England rousing from its sleep? Is she springing like a   
phoenix, from her ashes? God be with her and God bless her! Is another  
denomination leading the van and seeking by its ministers to entice the   
wanderer into the House of God? God be with it! Is the Primitive Methodist  
laboring in the hedge and ditch, toiling for his Master? God help him! Is   
the Calvinist seeking to uphold Christ crucified in all his splendors? God   
be with him! And does another man with far less knowledge preach much  
error, but still hold that by grace are you saved through faith, then God   
bless him and may success be with him evermore. If you loved Christ better you would love all Christs Church and all Christs people. Do you not know that Christ has now a mouth on earth and has left a   
hand on earth and a foot on earth still? if you would prove your love to   
Him, you would not think that you cannot feed Himyou need not imagine that you cannot fill His hand, or that you cannot wash His feet. You   
can do all this today. He has left His poor and afflicted people and their   
mouths are hungryfor they need breadand their tongue is parched for   
they need water. You meet them. They come to you. They are destitute   
and afflicted. Do you refuse them? Do you know who it was you denied at  
your door? Inasmuch as you did it not unto one of the least of these, My  
brethren, you did it not to Me. In rejecting the petition of the poor, when   
you might have helped them, you rejected Christ. Christ was virtually the   
man to whom you parsimoniously refused the needed almsyour Savior  
was thus rejected at the door of one for whom He Himself had died. Do you want to feed Christ? Open your eyes, then and you shall see   
Him everywhere! In our back streets, in our lanes, in our alleys, in all our  
Churches, connected with every branch of Christs people, you shall find  
the poor and the afflicted. If you want to feed Christ, feed them. But you   
say that you are willing to wash Christs feet Ah, well and you may do it. Has He no fallen children? Are there no Brothers and Sisters who have sinned and who are thus defiled? If Christs feet were foul, you say you would wash them. Then if a Christian man has stepped aside, seek to restore him and lead him once more in the way of righteousness. And do you want to fill Christs hands with your liberality? His Church is the treasure house of His alms and the hand of His Church is outstretched for help, for she always needs it. She has a work to do which must be accomplished. She is straitened because your help is withheld from her. Pour your gifts into her treasury, for all that you can give unto her is given to  
the Lord Jesus Christ.   
Finally, to stimulate your love, let me remind you that Christ Jesus had   
two trials of His love which He endured with firmness, but which are often  
too much for us. When Christ was on high and glorious, I marvel that He   
loved us. I have known many a man who loved his friend when he was in  
the same low estate. But he has advanced and he has disdained to know  
the man at whose table he had fed. A lofty elevation tries the love which   
we bear to those who are inferior to us in rank. Now, Christ Jesus, the   
Lord of Heaven and the King of angels, condescended to notice us before  
He came on earth. He always called us Brethrenand since He has ascended up to Heaven and has reassumed the diadem and once more sits   
down at the right hand of GodHe never has forgotten us. His high estate   
has never made Him slight a disciple.   
When He rode into Jerusalem in triumph, we do not read that He disdained to confess that the humble fishermen were His followers. And   
now, though He reigns exalted on high, His love is still as great. He still   
calls us Brethren, Friends. He still recognizes the kinship of the one   
blood. And yet, strange to say, we have known many Christians who have   
forgotten much of their love to Christ when they have risen in the world.  
Ah, said a woman, who had been desirous to do much for Christ in poverty, and who had had a great sum left her, I cannot do as much as I  
used to do. But how is that? said one. Said she, When I had a shilling   
purse I had a guinea heart, but now that I have a guinea purse I have only   
a shilling heart. It is a sad temptation to some men to get rich. They were   
content to go to the meeting house and mix with the ignoble congregation   
while they had but little. They have grown rich, there is an Oriental carpet   
in the drawing roomthey have arrangements now too splendid to permit   
them to invite the poor of the flock, as once they did. And Christ Jesus is   
not so fashionable as to allow them to introduce any religious topic when   
they meet with their new friends.   
Besides this, they say they are now obliged to pay this visit and that  
visitand they must spend so much time upon attireand in maintaining   
their station and respectability, they cannot find time to pray as they did.   
The House of God has to be neglected for the party and Christ has less of  
their heart than ever He had. Is this your kindness to your Friend? And have you risen so high that you are ashamed of Christ? And are you grown so rich, that Christ in His poverty is despised? Alas, poor wealth! alas, base wealth! Vile wealth! It were well for you if it should be all swept away, if a descent to poverty should be a restoration to the ardency of  
your affection.   
But once againwhat a trial of love was thatwhen Christ began to  
suffer for us! There are many men, I doubt not, who are true Believers and   
love their Savior, who would tremble to come to the test of suffering. Imagine yourself, my Brothers and Sisters, taken today into some dark dungeon of the Inquisitionconceive that all the horrors of the dark ages are   
revivedyou are taken down a long dark staircase and hurried you know  
not where. At last you come to a place, far deep in the bowels of the earth   
and round about you see hanging on the walls the pincers, the instruments of torture of all kinds and shapes. There are two inquisitors there   
who say to you, Are you prepared to renounce your heretical faith and to  
return to the bosom of the Church? I conceive my Brothers and Sisters,   
that you would have strength of mind and grace enough to say, I am not  
prepared to deny my Savior.   
But when the pincers began to tear your flesh, when the hot coals began to scorch, when the rack began to dislocate your boneswhen all the  
instruments of torture were wreaking their hellish vengeance, unless the   
supernatural hand of God should be mightily upon you, I am sure that in  
your weakness you would deny your Master and in the hour of your peril   
would forsake the Lord that bought you. True, the love of Christ in the  
heart, when sustained by His Grace, is strong enough to bear us   
throughbut I am afraid that with many of us here present, if we had no   
more love than we have now, we should come out from the inquisition  
miserable apostates from the faith.  
But now, remember Christ. He was exposed to tortures, which were   
really more tremendous by far. There is no engine of Romish cruelty that  
can equal that dreadful torture which forced a sweat of blood from every  
pore. Christ was scourged and He was crucified. But there were other   
woes unseen by us, which were the soul of His agonies. Now, if Christ in  
the hour of sore trial had said, I disown my disciples, I will not die, He   
might have come down from the Cross. And who could accuse Him of evil?  
He owed us nothing. We could do nothing for Him. Poor worms would be  
all that He would disown. But our Master, even when the blood sweat covered Him as with a mantle of gore, never thought of disowning us  
NEVER. My Father, He said once, if it is possible, let this cup pass from   
Me. But there was always the If it is possible. If it is possible to save   
without it, let the cup pass. But if not, Your will be done.   
You never hear Him say in Pilates hall one word that would let you   
imagine that He was sorry He had undertaken so costly a sacrifice for us.   
And when His hands are pierced and when He is parched with fever and His tongue is dried up like a potsherdand His whole body is dissolved into the dust of deathyou never hear a groan or a shriek that looks like going back. It is the cry of one determined to go on, though He knows He must die on His onward march. It was love that could not be stayed by  
death, but overcame all the horrors of the grave.   
Now, what do we say to this? We who live in these gentler timesare   
we about to give up our Master when we are tried and tempted for Him?   
Young man in the workshop! It is your lot to be jeered at because you are   
a follower of the Savior. And will you turn back from Christ because of a   
jeer? Young woman! You are laughed at because you profess the religion   
of Christshall a laugh dissolve the link of love that knits your heart to   
Himwhen all the roar of Hell could not divert His love from you? And   
you who are suffering because you maintain a religious principleare you   
cast out from men? Will you not bear that the house should be stripped   
and that you shall eat the bread of poverty, rather than dishonor such a   
Lord? Will you not go forth from this place, by the help of Gods Spirit,  
vowing and declaring that in life, come poverty, come wealthin death,  
come pain, or come what mayyou are and ever must be the Lords? For  
this is written on your heart, We love Him, because He first loved us.

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THE SECRET OF LOVE TO GOD   
NO. 2730

A SERMON   
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORDS-DAY, JUNE 9, 1901.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE, METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 15, 1880.

We love Him, because He first loved us.   
1 John 4:19.   
THIS morning, [Sermon #1553, Volume 26FAITH WORKING BY LOVEread/download the entire

sermon free of charge at http://www.spurgeongems.org] those of us who were here meditated upon the connection between faith and love, so I thought we had better pursue the same subject somewhat further, hoping that we might still receive Divine instruction upon that important theme.

You must have noticed how continually John blends faith with knowledge and love, as in the 16th verse of this ChapterWe have known and believed the love that God has to us. All through this Epistle, he constantly repeats the words, we know, we know, we know, we know. And perhaps even more frequently he uses the word, love. Knowledge, faith, and love are plaited together so closely that they cannot be separated. They are intertwined and united like the warp and the woof of a fabric, and so they become really one. To know Christ, to trust Christ, to love Christthese are among the elementary principles of piety. Without all of these Graces, there is no true religion. But if these things are in us, and abound, they make us to be neither barren nor unfruitful.

When you notice that knowledge, faith, and love are placed like a set of precious jewels in one case, it leads you to see how necessary it is that all the powers of our nature should be renewed. Our intellects need to be regenerated so that we may be able to know Christ, for those who are unspiritual do not know Him. They hear about Him, but they are strangers to Him. Spiritual things are only known to spiritual men. Faith is an act partly of the intellect and partly of the affections and we must, therefore, have both head and heart renewed by the Spirit of God, or we shall not have true faith. Even though the mind may be purified, it will not suffice unless the affections are also cleansed, because love to God never comes out of a foul heartit is a plant that will not grow on the dunghill of our corrupt nature. We must be transformed by the renewing of our minds, or else we can never know God, nor trust God, nor love God. In fact, it comes to this, as Christ told Nicodemus, You must be born again.

There must be a thorough, real, radical changenot of this faculty or that, but of the whole man. He that sits upon the Throne of God says, Behold, I make all things new. And all who come into His Kingdom are made new creatures in Christ Jesus just as much as if they had been annihilated and had been created over again! What a solemn influence this Truth of God should exercise over us! In what a clear light is true religion thus set before us! It is no mere childs play, no matter to be settled offhand, without thought or consideration. Search yourselves and see whether the Spirit of God has worked in you the true knowledge, the true faith, and the true lovefor, otherwise, whatever you may think you possess of any of these thingsthey are not of God!

This short text is one from which I have often preached to you. I notice that there are already three sermons [Sermon #229, Volume 5LOVE; #1008, Volume 17  
LOVES LOGIC; #1299, Volume 22LOVES BIRTH AND PARENTAGEread/download all these sermons free of

charge at http://www.spurgeongems.org] upon it published in my volumesand I hope to preach from it a good many more times if I am spared, for it is one of those inexhaustible wells into which you may let down the bucket every morningand always pull it up full! It is a mine with a good many seams of the richest ore. You may think that you have dug all its treasures out, but you have only to sink a new shaft to find that there is another seam just as rich as the former one! and when you have brought all that wealth to the surfaceand that may take your whole lifetimesomeone else may sink another shaft and open up a fresh vein!

I. I shall try to explain the text, first, by showing you that OUR LOVE TO GOD IS A FACT WHICH DESERVES AN AVOWAL.   
Is it a fact with you, dear Friend, or is it not? Let every one of us answer this question for himself or herself. With some of us, blessed be God, it is a fact that we do love Godit is a fact that is worth speaking out and worth writing down. The Holy Spirit, Himself, thought it worthwhile to move John to write down for himself and for his brethren, We love Him. Some feel that they must honestly confess that they do not love the Lord and there may be others who are quite indifferent as to whether they love Him or not. But there are some who must avow their affection for Him. The very stones in the street would cry out against them if they did not confess their love to their Lord! They feel compelled to say, in the face of all the world, We love Him. They do not say it boastingly, for they give the reason why they love Himbecause He first loved usa reason drawn from the Grace of God which prevents anything like boasting concerning it. Yet, trustfully, boldly, unhesitatingly, they do say outright, so that whoever will, may hear it, We love Him. Others may not, but we do, and we gather together as a company of people who are agreed upon this point, We love Him. We love God especially as He is revealed to us in the Person of Jesus Christ, His only-begotten and well-beloved Son, who loved us and gave Himself for us.   
If you ask me, Why ought this fact to be avowed? I answer, first, because there can be no good reason for concealing it. I cannot imagine a true man saying, I love Christ, but I do not want others to know that I love Him, lest they should laugh at me. That is a reason to be laughed at, or rather, to be wept over! Afraid of being laughed at? O Sir, this is, indeed, a cowardly fear! Are there not some of Christs servants who live in the full glare of public observation and whose names are ridiculed every hour of the day? Yet has that ridicule ever broken their bones, or their hearts? Verily, no! And if God makes men of us, we ought never to be afraid of such a thing as a sneer, or a jeer, or a jest on account of our religion.   
Perhaps some will say that they do love Christ, but that if they avowed their affection for Him, they would provoke opposition. Of course you would! Did not God Himself say so to the serpent in the Garden of Eden, I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed? Did you expect the womans seed to be loving the Lord, and yet not to be opposed by the serpents seed? Did not Jesus say to His disciples, If you were of the world, the world would love his own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you? You know how the world treated Him and shall the disciple be above his Master, the servant above his Lord?   
So, my Brothers and Sisters, if you love the Lord, say, We love Him, for there is no good reason why you should not avow your affection for Him. But, on the other hand, there is abundant reason why you should do so, for, first, Jesus Christ deserves and claims that avowal. He was not ashamed of His love for us. He left all the glories of Heaven that He might espouse our cause. And when we came to His feet, burdened and guilty, and full of woes, there was not one lovely trait in our character to attract Him toward usyet He took pity upon us, and loved us, and saved us and now He pleads for us in Heaven! He is not ashamed to call us brethren, so, surely, we oughtbravely and joyfullyto declare that we are on His side!  
We ought not to need any urging to that avowal. But if we do, let us remember that Christ claims it, for He has said, Whoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in the Glory of His Father with the holy angels. And He also said, Whoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God: but he that denies Meand the apposition, you see, makes that word, deny, mean, he that does not confess Me he that denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God. Come, then, Brothers and Sisters, since Christ claims it, and so richly deserves it, let the avowal of this fact be made, if fact it isWe love Him.   
It ought to be made, also, because it puts us among most blessed company. I wish I had the tongue of the eloquent, so that I could depict for you that great cloud of witnesses up on high who, with one voice, exclaim, We love Him. If I ask all who are in Heaven, Who among you loves Jesus Christ? I seem at once to hear a response, like Niagara in volume, but far sweeter in sound, We love Him. And above all human and angelic voices comes the declaration of the eternal Father, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.   
Look through all the pages of history and put to the noblest men and women, who seem still to live, this question, Who loves Christ? and, at once, up from dark dungeons and cruel racks there rises the confessors cry, We love Him! And from the fiery stake, where they clapped their hands as they were being burned to death, the same answer comes, We love Him! If you could walk through the miles of catacombs at Rome and if the holy dead, whose dust lies there, could suddenly wake up, they would all shout, We love Him! The best and bravest of men, the noblest and purest of women, have all been in this glorious company. So, surely, you are not ashamed to come forward and say, Put my name down among them. Though meanest of them all, I wish that we might comprehendme, my children and my friendsthat we all might be able to truthfully say, We love Him. Happy are they who enlist in such an army as this, which has emblazoned on its banners this grand declaration, We love Him.   
Further, dear Friends, if you love the Lord, confess that fact,

because your avowal may influence others. It may be that some who do not yet love Him, will be encouraged to do so when they hear you say, We love Him. Many a child has learned to love Christ through his parents godly example. And many a stranger to true religion has been induced to yield his heart to Jesus by seeing the loving behavior of those who were Christs disciples. So, for this poor worlds sake, confess your love to your Lord! Perhaps you will never be a preacher and you need not wish to be one unless you are Divinely called to the office, but you can at least be a confessor of Christ and, by that avowal, and by living consistently with it, you will draw your one or two to the Savior, in whose sight every soul is precious beyond all value.   
Besides, it may be a great blessing to yourself to avow your love to Christ. I always look back, with deep gratitude, to the day in which I was baptized. You know that we baptize none but those who profess to have believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, so it is absolutely certain that we attribute no saving efficacy to Baptism in water, yet, at the same time, we have proved, again and again, that there is a distinct blessing in the observance of the ordinance. It was so in my case. Up to that time I was timorous and tremblingand afraid to confess Christ. But after I went into the river and was publicly baptized into His death, I lost all fear of man and I think I can honestly say that I have never been ashamed to acknowledge my Lord from that day to this. That coming out boldly for Christ was like crossing the Rubicon, or burning the boatsno retreat was possible after thatnor have I ever wanted to go back to the world from which I then came out.   
The world has had many an ill word for me from that day to this, and there is no love lost between us. I have done with the world as the world has done with meI am crucified unto the world, and the world unto me. And you Christian people will find it good when you can also say, We have come right out from the world and we love Christ. Perhaps somebody says, I would not be admitted into society if I were to confess Christ. Society? Humph!

*In such society as this*

*My weary soul would rest!   
The man that dwells where Jesus is,   
Must be forever blessed.*

Be out-and-out for Him! Unfurl your colors, never hide them, but nail them to the mast and say to all who ridicule the saints, If you have any ill words for the followers of Christ, pour them out upon me! If you call us canting hypocrites, Presbyterians, Methodistssay what you like about usI am quite prepared to bear my share of your slander. I will even glory in it, if so it must be! But know thisyou shall hear it whether you like it or notI love Christ, and among the people whose names are written down as lovers of the Lord, my name shall stand, unworthy though I am of such an honor. This is a fact which deserves avowal and I would rejoice if I could induce some of you who have never made that avowal, to join yourselves openly with the people of God in our Lords appointed way!

II. Now we will take the text in another way and note, secondly, that OUR LOVE IS AN EFFECT FLOWING FROM A CAUSEWe love Him, because He first loved us.

And, first, it is not the result of effort. We do not love God because we tried to do so. True love cannot come in that way. You may say, I intend to think, and you may succeed in doing it, but you cannot act like that with regard to love. Oh, no! Love is not a slave to be at any mans beck and callit is a masterand when even the lowest form of love comes upon a man, it carries him right away wherever it will! So, this highest type of human loveour love to Godovermasters us. It is never the result of effort on our part. Did you ever hear a mother say, I will try to love my child? I do not know how she would go to work to bring about such a state of things as that. Oh, no! She loves her child naturallyshe cannot help loving her own offspring. I never tried to love my sons. I cannot help loving them! My love to them is not the effect of any effort on my part. It is as free as the dew that drops from Heavenwe may not know how it comes, but we know that we have not made it.

Nor is love to God produced in any heart as a matter of duty. We love God, not because we felt that we ought to love Him, but, because He first loved us. A sense of duty is a very proper thing concerning many matters and I do not deny that it is our duty to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength, for this is the very essence of the Law of the Lord. But no man ever loves as a mere matter of duty. You love even an earthly object because you cannot help yourselfand you love God because He is infinitely lovely and because He has so completely won your heart as to engross your whole affection. Because He first loved us and that love of His has been shed abroad in our hearts, we have loved Him in return as a matter of coursewe cannot help doing so. The mighty deeps of His immeasurable love, high up on the eternal hills, flow down into the inmost recesses of our empty hearts and when, afterwards, a fountain of love is seen springing up out of them, the secret of its action is to be traced to that great reservoir away up on the everlasting hills!

So our love to God is not the result of effort, nor does it arise from a sense of dutyit comes by knowledge and faith. As John says, We have known and believed the love that God has to us. We have been informed by a Revelation in this Book, which we accept as Infallible, that, God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. We have believed in Him. That is, we have trusted Him. We know, therefore, that we shall not perish, but that we have everlasting life. And now we love God for having bestowed upon us the priceless gift of His dear Son to redeem us from death and destruction.

Further, the cause of our love to God abundantly justifies it. People say that love is blind, but, in this case, the eyes of love are wide open and farseeing. Love can look the Savior in the face and point to His beauties, which fully justify all its admiration of Him and devotion to Him. We read the story of Christof His unique life in human flesh and His sacrificial death for our sins, and we say that if we did not love Him, we would be, of all men, the most ungrateful. As He has laid down His life for us and as He still lives to carry on the work of our salvationas He has loved us from before the foundation of the world and will love us when this world has passed awaywe must love Him. It is wasting words to argue over this matter! There is, in the natural and proper order of things, an absolute necessity that such a love as Christs is should have the supreme affection of our hearts in return.

We feel, also, that such a cause is capable of producing a far larger result than we have ever yet experienced. Because He first loved us, we expect to love Him much more than we do at present. And we believe that if we loved Him so much that men called us fanatics, we would be perfectly justified and that, if our heart were all taken up with Himif we lived for nothing else but to serve Himif we had not a breath or a pulse that was not devoted to Himif we laid down our lives for Himyes, if we had ten thousand lives and laid them all down for Himwe think that such love as that which He spontaneously showed to us when we were His enemies would perfectly justify us for doing all that, and ten thousand times more if it were possible!

See you, then, dear Brothers and Sisters, that our love to our Lord Jesus Christ is an effect produced by a great cause, namely, His eternal love to us! Oh, if you do really believe that He has loved you so, sit down and turn the subject over in your mind, and say to yourself, Jesus loves me! Jesus chose me! Jesus redeemed me! Jesus called me! Jesus has pardoned me! Jesus has taken me into union with Himself! Jesus has made me to be a part of the bride, the Lambs wife! I shall be one with Him forever! He will put a crown upon my head and I shall sit with Him upon His Throne! And this may happen within a weekperhaps I shall spend next Sabbath seeing Him face to face. With such a hope as this, you must love Him, must you not? Can your hearts resist His charms?

*Hard is the heart that does not feel   
Some sweet affection move*

whenever the love of Christ is proclaimed! Yet we must not try to make ourselves love our Lord, but first look to Christs love, for His love to us will beget in us, love to Him. I know that some of you are greatly distressed because you cannot love Christ as much as you would like to doand you keep on fretting because it is so. Now, just forget your own love to Him and think of His great love to you! And then, immediately, your love will come to something more like that which you would desire it to be.

III. But now, thirdlyand I must speak but briefly upon each point OUR LOVE IS A SIMPLICITY FOUNDED UPON A MYSTERY. We love Him. That is simple enough. Because He first loved us. Ah, there is a great mystery which none of us can fully understand!

I say that our love to Christ is a simplicity and I want you to keep it so, because some people treat it metaphysically. Now, what is love? Will somebody give us a clear definition of it? Yes. Now, will somebody else give us another? By the time that we have two or three hundred definitions of love and put them all together, it is very probable that we shall have lost all idea of what love really is! It is delight, it is complacency, it is longing for association, it iswell, you know what it is, do you not? for if not, I cannot tell you what it is! We get into the region of metaphysics when we begin to talk about loveand there we lose ourselves. And I have known people try to describe what love to Christ is, and, very soon, they have gone down in that sea. They could not explain it, for it does not go to be explained.

Sometimes I meet with persons in trouble of this sort. One says, I read that I ought to love Christ with a disinterested love. Does not Francis Xavier say *Not with the hope of gaining anything,*

*Not seeking a reward*   
and so onteaching us that we ought to love Christ simply for His own sake? Yes, I know that is his teaching, and that many holy men have thought they kept to that, and I daresay they have. But I also know that love may be perfectly genuine and yet be as far as possible from being disinterested. For instance, do you doubt the reality of the love of that little babe to its mother? No. If there is love anywhere, it is in that tiny child towards its parent. But is that love disinterested? Certainly not! Is not the love of dear kind children to their father and mother true love, and very sweet love, too? Of course it is, and we delight in itbut is it disinterested? No, they love us because, for years, they have received kindnesses at our hands and they expect we shall treat them in the same fashion in the future.

And I think that you and I will never be able to talk about being disinterested in our love to God when the very breath we breathe is His gift! His daily mercy supplies us with food and we are clothed and cared for by His love. We are debtorsso deeply drowned in debt to Him that we must leave off talking about being disinterested! Why, we are always receiving something or other from our God and so we shall be till we die! We are beggars at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, receiving daily alms from Christ and, inasmuch as John, who was, perhaps, the noblest of all the saints, only got so far as to say, We love Him, because He first loved us, I am quite satisfied if I can get as far as John did! And if you cannot say anymore than that, you may be well content if you can join with John and the rest of the disciples of Christ in saying, We love Him, because He first loved us. Do not trouble yourself about the metaphysical distinctions which some try to draw! If you love Christ, it is a simple thing, though you may not be able to explain it to others, or even to yourself.

Further, you must not always expect to display that love to the same extent. We are sometimes very foolish about that matter. You have an intense affection for your child, but you are busy all day long in your shop or your warehouse and, perhaps, throughout the whole day not one thought of your boy has crossed your mind. Does anybody say that you do not love him? No. Your love was just as true as ever, but there were other things that claimed your attention. Possibly you are away on a long journey and, one evening, as you are sitting down to rest, there comes a letter from your child. And as you read it, you say, Bless his little heart, I wish I had him on my knee at this moment. Something has come, you see, to awaken the love that was there all the while, for true love in our heart is often like the partridge or the pheasant in the shooting time. When somebody comes near, up they go! Yes, but they were there beforethey would not have flown up if they had not been under cover. So, often, do the Graces of Christians hide themselves away for a time till the occasion for their display arises. And then, up they start, but they would not have started up if they had not been there!

We were singing, a few minutes ago   
*If ever I loved You, my Jesus, tis now.*   
Well, if you meant it, then, you will still love Him tomorrow when your hands are busily occupied at your toilsome task, or your brain is counting up the long rows of figures which make your eyes ache, or you have to wait upon so many customers that you get utterly weary. You may not be able to be always thinking about Divine subjects, but if your heart is right, your love to your Lord is there all the while. We cannot always tell, during the day, where the rooks live, for they fly all over the fields. But at night we see which way they go to where their nests are built in the old rookery. So, your thoughts may fly here and there during the day, but when you get home they come back to your blessed Lord and Master. That is where the home of your heart is, for when it gets the opportunitywhen it is let go, as the Apostles wereit goes to its own company. So may it always be with you, Beloved!

But our love to Christ, though it is, in itself, a simplicity, is based upon a great mystery. The mystery is that He should ever have loved us at all. Can anybody tell us how it was that Christ ever began to love us? I sometimes fancy that I could explain why Jesus Christ loved some of you, but I cannot make out why He ever loved methat is a matter which I must leave until I see Him. But I suppose it was because He would do it because His own Sovereign Will so determined. Certainly, I cannot conceive of any other cause. And if any of you ever think that you were saved because you were better than other people, or that you owe the first advances towards being saved to your own free willwell, I am glad if there are any such good people about, but I know that it was not so with me! And I think that the most of Gods people will say, No, no, no, no! If there is any difference between us and others, it is the Grace of God that has made it, so let Him have all the glory of it. There is a difference between some of us and others whom we knowand whoever made it ought to have the crown for it. If you made it yourself, Brother, you can claim the crown. But I know that you will not do that if you are really a lover of the Lord, but that you will cry with us, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Your name give Glory, for Your mercy, and for Your truths sake. So I conclude that we are all agreed that the difference between us and our former selves, and our old companions, is one which Sovereign Grace has madeand that this is a great mysteryalthough our love in return for it is a simplicity.

IV. I can only give you just a few sentences upon our last point, which is thisOUR LOVE IS A FORCE SUSTAINED BY A HIGHER FORCE.   
Our love is a force. If you truly love God, you feel it to be so. It is a force that comforts and emboldens us. Out of love to God, we feel that we can even dare the devil to do his worst against us. When love fills us to the fullest, it makes us courageous.   
Love to God also constrains us. With the Apostle Paul, we cry, For the love of Christ constrains us. Because of this love, we often do things which we would never have chosen to do of ourselvesand we leave undone the things we should once have liked to do. Love is strong as death. And when once it gets full possession of a man, you know how completely it will carry him awayand love to God is indeed a mighty force of which, perhaps, we have not any of us proved the full power as yet.   
But it is a force which is kept up by a higher forcenamely, the love of God to us! What a force that is! Who can ever estimate its power? The love of God to men was so strong that when death and Hell strove against it, they were driven away like chaff before the wind! All our sins stood like a mighty mountain, barring our way to God, but His love leveled every hill and made a plain path by which we might approach His Mercy Seat. The love of God to His people is Omnipotentthere is no force in nature that can, for a single moment, be compared with it! It is irresistible, for the love of God conquered God, Himself, and brought Him down to earth in Human form   
*First, in our mortal flesh, to serve.   
Then, in that flesh, to die!*   
Found guilty of excess of love, our Savior was put to death that He might redeem us! He could lose His life for us, but He could not lose His love to us. O mighty force!   
Then, do you not see, Brothers and Sisters, if there is such a force as this to draw upon, that the love of God, when it is shed abroad in our hearts, can give our love a greater force than it has ever had? With that greater force there can be put into our lives an energy which we have never known! It is possible for us to rise to something far higher than our past poor little selveswe can do something more than we have ever dreamed of doingand God can use us to perform nobler deeds of selfdenial, to rise to greater heights of daring and to stoop to deeper depths of humiliation than we have ever yet ventured!   
Strong Son of Godimmortal love, nor pain, nor grief, nor bloody sweat, nor death, itself, could stop You and, by Your sacred passion, we implore You to let Your love drop into our souls till we, too, shall become strong, like Yourself, according to our measure, and shall be able to contend for You, to suffer for You, to live for You and to die for You, all the while giving this as the explanation of it allWe love Him, because He first loved us! God bless you, Beloved, for Christs sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **1 JOHN 4.**

Verse 1. Beloved, believe not every spirit. A simpleton believes every word that he hears, but the wise mans eyes are in his head, so he examines what he sees and hears, and does not blindly accept whatever may be told to him. So John says, Believe not every spirit.

1-3. But try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know you the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God. If there is any question raised about the Deity and the Humanity of Christ, do not listen any longer. When you taste the first morsel of meat from a joint and you find that it is tainted, there is no necessity for you to eat all the rest to see if it is good! And if any man questions the true Divinity and the real Humanity of Christ, have nothing to do with him, and give no heed to what he says, for he is not of God.

3, 4. And this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. You are of God, little children. You who are trusting in Jesus and are born again of His Spirit, though you may have only a small influence with others and are but as little children in your own esteem, yet, you are of God.

4. And have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world. There are two spiritsthe Holy Spirit dwells in Believersthe evil spirit dwells in the ungodly. But the Holy Spirit is stronger than the evil spirit and will certainly overcome him.

5. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world hears them. When people say to you, Everybody says such-andsuch, that is not the reason why you should believe it! All the men of advanced thoughtall the scholars of the age, speak thus. Yes, just soThey are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world hears them.

6. We are of God: he that knows God hears us; he that is not of God hears us not. The Apostles spoke as men sent from God, for the Spirit of God dwelt in them and they alone know the Truth of God who keep to that which has been revealed to us through His holy Apostles and Prophets.

6, 7. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loves is born of God, and knows God. From the abundance of love which was in Johns heart, we might almost be startled at the very strong things that he writes against those who are in error, did we not remember that it is only a false charity which winks at error! He is the most loving man who has honesty enough to tell the truth and to speak out boldly against falsehood. It is very easy to pass through this world believing and saying that everybody is right. That is the way to make a soft path for your own feet and to show that you only have love to yourself. But sometimes to speak as John the Baptist spoke, or as Martin Luther spoke is the way to prove that you have true love to others.

8-10. He that loves not knows not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. By nature we had no love to Godwe were His enemies. We loved sin and we had ruined ourselves by it. But God took out of His own bosom the only Son He had, that He might make reconciliation for us and put away our sin. Herein is love, says the Apostle, as though you could find it nowhere else as it is here. Here is the height and depth of immeasurable love. Here is love summed up, here is loves climax! Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

11. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. If such was His great kindness toward us that He denied Himself His own Son for our sake, ought we not to be kindly affectionate, one toward another?

12. No man has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us. God dwells in us though we do not see Him. The nearest approach we can have to God is by this golden way of love.

13, 14. Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. John is speaking for himself and the rest of the Apostles, for they were eyewitnesses who had seen Christ and, therefore, could testify of Him.

15, 16. Whoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in Him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God has to us. God is love and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him. Is there anyone here who is full of anger, enmity, malice and envy? If so, let him know that God dwells not in the heart that harbors such abominations! Until these base passions are expelled and we feel love to all mankind for Christs sake, God is not in us, for, He that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him. The old method, according to Jewish tradition, was, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But Christs new rule is, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that you may be the children of your Father who is in Heaven. This is the point in which our likeness to God will be seen, for He loved us when we were His enemiesand He expects His children to love their enemies! May He graciously teach us that sacred art!

17. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world. If we can be to the world, in our poor feeble measure, what God is to itfountains of love, dispensaries of goodnessthen we need not be afraid of the verdict even of the great Day of Judgment.

18. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear. If a man is conscious that he intends no harm to anyone, that he wishes good to all mankind, that he loves his God and loves his fellow men for Gods sake, what has he to fear? He becomes the bravest of the brave and often finds himself safe and unharmed in places where others dare not go.

18-20 . Because fear has torment. He that fears is not made perfect in love. We love Him, because He first loved us. If a man says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar. John! John! John! This is a very strong expression! Did we not always understand that John was full of affection? Yes, but he was not one of those oily, sugary sort of people who cannot speak the truth! There is no real love in that kind of manhe has only the mere pretense of love. John speaks sharply because he loves ardently. True love hates that which is unlovely. It is inevitable that a man who is full of love should feel intense indignation against that which is contrary to love. Hence the Apostle says, If a man says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar.

20, 21. For he that loves not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loves God must love his brother also. And the word, brother, is to be understood in the widest possible sense! We are all brothers, springing from the same common parent and, therefore, we ought to be philanthropists, lovers of man, loving even the guilty and the worthless, having an earnest desire to do good even to those who do us evil. If we have not yet reached that spirit, we had best begin our true Christian life at the foot of the Cross by trusting and loving Him who died there out of love for sinnersfor only there can we learn, in the Person of Christ Jesus our Lordthis Divine philosophy of love to God and men!

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LOVES GREAT REASON   
NO. 3398

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 1914.

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We love Him because He first loved us.   
1 John 4:19.

This is the point where all genuine Christians meet. They can all say, without exception, We love Him. They do not agree in doctrineit is a pity, but I suppose that as long as we are in this body, we shall, none of us, see all the Truths of God at once, and each man, seeing only a portion of the Truth, is most likely to think that what he does not see is not truewhereas it may be just as important as that which he is able to perceive. Well, well, amidst a thousand controversies between Calvinism and Arminianism, and all the forms that various systems have taken with regard to this, and that, and the other, still, all the elect of God, being quickened by Divine Grace, unite in this one declaration, Whatever we do not believe, we do love Him. There are great diversities of experience, as well as of doctrine. Some are down in the gloom and some never seem to leave the cellars of the Lords housethey have deep spiritual exercises, they doubt, they fear, they tremble and are afraid. Others climb up to the very roof of the Palace Beautiful and look abroad upon the fair scene around. Their feet are used to dancing with spiritual delight and their hearts sing sweetly before the Lord. Theirs is an experience of communion rather than of corruption. They have been with Jesus and their faces are made to shine with His company. Perhaps if I told my experience, it might differ from yours from an experimental point of viewin that we might stand wide as the poles asunderbut if we are in Christ, we can, each of us, say with equal truth and intensity, We love Him. There we join hands! Whatever we have not felt, tasted, or known, we do love Him!

And you will notice, too, in this short expression that there is a force, a power in it, principally derived from the fact of the Personality of this love. We love Him. You know, to love an, it, is hard work. It seems contrary to the nature and all the instincts of love. Love always seeks a living person to grasp. But when it is put, we love Him, it reads so naturally that we feel that we can love, through the force of the Divine Nature within us, with all the vitality and intensity of our godliness!

We can love Himthat blessed Son of God, that condescending One, that sacrificing, dying Lambthat ascended, reigning, coming Savior, towards whom our hearts are drawn out. We love Him. Depend upon it, we must have more preaching about the Person of Christ and our hearts must assume more and more a trustfulness and affection towards Him. A merely doctrinal religion is pretty sure to degenerate into bigotry. An experimental religion will sooner or later sink into gloom. Understand what I mean. I am not speaking either against doctrine or experience. On the contrary, I would say all I could in favor of bothand they do enter into all mens lives who live near to Christbut still make either the one or the other the great master-thought, brood over either of them, contend for them, live for them, throw your whole force into them and you may degenerate! But when you live as unto Him. When He is the Truth that you believe in. When He is the Way that you tread. When He is the Life that you experience and when the doctrine and practice and experience all meet in Him as lines in a centerthen you shall not be degraded, you shall not degeneratebut you shall rise! You shall go from glory to glory, being changed by the Presence of the Lord. We love Him, then.

But I must make one observation before I plunge into the text, namely, that in order to love this blessed Person, being a Person, it is clear to everyone who thinks, that there must, first of all, have been some acquaintance with Him and then some deep conviction concerning His excellency. We cannot love whom we do not know or esteem. If we know nothing about Christ, have no understanding of Him, have not in any degree occupied our minds with Him, we may talk about love to Him, but it will be mere talk. And after we have known Christ, by the reading or hearing of the Word, blessed to us by His Holy Spirit, it will be necessary for us to be brought into an admiring confidence in Him, believing that He is the altogether lovely, the chief among ten thousand, worthy of all our reliance, worthy of all our adoration and service! Then it is, when knowledge has produced faith, that faith gives birth to love!

I make this remark because I have sometimes noticed that in addressing Sunday school children, it is not uncommon to tell them that the way to be saved is to love Jesus, which is not true. The way to be saved for man, woman, or child is to trust Jesus for the pardon of sinand then, trusting Jesus, love comes as a fruit! Love is by no means the root. Faith, alone, occupies that place. And I think I have heard young persons, too, talking always about the question, Do I love the Lord or no?a very proper question, but it is not the first, but the second! The question that should always come first is, Do I trust the Lord or no? Do I rest entirely in what He has done for me? Am I depending upon Him for eternal life and salvation? If that first question is answered, the second will not long remain a matter of doubt! But if you begin with the second, and neglect the first, you may involve yourselves in very serious consequences. The great Gospel precept is not, Love Christ, but, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be savednot that love is less than faith, but that love, though, perhaps, first in point of excellence in some respects, comes second in point of orderand that faith is first to be looked to in the soul and then love will inevitably and necessarily follow.

But now to come to the text. I shall treat the first part of the sentence as the great general confession of the whole ChurchWe love Him. And the second first part of the sentence as the most glorious reason for that lovebecause He first loved us. I am not going to preach this evening, but only to stir you up about these points.

I. THE GREAT GENERAL CONFESSION, WE LOVE HIM. Now, if you are a child of God, you will say, or if you do not say it, it will be true, We love Him. As sure as ever you have passed from darkness to light, whether you are an Episcopalian, or a Presbyterian, or a Baptist, or whatever you may be, you will agree with this utterance of the one mouth of the one Church! We all, without exception, who have believed in Him, love Him.   
But how do we love Him? We love Him, first, not at all as we ought to love Him. We confess that much with shameand not at all as we wish to love Him. Our conception of what is due to Christ is, no doubt, very short of what is due to Him, but we fall short even of our own conception! I am afraid that many of us are like the children at school who have a good, fair copy set them at the top of the page, and the next line is written to imitate the copy, and the next imitates the imitation of the copy and as it gets to the bottom of the pagealas, poor writinghow unlike it is to the perfect copy at the top! So what is due to Christ stands at the topwhat I believe about Christ in my best moments stands next. What I actually give to Christ comes next to thatand then far down the page, how badly do I write and how far do I fall short of what my love knows I ought to give Him!   
*Yes, I love You and adore,   
Oh, for Grace to love You more!*   
Now, remember, we never make ourselves love Christ more by flogging ourselves for not loving Him more. We come to love those better whom we love by knowing them better, not by talking to ourselves about the duty of loving them, for love and duty, somehow or other, do not work well together. I mean that to talk of love being squeezed and pressed out by duty is not at all congruous. Love is like the generous first drops of the honeycombthe virgin honey which drips spontaneously because the comb is full to bursting. Such is true, genuine love. If you want to love Christ more, think more of Him, think more of what you have received from Him. Study His Character more in the Word of God. Draw more often near to Him in prayer. Live more in holy fellowship with Him. These are the logs that shall make that oven blaze. This is the secret fuel that shall make our soul on fire with love to Jesus! We do not love Him as we ought, nor as we wish.   
But for all that, in the next place, we do really love Him. The devil tells us we do not, but when it comes to close quarters, we can turn to One who knows better than the devil, and we can say, Lord, You know all things, You know that I love You. What a mercy it is that Jesus Christ does not believe our actions, for they very often say, Jesus, we do not love You. But He reads our hearts, and our hearts still beat with this, Oh, my God! In my very soul I do love Christ, and if it were possible I would never sin against Him! Oh, wretched man that I am, that I should live so contrary to my true life and that the thing that I would, I do not, and what I would not, that I do, for I find this law in my members, bringing me into captivity. For I have tasted of freedom and am, indeed, free, and will not be the servant of any, but will be the espoused one, the free espoused one of Christ Jesus my Lord. Yes, we do really love Him!   
And we also, if we are saints at all, love Him practically. We delight and that is the true standard and gauge of the manin that in which he delights. We delight in His service, in His company, in His friends. There is nothingI feel sure some of us can say this without egotismthere is nothing that makes our soul feel so full of bliss as when we have opportunities of glorifying the name of Jesus Christ! And if we had the offer of all the kingdoms of the world, and but a grain of glory put into our hand that we might give to Christwe would sooner have it than all the wealth of the Indies and all the royalties of all the empires! To glorify Christ is a lasting treasure which shall abide with us when the world is on a-blaze. To teach one little child the name of Jesus. To bring the tear into its little eyes about the dying Lord is better and sweeter work to us than statesmanship, itself, could be if it were dissociated from Him   
*Is there a lamb among Your flock,   
I would disdain to feed?   
Is there a foe before whose face,   
Id fear Your cause to plead?*   
Some of you are very busy preaching for my Lord and I know that when you are preaching, your main desire is that He may be extolled in your hearers hearts. Do you not pine and sigh after this? Would you not give up all the graces of oratory, and talk in the most vulgar style, if necessary, if you could win one soul for Him? I know you would, my Brothers, for this is every true ministers desire! And you, too, who have been standing in the streets today, preaching at the corners, I hopeno, I feel it must be so with you if you are His at allthat you spoke out of love to His dear name and when you would have preferred to have been silent, it was love that unloosened that tongue of yours! Do you not wish you could speak better? Do you not wish you could command attention better? And it is all for Him, for His dear sake that you might paint Him better before the eyes of men! And you, dear teachers in the classes, you who have been engaged in the Sunday school, if you are right at all, and I trust you are, you have been teaching because you wanted to make Him famous and to let Him see of the travail of His soul. And you who cannot come to the school, but have been praying for your children and talking with them, you who have been dropping your pence into the box and have each been trying to do your share of something for the Master well, if His life is in your hearts and His blood is sprinkled on you, you can say that you desire to do all this as a practical evidence that you so love Him! All the works that you have done today, done in His Spirit, have been a repetition of this verse, We love Him.   
Now, will you do the same in your ordinary lives, for in this I fear we sometimes fail? As a servant, live as one who loves Jesus! As a master, as a workman, as a merchant, as a man of retirement and property, still let this be the guide of your steps, the order of your life, the model by which you shape your conversation, We love Him. Let every breath prove it! Let every heaving of the lungs, every motion of the tongue and of the hand, prove the great and blessed reality of the fact that we love Him!   
Brothers and Sisters, we can go a step further. I trust we love Jesus Christ not only really and practically, but we love Him supremely. That point has often vexed good hearts. They have said, I cannot say that I love Jesus Christ better than father, or mother, or husband, or wife, or child. No, you cannot say it, and there are a great many things we cannot say, which it were better not for us to say, which would be immodest for us to say, but they may be true for all that! They who are beautiful, talk not of their beauty, and those who love most are usually the most diffident about their love. Now, you cannot contrast loves, the one to another, as you can contrast five to eight and say which may be the greater. It is not an arithmetical problem, but I will put it to the proof with you in this wayif you had to lose that dear husband, or else lose Jesus Christ, what would you do? Why, it does not take two minutes to consider! You would not put them in the scale together for a single second! He stands out of sight, above all husbands and dearest wives! We cannot consider Him in such a relation as that. Or, put it thusif you had to give up your hope of Heaven and your interest in Christ tonight, or to lose all that you havewhat would you do? Why, I think you would not need to go into that little chamber to calculate. No, you say, all that I have, why it is so little! It is a thing of care to me, and if it were not, if I had more, as I would be very glad to have that I might give up more, I would put it all away and say, Lord, I have left all that I might follow You. But in leaving it, I did but gain a greater consciousness of Your love to me and a far greater and deeper enjoyment of that love.

Sometimes, however, some of you young people get an opportunity of showing which you love bestwhether you do love Jesus better than all things else, or not. In the case of marriage, that test often comes. And ah, how lamentable is the fact that many a young Sister, and many a Brother, too, will break through Christs law, Be you not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. I know this is a perplexing and solemn point, mark you. You do, in fact, give Christ up when you take that ungodly man! And you, young man, when you seek after that Christless woman, you deny your Lord and Masteras far as you can do it, you deny Him and give Him up for the sake of earthly pleasures! For such an act as that, your conscience may well prick you, and if you are, indeed, the Lords servant, the rod will follow you, and in your household the Lords hand will go out against you as long as you live. You there came to the test and could not stand it! But I hope there are many, many here who could say, Yes, with everything that beauty could present to attract my heart, and all that wealth could lay at my feet to win my regard. With all that honor could put before me to dazzle my desires, I feel that I must obey my Lord and Master. I must be a chaste virgin unto Him, and give myself to Christ and to Him alone. We love Christ, Brothers and SistersI trust we do supremely!   
We love Him, also, always. The love of a Believer to Christ is not a thing of Sundays, nor of public meetings and Prayer Meetings. We love Himit is the utterance of the man sitting at the desk penning a letter, or standing in the market selling his corn, or on the exchange, dealing in his shares and stocks. We love Him. Our love is not a spasm. It is not a mere emotion, a thing of excitement. It does not, like the Salamander, live in the fire, but then die when the fire dies out. We love Him, soberly, steadily, constantly, persistently, after a real and serious, and business-like spirit. We love Himit is intertwisted with our daily life! It is part of our inmost being! It flows in the blood, it breathes in the lungs, it is everywhere about us and we could as soon cease to exist as to cease to be lovers of Christ. I mean, of course, if we are, indeed, the saved sons of God. We love Him, then, constantly.   
And yet another thing, dearly Belovedwe love Him increasingly. We do not always think so, but it is true, if we are right with God. We love Him more than ever. When we are first converted we think we shall love Jesus Christ a great deal more than we really prove to do, and much of that love, afterwards, departs, but it is only the superficial and halffictitious love that vanishes.   
Look! Mary is lighting the fire and as the straw or paper takes light at the bottom, what a great blaze there is! No sooner is the match put to it than the flames rush up the chimney. But come again in half an hour why, there is not half the blaze, nor any crackling, nor noise! But is there less heat? Why, see, the coals have caught and the whole grate has become one glowing mass of fire! There is not half the blaze and the crackling, but there is more real, solid heat. And so is it with the growing Believer! At the first, there is much of excitement, much of novelty, but afterwards there is the steady, calm warmth of a glowing soul! I can only say, Brothers and Sisters, that if we do not love Christ, growingly, we ought to do so. He is One that grows upon Believers. The more they know Him, the better they must love Him. The longer is their experience of His faithfulness, His fullness, His freeness, His goodness and greatness, the deeper, and firmer, and broader, and higher ought to be their love of Him! And I trust that it is so.   
And another thingwe love Him and we are not ashamed to love Himand we are not ashamed to confess it and we do not blush to bear the shame which may come to us after the avowal. Ah, perhaps I am addressing some hereI do not know where they arewho love my Lord, but they have never said so. Oh, you that are on the rock, in the secret places of the stair, come forth and let Him hear your voice, for that voice is sweet to Him, and your face is comely in His eyes. Oh, be not ashamed to confess that you love Him! There is nothing in it of which to be ashamed. It might make an angel proud to be permitted to love Christ and to declare His love. Ashamed of saying that I love Him? No! Let the earth hear it and let it rage! Let Hell hear it and let it boil over with fury! Yet is He such an One that as I cry, I love Him, I feel it to be the grandest, greatest statement that Divine Grace can enable us to make! Yes, never, in any circumstances make this a thing to be shy about, but avow it in your actions and declare it by your public profession, We love Him!   
Brothers and Sisters, we bless God that the day is coming when we shall love Him best of all. This tenement of our body is falling away by degrees. These fetters of the flesh are rusting off. We shall soon be free and when the emancipated spirit shall see Him without a veil to hide Him, then shall our love to Him be perfected! Or if He comes before our death arrives, we shall see Him as He is and shall be like Heand then, too, shall our love rise to its transcendent maturity! It is a mercy that while other loves die like lilies, broken at the stalk, or fall like rosebuds when they burst and are full-blown, our love to Christ shall go on forever and forever increasing! And when Heaven and earth shall pass away, immortal love, eternal love, shall still abide! As long as God exists, the love of God shall be shed abroad in us and our hearts shall continually love Him in return.   
I might pause here to sayif it is true that you love Him, dear Brothers and Sisterslove His people better, love His poor better, love His cause better, love His Truth better, love poor blood-bought sinners better, love the assemblies of His saints better, love His Word better, keep His commandments better, draw nearer to Him, aim to be more like He! May these practical Truths, though unspoken by me, yet be lived out in your conversation. But now for the second head. We can only afford a few minutes upon it, but it is a subject which might well occupy eternity in our meditation   
II. THE GLORIOUS REASON FOR OUR LOVE.

We love Himbecause He first loved us. It is personal, again, you see, personal again. WeHimtwo personsand here is the reason for itbecause He first loved uspersons again! We do not love Christ because the minister preached, or we received his doctrines, or because we can understand that such-and-such things are in our Lords teachings. The reason for the love springs from Himself, as it goes out after Himself. It is because of something that He did and something that He said, prior to anything that He did. We love Him because He first loved us. Love is the cause of love! He loveswe love. We love second and after Him because He loves first and before us. He first. Now, that is an experimental Truth of God. We know that He loved us before we loved Him. Just look back on your life before conversion. He loved you then. What made you love Him at all? It was because you were told that He loved you and you believed it. Law and terrors never made you love Himthey hardened you. It was a sense of blood-bought pardon that dissolved you and you saw the love of Christ in that pardon! And so, you could not help loving Him in return. This is no noveltythis is no mere theoryit is a great Truth of God! I pray you turn it over. Jesus loved you when you lived carelessly, when you neglected His Word, when the knee was unbent in prayer. Ah, He loved some of you when you were in the dancing saloon, when you were in the playhouseyes, even when you were in the brothel! He loved you when you stood at Hells gate and drank damnation at every draught! He loved you when you could not have been worse or further from Him than you were! Marvelous, O Christ, is Your strange love! What love is this that shone on us when we were the serfs and slaves of Satan, the dishwashers in the kitchen of iniquity? When nothing was too hard for some of us to do if we might but sinand yet He loved us! And others there were of us who were as bad as thisproud, hypocritical, rotten-hearted professors who were boasting of our own self-righteousness, as proud as Lucifer, when there was not even a good thing in usand yet we were loved with His great love, wherewith He loved us even when we were dead in trespass and in sins! Blessed be His name!

Now, that is a matter of experience, and it is also a matter of our firm belief and joyous confidence that Jesus loved us before thatin that tremendous day, the center of the two eternities, the end of one dispensation and the beginning of the nextthat day in which the sun was darkened and yet for the first time began to shine, that day in which the earth did shake and Heaven was establishedthat day in which the dead arose and the thoughts of men were discoveredin that day when He, the appointed Substitute, went up to Calvary with all the sins of all His people upon Him, piled like a tremendous worldwhen, like another Atlas, He bore that overwhelming load upon His shoulders and afterwards heaved the whole infinite weight into forgetfulness! In that day He gave the supreme proof of His love to us. Look at those eyes red with weepingsee how He loves! Look at those cheeks defiled with the filthy spit and bruised where the fists of the scoffers struck Him! See how He loved! Look to that dear head still scarred with the jagged wounds of the crown of thorns! Look to that matchless mouth and that tongue so parched. Look to the whole face, so marred as to be sorrows dwelling place. Look to the whole body so utterly agonized, tortured and languishing. Look to the tender gracious handsthose crimson fountains tell the tale! Look at the feetthose scarlet rivulets declare how deep is His love! Yes, look to His side, sliced open by the soldiers spearthat precious stream of blood and water declares with double and indisputable force that Jesus loves! And we were not born thenwe were not here! He loved us first.

But this grand old Book bids us go farther back than that day! He loved us when, in the Garden, our first parents spoiled us all and a promise was given that He should come to bruise the serpents head. Yes, when yonder mountains were infants, when the gray old world and its ruins that speak of ages were as yet but newly formed, yes, and before thatbefore the suns great flame was lit by the Divine torch, before stars began to whirl in their all but boundless revolutionswhen time was not, when there was no day but the Ancient of Days and He dwelt alone, the Infinite Jehovaheven then, Jesus loved His people! His prescient eyes had seen them. His Sovereign choice had separated them. His distinguishing Grace had discriminated them and His eternal purpose had decreed them to be His forever and ever! He loved us first.

Well, if this is not a good reason for loving Him, where could such reason be found? He first loved us. Oh, cold hearts! Oh, slabs of marble! Oh, blocks of granite! Oh, icebergs! If we melt not now, when will we melt? He loved us first! That glorious thought like fire rushes through and through and through our very deepest nature and refines it, and sets us all on a glow. We must love Him because He first loved us!

Words fail me to speak about that love of His. It was a love so condescending that He stooped from Heaven to reach us, laid aside the royalties of Glory and took upon Himself the infirmities of earth! It was a love so lasting that the ages have never dimmed it, nor lessened it by so much as a single atom. It was a love so enduring that the ten thousand provocations of our unbelief and of our sin have never quenched it! Many waters could not quench it, neither could the floods drown it. It was a love so generous that Jesus gave us all! He gave us even His Father and His God, for did He not say, My Father and your Father, My God and your God? He gave us and He gives us this day Himself! He gives us communion with Himself. He gives us His blood to wash us. He gives us His righteousness to clothe us. He gives us His life for our example, His Throne for our rest at the last. Oh, generous Love, nothing do You withhold! You reserve nothing for Yourself! You give all to the beloved object. It was a love that was quite disinterested. Jesus had nothing to gain. The gain was ours. It was a love most self-sacrificing. His sufferings, how intense! His griefs, how terrible! And all for His sweet love of us who were His enemies!

I would I had a seraphs tongue but for one momenta tongue of flame with which to speak of my Master! As I cannot have this, I must be content to say that this ocean of Christs love is one that is not to be measured. Plunge into it! Ask that you may be swallowed up in it! Pray that it may baptize you, that you may be lost in its overwhelming floods and that henceforth for you to live may be Christ and to die may be gain! Brothers and Sisters, the Lords love is over you, and in you, and in the power of His quickening Spirit may you live through another week! And when we come together again, may our hearts retain some of the glow of the affection which I trust we have felt burning within our hearts tonight. To His name be praise! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **ROMANS 8:26-39.**

Verse 26. Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities. Our weaknesses, our insufficiencies, our inabilitiesthe Spirit of God comes to be a Helper to the children of God!

26. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought. We do not know our own infirmities. Perhaps we think that we are strong while we are exceedingly weak. The Spirit of God spies out the infirmities and puts the help where the strength is required. We know not what we should pray for as we ought.

26. But the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered. Those great things in prayer that we cannot ask for, which can never be expressed in human language, the Holy Spirit translates into groans. And so we are made to groan when we cannot speak and those groans bring us blessings which words cannot compass. Have you been into your prayer chamber lately, pleading with God, and have you felt as if you could not pray? We often pray best when we think that we are praying worst! When there is the most anguish, sighing and crying in prayer, there is most of the very essence of prayer.

27. And He who searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. The Spirit knows what we need. God knows what the Spirit is asking forand so our prayer makes the complete round and God sends us the blessing!

28. And we knowWe knowwe are sure of it.   
28. That all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. We know this for we have proved it in our own experience. All things work. There is nothing inactive in the Providence of God. All things work together. There is a unity in Providence. God sets one thing over against another. Blessed be the name of God, all things work together for good! The purpose of God to His people is good and only goodand though this or that might be injuriousyet, all put together, they work for good to those who love God. Come, my Soul, do you love God? Can you say tonight, You know all things. You know that I love You? All things work together for your good! Not only shall they work, but they are workingthey work for your good now! And learn another sweet lesson. You are one of those whom God calls according to the sweet purpose of His electing love, for so it standsthey that love God are the same as those who are called according to His purpose! If you love God, God loves you. Your love to God, poor and faint though it is, is the assured token that He loves you with an everlasting love and, therefore, with bands of loving kindness has He drawn you.  
29. For whom He did foreknow. That is, look upon with pleasure and delight from before all worlds. Whom He did love and call to be His own. Christ is the Man, the archetype. He is not to be a lone Man. It is not good for man to be alone, not even for the Man! And there are to be other men called by Gods Grace who are to be made like He, who are to be His Brothers and Sisters. These, whom God foreknew, with fore-love He has ordained, determined and predestinated to be made like His Son.   
29-30. He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the First-Born among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called. Not with the common call with which He calls other men, but with the special call! The hen, when she is about in the yard, keeps on calling, but when she wants her own little ones to come and run beneath her wings, then she has a special cluck for them and they know itand they come and run and hide beneath her.   
30. And whom He called, them He also justified. He regarded them as just. He made them just through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ.   
30. And whom He justified, them He also glorified. There is no break in this chain. The foreknown are predestinated, the predestinated are called, the called are justified, the justified are glorified. It is a wondrous chain! He that gets a hold of it anywhere has a hold of the whole of it, for this Scripture cannot be broken! If you are called by Grace into the fellowship of eternal life, you shall be justified and glorified!   
31. What shall we then say to these things? I do not know what we can say. Wonders of Grace, mountains of mercy, mercy without limitwhat shall we say to these things? This, at least we, can say   
31. If God is for us, who can be against us? A great many can be against us, but we reckon them as nothing at all if God is for us!  
32. He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? There can be no end to the bounty of God after He has given His Son. He that has given the jewel of the universe, the very eye of Heavenwill He not give to us all else really neededand give freely, too?   
33-35. Who shall lay anything to the charge of Gods elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather who is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Dear children of God, feed on these words! They are like wafers made with honey, like cold waters from the Rock! Eat, drink and be filled. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?   
35. Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Well, these things have been tried. As it is written, For Your sake we are killed all the day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. In Pauls day they were being hunted to the death by the thousands and tens of thousands. Were they separated from Christs love? The enemy grew tired of persecution before the saints were wearied by it! You remember how, in the days of the Roman Empire, the Christians came to the judgment seat and confessed Christ even when they were not sought afteras if tempting their enemies to throw them to the lions, or put them to death! They were destitute of all fear and though Emperors were worse than brutes, these Christians defied them, outbraved them, vanquished them! They could not put down the Christians.   
36-39. As it is written, For Your sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come. Nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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FAITH AND REGENERATION   
NO. 979

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, MARCH 5, 1871, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot loves Him also who is begotten of Him. 1 John 5:1.

FOR the preacher of the Gospel to make full proof of his ministry will be a task requiring much Divine teaching. Besides much care in the manner and spirit, he will need guidance as to his matter. One point of difficulty will be to preach the whole Truth in fair proportion, never exaggerating one doctrine, never enforcing one point at the expense of another, never keeping back any part, nor allowing it undue prominence. For practical result much will depend upon an equal balance and a right dividing of the word.

In one case this matter assumes immense importance because it affects vital Truths of God, and may lead to very serious results unless rightly attended to. I refer to the elementary facts involved in the work of Christ for us, and the operations of the Holy Spirit in us. Justification by faith is a matter about which there must be no obscurity, much less equivocation. And at the same time we must distinctly and determinately insist upon it that regeneration is necessary to every soul that shall enter Heaven.

You must be born again is as much a Truth as that clear Gospel statement, He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. It is to be feared that some zealous Brethren have preached the doctrine of justification by faith not only so boldly and so plainly, but also so badly and so out of all connection with other Truth, that they have led men into presumptuous confidences and have appeared to lend their countenance to a species of Antinomianism very much to be dreaded.

From a dead, fruitless, inoperative faith we may earnestly pray, Good Lord, deliver us, yet may we be unconsciously fostering it. Moreover, to stand up and cry, Believe, believe, believe, without explaining what is to be believed. To lay the whole stress of salvation upon faith without explaining what salvation is, and showing that it means deliverance from the power as well as from the guilt of sinmay seem to a fervent revivalist to be the proper thing for the occasionbut those who have watched the result of such teaching have had grave cause to question whether as much hurt may not be done by it as good.

On the other hand, it is our sincere conviction that there is equal danger in the other extreme. We are most certain that a man must be made a new creature in Christ Jesus, or he is not saved. But some have seen so clearly the importance of this Truth that they are forever and always dwelling upon the great change of conversionits fruits, and its consequencesand they hardly appear to remember the glad tidings that whoever believes on Christ Jesus has everlasting life.

Such teachers are apt to set up so high a standard of experience, and to be so exacting as to the marks and signs of a true born child of God, that they greatly discourage sincere seekers and fall into a species of legality from which we may again say, Good Lord, deliver us. Never let us fail most plainly to testify to the undoubted Truth of God that true faith in Jesus Christ saves the soul! If we do not, we shall hold in legal bondage many who ought long ago to have enjoyed peace, and to have entered into the liberty of the children of God.

It may not be easy to keep these two things in their proper position, but we must aim at it if we would be wise builders. John did so in his teaching. If you turn to the third chapter of his Gospel it is very significant that while he records at length our Saviors exposition of the new birth to Nicodemus, yet in that very same chapter he gives us what is perhaps the most plain piece of Gospel in all the ScripturesAnd as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

So, too, in the chapter before us he insists upon a mans being born of God. He brings that up again and again, but evermore does he ascribe wondrous efficacy to faith. He mentions faith as the index of our being born again, faith as overcoming the world, faith as possessing the inward witness, faith as having eternal lifeindeed, he seems as if he could not heap honor enough upon believing, while at the same time he insists upon the grave importance of the inward experience connected with the new birth.

Now, if such a difficulty occurs to the preacher, we need not wonder that it also arises with the hearer, and causes him much questioning. We have known many who, by hearing continually the most precious doctrine that belief in Christ Jesus is saving, have forgotten other Truths of God, and have concluded that they were saved when they were not. They have fancied they believed when as yet they were total strangers to the experience which always attends true faith. They have imagined faith to be the same thing as a presumptuous confidence of safety in Christnot grounded upon the Divine Word when rightly understoodnor proved by any facts in their own souls.

Whenever self-examination has been proposed to them they have avoided it as an assault upon their assurance, and when they have been urged to try themselves by Gospel tests, they have defended their false peace by the notion that to raise a question about their certain salvation would be unbelief. Thus, I fear, the conceit of supposed faith in Christ has placed them in an almost hopeless position. To them the warnings and admonitions of the Gospel have been set aside by their fatal persuasion that it is needless to attend to them.

They think it only necessary to cling tenaciously to the belief that all has been done long ago for us by Christ Jesus, and that godly fear and careful walking are superfluities, if not actually an offense against the Gospel. On the other hand, we have known others who have received the doctrine of justification by faith as a part of their creed, and yet have not accepted it as a practical fact that the Believer is saved. They so much feel that they must be renewed in the spirit of their minds, that they are always looking within themselves for evidences, and are the subjects of perpetual doubts. Their natural and frequent song is

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

These are a class of people to be much more pitied than condemned. Though I would be the very last to spread unbelief, I would be the very first to inculcate holy anxiety. It is one thing for a person to be careful to know that he is really in Christ, and quite another thing for him to doubt the promises of Christsupposing that they are not really made to him. There is a tendency in some hearts to look too much within, and spend more time in studying their outward evidences and their inward feelings, than in learning the fullness, freeness, and all sufficiency of the Grace of God in Christ Jesus.

They too much obscure the grand evangelical Truth that the Believers acceptance with God is not in himself, but in Christ Jesusthat we are cleansed through the blood of Jesus, that we are clothed in the righteousness of Jesusand are, in a word, accepted in the Beloved. I earnestly long that these two doctrines may be well balanced in your souls. Only the Holy Spirit can teach you this. This is a narrow path which the eagles eye has not seen, and the lions whelp has not trod. He whom the Holy Spirit shall instruct will not give way to presumption and despise the Spirits work within, neither will he forget that salvation is of the Lord Jesus Christ, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

The text appears to me to blend these two truths in a very delightful harmony, and we will try to speak of them, God helping us. He that believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. We shall consider this morning, first of all, the believing which is here intended. And then, secondly, how it is a sure proof of regeneration. And then, thirdly, dwelling for awhile upon the closing part of the verse we shall show how it becomes an argument for Christian loveEveryone that loves Him who begot loves Him also who is begotten of Him.

I. WHAT IS THE BELIEVING intended IN THE TEXT? We are persuaded, first of all, that the believing here intended is that which our Lord and His Apostles exhorted men to exercise, and to which the promise of salvation is always appended in the Word of God. As, for instance that faith which Peter inculcated when he said to Cornelius, To Him give all the Prophets witness, that through His name whoever believes in Him shall receive remission of sins. And which our Lord commanded when He came into Galilee, saying to men, Repent, and believe in the Gospel (Mark 1:15). Certain persons have been obliged to admit that the Apostles commanded, exhorted, and besought men to believe, but they tell us that the kind of believing which the Apostles bade men exercise was not a saving faith.

Now God forbid we should ever, in our zeal to defend a favorite position, be driven to an assertion so monstrous! Can we imagine for a moment Apostles with burning zeal and ardor, inspired by the Spirit of God within them, going about the world exhorting men to exercise a faith which, after all, would not save them? To what purpose did they run on so fruitless an errand, so tantalizing to human need, so barren of results?   
When our Lord bade His disciples go into all the world and preach the

Gospel to every creature, and added, he that believes and is baptized shall be saved, the faith which was to be preached was evidently none other than a saving faith, and it is frivolous to say otherwise. I must confess that I felt shocked the other day to read in a certain sermon the remark that the words of Paul to the jailor, were spoken in a conversation held at midnight under peculiar circumstances, and the Evangelist who wrote them was not present at the interview.

Why, had it been at high noon, and had the whole world been present, the Apostle could have given no fitter answer to the question, What must I do to be saved? than the one he did give, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved! It is, I repeat, a mere frivolity, or worse, to say that the faith enjoined by the Apostles was a mere human faith which does not save, and that there is no certainty that such faith saves the soul. That cause must be desperate which calls for such a defense.

Furthermore, the faith here intended is the duty of all men. Read the text againWhoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. It can never be less than mans duty to believe the Truth of God. That Jesus is the Christ is the Truth, and it is the duty of every man to believe it. I understand here by believing, confidence in Christ, and it is surely the duty of men to confide in that which is worthy of confidence. That Jesus Christ is worthy of the confidence of all men is certainit is therefore the duty of men to confide in Him. Inasmuch as the Gospel command, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, is addressed by Divine authority to every creature, it is the duty of every man to do so.

What says JohnThis is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and our Lord Himself assures us, He that believes on Him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the OnlyBegotten Son of God. I know there are some who will deny this, and deny it upon the grounds that man has not the spiritual ability to believe in Jesus, to which I reply that it is altogether an error to imagine that the measure of the sinners moral ability is the measure of his duty.

There are many things which men ought to do which they have now lost the moral and spiritualthough not the physical power to do. A man ought to be chaste, but if he has been so long immoral that he cannot restrain his passions, he is not thereby free from the obligation! It is the duty of a debtor to pay his debts, but if he has been such a spendthrift that he has brought himself into hopeless poverty, he is not thereby exonerated from his debts! Every man ought to believe that which is true, but if his mind has become so depraved that he loves a lie and will not receive the Truth, is he thereby excused?

If the Law of God is to be lowered according to the moral condition of sinners, you would have a Law graduated upon a sliding-scale to suit the degrees of human sinfulness. In fact, the worst man would then be under the least Law, and become, consequently, the least guilty! Gods requirements would be a variable quantity, and, in truth, we should be under no rule at all. The command of Christ stands good however bad men may be, and when He commands all men everywhere to repent, they are bound to repent, whether their sinfulness renders it impossible for them to be willing to do so or not.

In every case it is mans duty to do what God bids him. At the same time, this faith, wherever it exists, is in every case, without exception, the gift of God and the work of the Holy Spirit. Never yet did a man believe in Jesus with the faith here intended, except the Holy Spirit led him to do so. He has worked all our works in us, and our faith, too. Faith is too celestial a Grace to spring up in human nature till it is renewedfaith is in every Believer the gift of God. You will say to me, Are these two things consistent? I reply, Certainly, for they are both true. How consistent? you say. How inconsistent? say I, and you shall have as much difficulty to prove them inconsistent as I to prove them consistent.

Experience makes them consistent, if theory does not. Men are convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit. Of sin, says Christ, because they believe not on Me. Here is one of the Truths of God. But the selfsame hearts are taught by the same Spirit that faith is of the operation of God (Col. 2:12). Brethren, be willing to see both sides of the shield of Truth. Rise above the babyhood which cannot believe two doctrines until it sees the connecting link. Have you not two eyes? Must you put one of them out in order to see clearly? Is it impossible to you to use a spiritual binocular, and look at two views of Truth until they melt into one, and that one becomes more real and actual because it is made up of two?

Many men refuse to see more than one side of a doctrine and persistently fight against anything which is not on its very surface consistent with their own ideas. In the present case I do not find it difficult to believe faith to be at the same time the duty of man and the gift of God. And if others cannot accept the two Truths, I am not responsible for their rejection of them. My duty is performed when I have honestly borne witness to them. Up to now we have only been clearing the way. Let us advance.

The faith intended in the text evidently rests upon a Personupon Jesus. Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. It is not belief about a doctrine, nor an opinion, nor a formula, but belief concerning a Person. Translate the words, Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, and they stand thusWhoever believes that the Savior is the Anointed, is born of God. By which is assuredly not meant, whoever professes to believe that He is sofor many do that whose lives prove that they are not regeneratebut, whoever believes it to be the fact, as truly and in very deed to receive Jesus as God has set Him forth and anointed Him, is a regenerate man.

What is meant by, Jesus is the Christ, or, Jesus is the Anointed? First, that He is the Prophet. Secondly, that He is the Priest. Thirdly, that He is the King of the Church, for in all these three senses He is the Anointed. Now, I may ask myself this questionDo I this day believe that Jesus is the great Prophet anointed of God to reveal to me the way of salvation? Do I accept Him as my Teacher, and admit that He has the Words of eternal life? If I so believe, I shall obey His Gospel and possess eternal life.

Do I accept Him to be, from now, on the Revealer of God to my soul, the Messenger of the Covenant, the Anointed Prophet of the Most High? But He is also a Priest. Now a priest is ordained from among men to offer sacrificesdo I firmly believe that Jesus was ordained to offer His one Sacrifice for the sins of mankind, by the offering of which sacrifice, once and for all, He has finished atonement and made complete expiation? Do I accept His Atonement as an atonement for me, and receive His death as an

expiation upon which I rest my hope for forgiveness of all my transgressions?

Do I, in fact, believe Jesus to be the one sole, only propitiating Priest, and accept Him to act as Priest for me? If so, then I have in part believed that Jesus is the Anointed. But He is also King, and if I desire to know whether I possess the right faith, I further must ask myself, Is Jesus, who is now exalted in Heaven, who once bled on the Cross, is He King to me? Is His Law my Law? Do I desire entirely to submit myself to His government? Do I hate what He hates, and love what He loves? Do I live to praise Him? Do I, as a loyal subject, desire to see His kingdom come and His will done on earth as it is in Heaven?

My dear Friend, if you can heartily and earnestly say, I accept Jesus Christ of Nazareth to be Prophet, Priest, and King to me because God has anointed Him to exercise those three offices. And in each of these three Characters I unfeignedly trust Him, then, dear Friend, you have the faith of Gods elect, for it is written, He that believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.   
Now we will go a little further. True faith is reliance. Look at any Greek lexicon you like and you will find that the word pisteuein does not merely

mean to believe, but to trust, to confide in, to commit to, entrust with, and so forth. And the marrow of the meaning of faith is confidence in, reliance upon. Let me ask, then, every Professor in Christ here who professes to have faithis your faith the faith of reliance? You give credit to certain statementsdo you also place trust in the one glorious Person who alone can redeem? Have you confidence as well as credence? A creed will not save you, but reliance upon the Anointed Savior is the way of salvation!

Remember, I beseech you, that if you could be taught an orthodoxy unadulterated with error, and could learn a creed written by the pen of the Eternal God Himself, yet a mere notional faith, such as men exercise when they believe in the existence of men in the moon, or nebulae in space, could not save your soul! Of this we are sure, because we see around us many who have such a faith, and yet evidently are not children of God. Moreover, true faith is not a flattering presumption, by which a man says, I believe I am saved, for I have such delightful feelings. I have had a marvelous dream, I have felt very wonderful sensations.

All such confidence may be nothing but sheer assumption. Presumption, instead of being faith, is the reverse of faithinstead of being the substance of things hoped for, it is a mere mirage. Faith is as correct as reason, and if her arguments are considered, she is as secure in her conclusions as though she drew them by mathematical rules. Beware, I pray you, of a faith which has no basis but your own fancy!

Faith, again, is not the assurance that Jesus died for me. I sometimes feel myself a little at variance with that verse   
*Just as I am: without one plea*

*But that Your blood was shed for me.*   
It is eminently suitable for a child of God, but I am not so sure as to its being the precise way for putting the matter for a sinner. I do not believe in Jesus because I am persuaded that His blood was shed for me, but rather I discover that His blood was shed especially for me from the fact that I have been led to believe in HIM. I fear there are thousands of people who believe that Jesus died for them, who are not born of God, but rather are hardened in their sin by their groundless hopes of mercy. There is no particular efficacy in a mans assuming that Christ has died for him. For it is a mere truism, if it is true, as some teach, that Jesus died for everybody.

On such a theory every believer in a universal atonement would necessarily be born of God, which is very far from being the case. When the Holy Spirit leads us to rely upon the Lord Jesus, then the Truth that God gave His Only-Begotten Son that whoever believes in Him might be saved, is opened up to our souls. And then we see that for us who are Believers Jesus died with the special intent that we should be saved. For the Holy Spirit to assure us that Jesus shed His blood for us in particular is one thing, but merely to conclude that Jesus died for us on the notion that He died for everybody is as far as the east is from the west from being real faith in Jesus Christ.

Neither is it faith for me to be confident that I am saved, for it may be the case that I am not saved, and it can never be faith to believe a lie. Many have concluded rashly that they were saved when they were still in the gall of bitterness. That was not the exhibition of confidence in Christ but the exhibition of a base presumption destructive to the last degree. To come back to where we started from, faith, in a word, is reliance upon Jesus Christ. Whether the Redeemer died in special and particular for me or not, is not the question to be raised in the first place. I find that He came into the world to save sinnersunder that general character I come to Him.

I find that whoever trusts Him shall be saved, I therefore trust Him, and having done so, I learn from His Word that I am the object of His special love, and that I am born of God. In my first coming to Jesus I can have no knowledge of any personal and special interest in the blood of Jesus. But since it is written, God has set Him forth to be a Propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world, I come and trust myself to that Propitiationsink or swim I cast myself on the Savior.

Great Son of God, You have lived and died! You have bled and suffered, and made atonement for sin for all such as trust You! And, by Your Grace, I trust you, I lean upon You, I cast myself upon You. Now, whoever has such faith as this is born of God. He has true faith which is proof positive of the new birth. Judge yourselves, therefore, whether you have this faith or not.

Let me tarry just one minute longer over this. The true faith is set forth in Scripture by figures, and one or two of these we will mention. It was an eminent type of faith when the Hebrew father in Egypt slew the lamb and caught the warm blood in the basin. He then took a bunch of hyssop and dipped it in the blood and marked the two posts of his door. Then he struck a red mark across the lintel. That smearing of the door represented faith. The deliverance was worked by the blood. And the blood availed through the householders own personally striking it upon his door.

Faith does that. It takes of the things of Christ, makes them its own, sprinkles the soul, as it were, with the precious blood, accepts the way of mercy by which the Lord passes over us and exempts His people from destruction. Faith was shown to the Jews in another way. When a beast was offered in sacrifice for sin, the priest, and sometimes the representatives

of the tribes, or the individual laid their hands upon the victim in token that they desired their sins to be transferred to it, that it might suffer for them as a type of the Great Substitute. Faith lays her hands on Jesus, desiring to receive the benefit of His substitutionary death.

A still more remarkable representation of faith was that of the healing look of the serpent-bitten Israelites. On the great standard in the midst of the camp, Moses lifted up a serpent of brass! High overhead above all the tents this serpent gleamed in the sun, and whomever, of all the dying host, would but look to it was made to live. Looking was a very simple act, but it indicated that the person was obedient to Gods command. He looked as he was bid, and the virtue of healing came from the bronze serpent through a look.

Such is faith. It is the simplest thing in the world, but it indicates a great deal more than is seen upon its surface

*There is life for a look at the Crucified One.* To believe in Jesus is but to glance the eye of faith to Him, to trust Him with your soul. That poor woman who came behind our Savior in the crowd offers us another figure of what faith is. She said, If I may but touch the hem of His garment I shall be made whole. Taking no medicines, making no profession, and performing no ceremonies, she simply touched the hem of the Saviors robe, and she was healed at once!

O Soul, if you can get into contact with Christ by simply trusting Him, though that trust is ever so feeble you have the faith of Gods elect! You have the faith which is in every case the token of the new birth.

II. We must now pass on to show that WHEREVER IT EXISTS IT IS THE PROOF OF REGENERATION. There never was a grain of such faith as this in this world, except in a regenerate soul, and there never will be while the world stands. It is so according to the text, and if we had no other testimony, this one passage would be quite enough to prove it. Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.

Ah, I hear you say, poor Soul, the new birth is a great mystery. I do not understand it. I am afraid I am not a partaker in it. You are born again if you believe that Jesus is the Christ, if you are relying upon a crucified Savior you are assuredly begotten again unto a lively hope. Mystery or no mystery, the new birth is yours if you are a Believer. Have you ever noticed that the greatest mysteries in the world reveal themselves by the simplest indications? The simplicity and apparent easiness of faith is no reason why I should not regard its existence as an infallible indication of the new birth within.

How do we know that the new-born child lives except by its cry? Yet a childs crywhat a simple sound it is! How readily could it be imitated! A clever workman could, with pipes and strings, easily deceive us. Yet was there ever a childs cry in the world but what it indicated the mysteries of breathing, heart-beating, blood-flowing, and all the other wonders which come with life itself? Do you see yonder person just drawn out of the river? Does she live? Yes, life is there. Why? Because the lungs still heave. But does it not seem an easy thing to make lungs heave? A pair of bellows blown into themmight not that produce the motion?

Ah, yes, the thing is easily imitated after a sort. But no lungs heave except where life is, no blood is pumped to and from the heart except where life is. Take another illustration. Go into a telegraph office at any time and you will see certain needles moving right and left with unceasing clicks. Electricity is a great mystery, and you cannot see or feel it. But the operator tells you that the electric current is moving along the wire. How does he know? I know it by the needle. How is that? I could move your needles easily. Yes, but do you not see the needle has made two motions to the right, one to the left, and two to the right again? I am reading a message.

But, you say, I can see nothing in it. I could imitate that clicking and moving very easily. Yet he who is taught the art sees before him in those needles not only electric action, but a deeper mystery still. He perceives that a mind is directing the invisible force, and speaking by means of it. Not to all, but to the initiated is it given to see the mystery hidden within the simplicity. The Believer sees in the faith, which is simple as the movements of the needle, an indication that God is operating on the human mind, and the spiritual man discerns that there is an inner secret intimated which the carnal eye cannot decipher.

To believe in Jesus is a better indicator of regeneration than anything else, and in no case did it ever mislead. Faith in the living God and His Son Jesus Christ is always the result of the new birth, and can never exist except in the regenerate. Whoever has faith is a saved man. I beg you to follow me a little in this argument. A certain Divine has lately said, A mans act of believing is not the same as his being savedit is only in the direction of being saved. This is tantamount to a denial that every Believer in Christ is at once saved. And the inference is that a man may not conclude that he is saved because he believes in Jesus.

Now, observe how opposed this is to Scripture. It is certain from the Word of God that the man who believes in Jesus is not condemned. Read John 3:18, and many other passages. He that believes on Him is not condemned. Now is not every unregenerate man condemned? Is not a man who is not condemned a saved man? When you are sure, on Divine authority that the Believer is not condemned, how in the name of everything that is rational can you deny that the Believer is saved? If he is not condemned, what has he to fear? Will he not rightly conclude that being justified by faith he has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ?

Note, secondly, that faith in the fourth verse of the chapter before us is said to overcome the world. This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. What, then? Does faith overcome the world in persons who are not saved? How can this be possible when the Apostle says that that which overcomes the world is born of God? Read the fourth verse Whatever is born of God overcomes the worldand FAITH overcomes the world. Therefore the man who has faith is regenerate. And what does that mean but that he is saved, and that his faith is the instrument by which he achieves victories?

Further, faith accepts the witness of God, and morehe that has faith has the witness in himself to the Truth of God. Read the tenth verse of the chapterHe that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself. It is not said, He that does this, or feels that, but, He that BELIEVES has the witness in himself. His heart bears witness to the Truth of God. Has any unsaved man an experimental witness within? Will you tell me that a mans inner experience bears witness to Gods Gospel and yet the man is in a lost state, or only hopeful of being saved ultimately? No, Sir,

it is impossible!

He that believes has that chance worked in him which enables him by his own consciousness to confirm the witness of God, and such a man must be in a state of salvation. It is not possible to say of him that he is an unsaved man. Again, note in this chapter, at the thirteenth verse, that wherever there is faith there is eternal life. So run the words, these things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. Our Lord Himself, and His Apostles, in several places have declared, He that believes on Him has everlasting life.

Do not tell me that a sinner who believes in Jesus is to make an advance before he can say he is saved. Do not tell me that a man who trusts Christ is only on the way to salvation, and must wait until he has used the ordinances, and has grown in Grace before he may know that he is saved. No! the moment that the sinners trust is placed on the finished work of Jesus he is saved. Heaven and earth may pass away, but that man shall never perish!

If only one second ago I trusted the Savior I am safe, just as safe as the men who has believed in Jesus fifty years and who has all that while walked uprightly. I do not say that the new-born convert is as happy, nor as useful, nor as holy, nor as ripe for Heaven. But I do say that the words, he that believes on Him has everlasting life, is a Truth of God with general bearings, and relates as much to the babe in faith as it does to the man who has attained to fullness of stature in Jesus Christ. As if this chapter were written on purpose to meet the gross error that faith does not bring immediate salvation, it extols faith again and again! Yes, and I may add our Lord Himself crowns faith, because faith never wears the crown, but brings all the glory to the dear Redeemer.

Now, let me say a word or two in reply to certain questions. But must not a man repent as well as believe? ReplyNo man ever believed but what he repented at the same time. Faith and repentance go together. They must. If I trust Christ to save me from sin, I am at the same time repenting of sin, and my mind is changed in relation to sin, and everything else that has to do with its state. All the fruits meet for repentance are contained in faith itself. You shall never find that a man who trusts Christ remains an enemy to God, or a lover of sin. The fact that he accepts the Atonement provided is proof positive that he loathes sin, and that his mind is thoroughly changed in reference to God.

Moreover, as to all the Graces which are produced in the Christian afterwards, are they not all to be found in embryo in faith? Only believe, and you shall be saved, is the cry which many sneer at, and others misunderstand. But do you know what, only believe, means? Do you know what a world of meaning lies in those two words? Read that famous Chapter 11 in Hebrews and see what faith has done and is still able to do, and you will see that it is no trifle! Wherever there is faith in a man let it but develop itself and there will be a purging of himself from sin, a separating himself from the world, a conflict with evil, and a warring for the glory of Christ which nothing else could produce.

Faith is, in itself, one of the noblest of Graces. It is the compendium of all virtues. And as sometimes there will lie within one single ear enough seed to make a whole garden fertile, so, within that one word, faith, there lies enough of virtue to make earth blessedenough of Grace, if the Spirit makes it growto turn the fallen into the perfect. Faith is not the easy and light thing men think.

Far are we from ascribing salvation to the profession of a mere creed we loathe the idea! Neither do we ascribe salvation to a fond persuasion, but we do ascribe salvation to Jesus Christ, and the obtaining of it to that simple, child-like confidence which lovingly casts itself into the arms of Him who gave both His hands to the nails and suffered to the death for the sins of His people. He who believes, then, is savedrest assured of that. Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.

III. Now what flows out of this? Love is the legitimate issue! We must love, if we are begotten of God, all those who are also born of God. It would be an insult to you if I were to prove that a brother should love his brother. Does not Nature, herself, teach us that? Those, then, who are born of God ought to love all those of the same household. And who are they? Why, all those who have believed that Jesus is the Christ, and are resting their hopes where we rest ours, namely, on Christ the Anointed One of God. We are to love all such. We are to do this because we are of the family. We believe, and therefore we have been begotten of God.

Let us act as those who are of the Divine family. Let us count it our privilege that we are received into the household, and rejoice to perform the lovely obligations of our high position. We look around us and see many others who have believed in Jesus Christ. Let us love them because they are of the same kindred. But they are some of them unsound in doctrine, they make gross mistakes as to the Masters ordinances. We are not to love their faults, neither ought we to expect them to love ours. But we are, nevertheless, to love their persons, for, whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.

And therefore he is one of the family, and as we love the Father who begot, we are to love all those that are begotten of Him. First, I love God, and therefore I desire to promote Gods Truth and to keep Gods Gospel free from taint. But then I am to love all those whom God has begotten, despite the infirmities and errors I see in them, being also, myself, compassed about with infirmities. Life is the reason for love. The common life which is indicated by the common faith in the dear Redeemer is to bind us to each other. I must confess, though I would pay every deference to every Brothers conscientious judgment, I do not know how I could bring my soul, as a child of God, to refuse any man communion at my Masters Table who believed that Jesus is the Christ.

I have proof in His doing so. If He is sincere (and I can only judge of that by his life), then he is born of God. And has not every child a right to come to the Fathers Table? I know in the olden times parents used to make children go without their meals as a punishment, but everybody tells us now that this is cruel and unwise, for it injures the childs constitution to deprive it of necessary food. There are rods in the Lords House, and there is no need to keep disobedient children away from the Supper.

Let them come to the Lords Table, and eat and drink with the Lord Jesus and with all His saints in the hope that when their constitution bestows stronger they will throw out the disease which now they labor under, and come to be obedient to the whole Gospel, which says, He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. Let me beg the members of this

Church to exhibit mutual love to one another. Are there any feeble among you? Comfort them. Are there any who want instruction? Bring your knowledge to their help. Are there any in distress? Assist them. Are they backsliding? Restore them.

Little children, love one another, is the rule of Christs familymay we, by His Grace, observe it. May the love of God which has been steeped abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us, reveal itself by our love to all the saints. And, remember, other sheep He has which are not yet of His foldthem, also, He must bring in. Let us love those who are yet to be brought in, and lovingly go forth at once to seek them. In whatever other form of service God has given us, let us with loving eyes look after our prodigal Brothers, and who knows, we may bring into the family this very day some for whom there will be joy in the presence of the angels of God because the lost one has been found! God bless and comfort you, for Jesus Christs sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON1 JOHN 5.

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NO. 14

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AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. 1 John 5:4

THE Epistles of John are perfumed with love. The word is continually occurring while the Spirit enters into every sentence. Each letter is thoroughly soaked and impregnated with this heavenly honey. If he speaks of God, His name must be Love. Are the Brethren mentioned, he loves them. And even of the world itself, he writes, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. From the opening to the conclusion, love is the manner, love the matter, love the motive and love the aim! We stand, therefore, not a little astonished, to find such martial words in so peaceful a writing, for I hear a sound of war. It is not the voice of love, surely, that says, He that is born of God overcomes the world. Lo, here are strife and battle! The word overcomes seems to have in it something of the sword and warfareof strife and contentionof agony and wrestling. So unlike the love which is smooth and gentle, which has no harsh words within its lipswhose mouth is lined with velvet, whose words are softer than butterwhose utterances are more easily flowing than oil. Here we have warwar to the knife, for I read, Whatever is born of God overcomes the world. Strife until deathbattle throughout lifefighting with a certainty of victory. How is it that the same Gospel which always speaks of peace, here proclaims a warfare? How can it be? Simply because there is something in the world which is antagonistic to love. There are principles abroad which cannot bear light and, therefore, before light can come, it must chase the darkness. Before summer reigns, you know, it has to do battle with old winter and to send it howling away in the winds of Marchthen shedding its tears in April showers. So also, before any great or good thing can have the mastery of this world, it must do battle for it! Satan has seated himself on his blood-stained throne and who shall take him down, except by force? Darkness broods over the nations. Nor can the sun establish his empire of light until he has pierced night with the arrow sunbeams and made it flee away. Hence we read in the Bible that Christ did not come to send peace on earth but a sword He came to set the father against the son and the son against the father. The mother against the daughter and the daughter against the mother. The mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. Not intentionally, mind you, but as a means to an endbecause there must always be a struggle before truth and righteousness can reign! Alas, for that earth is the battlefield where good must combat with evil. Angels look on and hold their breath, burning to mingle in the conflict, but the troops of the Captain of Salvation may be none but the soldiers of the Cross. And that slender band must fight alone and yet shall triumph gloriously! Enough shall they be for conquest and the slogan of their standard is ENOUGH. Enough by the arm of the helping Trinity.

As God shall help me, I shall speak to you of three things to be found in the text. First, the text speaks of a great victoryit says, This is the victory. Secondly, it mentions a great birthWhatever is born of God. And, thirdly, it extols a great Grace, whereby we overcome the world, even our faith.

I. First, the text speaks of a GREAT VICTORYthe victory of victoriesthe greatest of all. We know there have been great battles where nations have met in strife and one has overcome the other. But who has read of a victory that overcame the world? Some will say that Alexander was its conqueror. But I answer, no. He was himself the vanquished man, even when all things were in his possession. He fought for the world and won itand then mark how it mastered its master, conquered its conquerorand lashed the monarch who had been its scourge. See the royal youth weeping and stretching out his hands with idiotic cries, for another world which he might ravage. He seemed, in outward show, to have overcome old Earthbut, in reality, within his inmost soul the earth had conquered him! It had overwhelmed him, had wrapped him in the dream of ambition, girdled him with the chains of covetousness, so that when he had all, he was still dissatisfied. And like a poor slave, he was dragged on at the chariot wheels of the world, crying, moaning, lamenting, because he could not win another. Who is the man that ever overcame the world? Let him stand forwardhe is a Triton among the minnows. He shall outshine Caesar. He shall outmatch even our own lately departed Wellington, if he can say he has overcome the world! It is so rare a thing, a victory so prodigious, a conquest so tremendous, that he who can claim to have won it may walk among his fellows, like Saul, with head and shoulders far above them! He shall command our respect. His very presence shall awe us into reverence. His speech shall persuade us to obedience and, yielding honor to whom honor is due, well say when we listen to his voice, Tis even as if an angel shook his wings!

I shall now attempt to expand the idea I have suggested, showing you in what varied senses the Christian overcomes the world. A tough battle, Sirs, I guarantee younot one which carpet knights might winno easy skirmish that he might win, who dashed to battle on some sunshiny day, looked at the host, then turned his coursers rein and daintily dismounted at the door of his silken tent. Not one which he shall gain, who, but a raw recruit today, puts on his regimentals and foolishly imagines that one week of service will ensure a crown of glory! No, Sirs, it is a lifelong wara fight needing the power of all the musclesand a strong heart. It is a contest which shall need all our strength, if we are to be triumphant. And if we do come off more than conquerors, it shall be said of us, as Hart said of Jesus ChristHe had strength enough and none to spare. A battle at which the stoutest heart might quail. A fight at which the brave might shake, if he did not remember that the Lord is on his side and, therefore, whom shall he fear? Jesus Christ is the strength of his lifeof whom shall he be afraid? This fight with the world is not one of main force, or physical mightif it were, we might soon win it. But it is all the more dangerous from the fact that it is a strife of mind, a contest of heart, a struggle of the spirit, a strife of the soul. When we overcome the world in one fashion, we have not half done our work. For the world is a Proteus, changing its shape continually. Like the chameleon, it has all the colors of the rainbow and when you have worsted the world in one shape, it will attack you in another! Until you die, you will always have fresh appearances of the world to wrestle with. Let me just mention some of the forms in which the Christian overcomes the world.

1. He overcomes the world when it sets up itself as a legislator, wishing to teach him customs. You know the world has its old massive law book of customs and he who does not choose to go according to the fashion of the world is under the ban of society. Most of you do just as everybody else does and that is enough for you. If you see So-and-So do a dishonest thing in business, it is sufficient for you that everybody does it. If you see that the majority of mankind have certain habitsyou succumb, you yield. You think, I suppose, that to march to Hell in crowds, will help to diminish the fierce heat of the burning of the bottomless pit, instead of remembering that the more fire wood the fiercer will be the flame! Men usually swim with the stream like a dead fish. It is only the living fish that goes against it. It is only the Christian who despises customs, who does not care for conventionalisms, who only asks himself the question, Is it right or is it wrong? If it is right, I will be singular. If there is not another man in this world who will do it, I will do it. Should a universal hiss go up to Heaven, I will still do it. Should the very stones of earth fly up and stone me to death, by Gods grace, I will still do it. Though they bind me to the stake, yet I must do it. I will be singularly right.

If the multitude will not follow me, I will go without them. I will be glad if they will all go and do right as well, but if not, I will despise their customs. I care not what others do. I shall not be weighed by other men. To my own Master I stand or fall. Thus I conquer and overcome the customs of the world. Fair world! She dresses herself in ermine, she puts on the robes of a judge and she solemnly tells you, Man, you are wrong. Look at your fellows, see what they do? Behold my laws. For hundreds of years have not men done so? Who are you to set yourself up against me? And she pulls out her worm-eaten law book and turning over the musty pages, says, See, here is an act passed in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar and here is another law enacted in the days of Pharaoh. These must be right, because antiquity has enrolled them among her standard authorities. Do you mean to set yourself up and stand against the opinions of the multitude? Yes, we do! We take the law book of the world and we burn it, as the Ephesians did their magic rolls. We take her deeds and make them into waste paper. We rend her proclamation from the walls. We care not what others docustom to us is a cobweb. We count it no folly to be singular. When to be singular is to be right, we count it the proudest wisdom. We overcome the world. We trample on her customs. We walk as a distinct people, a separate race, a chosen generation, a peculiar people. The Christian behaves in his dealings not as the laughing infidel insinuates, when he sneeringly describes Mawworm, as saying, Boy, have you sanded the sugar? Yes, Sir. Have you put the sloe leaves in the tea? Yes, Sir. Have you put red lead in the pepper? Yes, Sir. Then come to prayers. Christians do not do so! They say, We know better, we cannot conform to the customs of the world. If we pray, we will also act, or else we are hypocrites, confounded hypocrites. If we go to the House of God and profess to love Him, we love Him everywhere! We take our religion with us into the shop, behind the counter, into our officeswe must have it everywhere, or else God knows it is not religion at all. You must stand up, then, against the customs of mankind. Albeit, this may be a three-million peopled city, but you are to come out and be separate if you would overcome the world.

2. We rebel against the worlds customs. And if we do so, what is the conduct of our enemy? She changes her aspect. That man is a heretic. That man is a fanatic. He is a cant, he is a hypocrite, says the world, directly. She grasps her sword, she puts frowns upon her brow, she scowls like a demon, she girds tempests round about her and she says, The man dares defy my government. He will not do as others do. Now I will persecute him. Slander! Come from the depths of Hell and hiss at him. Envy! Sharpen up your tooth and bite him. She fetches up all false things and she persecutes the man if she can. She does it with the hand, if not by the tongue. She afflicts him wherever he is. She tries to ruin him in business. Or, if he stands forth as the champion of the truth, why then she laughs and mocks and scorns. She lets no stone be unturned whereby she may injure him. What is then the behavior of the Lords warrior when he sees the world take up arms against him and when he sees all earth, like an army, coming to chase him and utterly destroy him? Does he yield? Does he yield? Does he bend? Does he cringe? Oh, no! Like Luther, he writes Cedo nulli on his bannerI yield to none. And he goes to war against the world, if the world goes to war against him

*Let earth be all in arms abroad,*

*He dwells in perfect peace.*   
Ah, some of you, if you had a word spoken against you, would at once give up what religion you have! But the true-born child of God cares little for mans opinion. Ah, he says, let my bread fail me, let me be doomed to wander penniless the wide world over. Yes, let me dieeach drop of blood within these veins belongs to Christ and I am ready to shed it for His names sake. He counts all things but loss, that he may win Christ that he may be found in Him. And when the worlds thunders roars, he smiles at the uproar, while he hums his pleasant tune

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

When the worlds sword comes out, he looks at it. Ah, he says, just as the lightning leaps from its thunder lair, splits the clouds and affrights the stars but is powerless against the rock-covered mountaineer who smiles at its grandeur, so now the world cannot hurt me. In the time of trouble my Father hides me in His pavilion. In the secret of His tabernacle does He hide me and set me up upon a rock. Thus, again, we conquer the world by not caring for its frowns!

3. Well, says the world, I will try another style, and this, believe me, is the most dangerous of all. A smiling world is worse than a frowning one. She says, I cannot smite the man low with my repeated blows, so I will take off my mailed glove and show him a fair white hand. Ill bid him kiss it. I will tell him I love himI will flatter him, I will speak good words to him. John Bunyan well describes this Madam Bubble. She has a winning way with her. She drops a smile at the end of each of her sentences. She talks much of fair things and tries to win and woo. Oh, believe me, Christians are not so much in danger when they are persecuted as when they are admired! When we stand upon the pinnacle of popularity we may well tremble and fear. It is not when we are hissed at and hooted that we have any cause to be alarmed. It is when we are dandled on the lap of fortune and nursed upon the knees of the people. It is when all men speak well of us that woe is unto us. It is not in the cold wintry wind that I take off my coat of righteousness and throw it away. It is when the sun comes, when the weather is warm and the air balmy that I unguardedly strip off my robes and become naked. Good God! How many a man has been made naked by the love of this world! The world has flattered and applauded him. He has drunk the flattery. It was an intoxicating draught. He has staggered, he has reeled, he has sinned, he has lost his reputation. And as a comet that dashed across the sky wanders far into space and is lost in darkness, so does he. Great as he was, he falls. Mighty as he was, he wanders and is lost. But the true child of God is never so. He is as safe when the world smiles, as when it frowns. He cares as little for her praise as for her dispraise. If he is praised and it is true, he says, My deeds deserves praise, but I refer all honor to my God. Great souls know what they merit from their critic. To them it is nothing more than the giving of their daily income. Some men cannot live without a large amount of praise. If they have no more than they deserve, let them have it. If they are children of God they will be kept steady, they will not be ruined or spoiled. But they will stand with feet like hinds feet upon high placesThis is the victory that overcomes the world.

4. Sometimes again, the world turns jailer to a Christian. God sends affliction and sorrow until life is a prison, the world its jailerand a wretched jailer, too. Have you ever been in trials and troubles, my Friends? And has the world ever come to you and said, Poor prisoner, I have a key that will let you out. You are in financial difficulties. I will tell you how you may get free. Put that Mr. Conscience away. He asks you whether it is a dishonest act. Never mind about him. Let him sleep think about the honesty after you have got the moneyand repent at your leisure. So says the world. But you say, I cannot do the thing. Well, says the world, then groan and grumblea good man like you locked up in this prison! No, says the Christian, my Father sent me into want and in His own time He will fetch me out. But if I die here, I will not use wrong means to escape. My Father put me here for my good, I will not grumble. If my bones must lie hereif my coffin is to be under these stonesif my tombstone shall be in the wall of my dungeonhere will I die, rather than so much lift a finger to get out by unfair means. Ah, says the world, then you are fool. The scorner laughs and passes on, saying, The man has no brain, he will not do a bold thing. He has no courage. He will not launch upon the sea. He wants to go in the old beaten track of morality. Yes, so he does. For thus he overcomes the world!

Oh, I might tell you of some battles that have been fought. There has been many a poor maiden who has worked, worked, worked, until her fingers were worn to the bonejust to earn a scanty living out of the things which we wear upon us, knowing not that oftentimes we wear the blood, bones and sinews of poor girls. That poor girl has been tempted a thousand times. The Evil One has tried to seduce her, but she has fought a valiant battle. Stern in her integrity in the midst of poverty, she still stands upright. Clear as the sun, fair as the moon and terrible as an army with banners, a heroine unconquered by the temptations and enticements of vice! In other cases many a man has had the chance of being rich in an hour, affluent in a moment, if he would but clutch something which he dares not look at, because God within him said, No. The world said, Be rich, be rich. But the Holy Spirit said, No! Be honest. Serve your God. Oh, the stern contest and the manly combat carried on within the heart! But he said, No. Could I have the stars transmuted into worlds of gold, I would not, for those globes of wealth belie my principles and damage my soul. Thus he walks a conqueror. This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.

II. But my text speaks of a GREAT BIRTH. A very kind friend has told me that while I was preaching in Exeter Hall I ought to pay deference to the varied opinions of my hearers. He said that albeit I may be a Calvinist and a Baptist, I should remember that there are a variety of creeds here. Now, if I were to preach nothing but what would please the whole lot of you, what on earth would I do? I preach what I believe to be true! And if the omission of a single Truth that I believe would make me King of England throughout eternity, I would not leave it out! Those who do not like what I say have the option of leaving. They come here, I suppose, to please themselves and if the Truth does not please them, they can leave. I will never be afraid that an honest British audience will turn away from the man who does not stick, stutter and stammer in speaking the Truth of God! Well, now, about this great birth. I am going to say, perhaps, a harsh thing, but I heard it said by Mr. Jay first of all. Some say a new birth takes place in an infant baptism, but I remember that venerable Patriarch saying, Popery is a lie, Puseyism is a lie, baptismal regeneration is a lie. So it is. It is a lie so palpable that I can scarcely imagine the preachers of it have any brains in their heads at all! It is so absurd upon the very face of it, that a man who believes it puts himself below the range of a commonsense man! Believe that every child by a drop of water is born-again? Then that man that you see in the ring as a prize-fighter is born-again because those sanctified drops once fell upon his infant forehead! Another man swearsbehold him drunk and reeling about the streets. He is born-again! A pretty born-again that is! I think he wants to be born-again another time. Such a regeneration as that only fits him for the devil. And by its deluding effect, may even make him sevenfold more the child of Hell! But the men who curse, swear, rob and steal and those poor wretches who are hanged, have all been born-again, according to the fiction of this beautiful Puseyite church. Out with it! Out with it! Ah, God sends something better than that into mens hearts when He sends them a new birth!

However, the text speaks of a great birth. Whatever is born of God overcomes the world. This new birth is the mysterious point in all religion. If you preach anything else except the new birth, you will always get on well with your hearers. But if you insist that in order to enter Heaven there must be a radical changethough this is the Doctrine of the Scriptureit is so unpalatable to mankind in general that you will scarcely get them to listen! Ah, now you turn away as I begin to tell you, that except you be born of water and of the Spirit, you cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven. If I tell you that there must be a regenerating influence exerted upon your minds by the power of the Holy Spirit, then I know you will say it is enthusiasm. Ah, but it is the enthusiasm of the Bible! There I stand. By this I will be judged. If the Bible does not say we must be born-again, then I give it up. But if it does, then, Sirs, do not distrust that Truth on which your salvation hangs!

What is it to be born-again? Very briefly, to be born-again is to undergo a change so mysterious that human words cannot speak of it. As we cannot describe our first birth, so it is impossible for us to describe the second. The wind blows where it lists and you hear the sound thereof. But you cannot tell from where it comes or where it goes. So is everyone that is born of the Spirit. But while it is so mysterious, it is a change which is known and felt. People are not born-again when they are in bed and asleep so that they do not know it. They feel it! They experience it! Galvanism, or the power of electricity, may be mysterious. But it produces a feelinga sensation. So does the new birth. At the time of the new birth, the soul is in great agonyoften drowned in seas of tears. Sometimes it drinks bitters, now and then mingled with sweet drops of hope. While we are passing from death unto life there is an experience which none but the child of God can really understand. It is a mysterious change, but, at the same time, it is a positive one. It is as much a change as if this heart were taken out of me and the black drops of blood wrung from it, then washed and cleansed and put into my soul again! It is a new heart and a right spirita mysterious but yet an actual and real change!

Let me tell you, moreover, that this change is a supernatural one. It is not one that a man performs upon himself. It is not leaving off drinking and becoming sober. It is not turning from a Roman Catholic to a Protestant. It is not veering round from a Dissenter to a Churchman, or a Churchman to a Dissenter. It is vast deal more than that. It is a new principle infused which works in the heart, enters the very soul and moves the entire man. It is not a change of my name, but a renewal of my nature so that I am not the man I used to be, but a new man in Christ Jesus. It is a supernatural changesomething which man cannot do and which only God can effectwhich the Bible, itself, cannot accomplish without the attendant Spirit of God. It is something which no ministers eloquence can bring aboutsomething so mighty and wondrous that it must be confessed to be the work of God and God, alone. Here is the place to observe that this new birth is an enduring change. Arminians tell us that people are born-again, then fall into sin, pick themselves up again and become Christians againfall into sin, lose the Grace of God, then come back againfall into sin a hundred times in their lives and so keep on losing Grace and recovering it. Well, I suppose it is a new version of the Scripture where you read of that. But I read in my Bible that if true Christians could fall away it would be impossible to renew them again unto repentance. I read, moreover, that wherever God has begun a good work, He will carry it on even to the end. And that whom He once loves, He loves to the end.

If I have simply been reformed, I may be a drunkard yet, or you may see me acting on the stage. But if I am really born-again, with that real supernatural change, I shall never fall away. I may fall into a sin, but I shall not fall finally. I shall stand while life shall last, constantly secure. And when I die it shall be said

*Servant of God, well done!   
Rest from your blest employ.   
The battles fought, the victorys won,   
Enter your rest of joy.*

Do not deceive yourselves, my Beloved. If you imagine that you have been regenerated and having gone away from God, will be once more bornagain, you do not know anything about the matter. For he that is born of God sins not. That is, he does not sin so much as to fall away from Gracefor he keeps himselfthat the Evil One touches him not. Happy is the man who is really and actually regenerate and passed from death unto life!

III. To conclude. There IS A GREAT GRACE. Persons who are bornagain really do overcome the world. How is this brought about? The text says, This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. Christians do not triumph over the world by reason. Not at all. Reason is a very good thing and nobody should find fault with it. Reason is a candlebut faith is a sun! Well, I prefer the sun, though I do not put out the candle. I use my reason as a Christian. I exercise it constantlybut when I come to real warfare, reason is a wooden sword. It breaks, it snapswhile faith, that sword of true Jerusalem metal, cuts to the dividing of soul and body.

My text says, This is the victory which overcomes the world, even our faith. Who are the men that do anything in the world? Are they not always men of faith? Take it even as natural faith. Who wins the battle? Why, the man who knows he will win it and vows that he will be the victor! Who never gets on in the world? The man who is always afraid to do a thing for fear he cannot accomplish it. Who climbs to the top of the Alps? The man who says, I will do it, or I will die. Let such a man make up his mind that he can do a thing and he will do itif it is within the range of possibility. Who have been the men who have lifted the standard and grasping it with firm hand, have upheld it in the midst of stormy strife and battle? Why, men of faith. Who have done great things? Not men of fear and trembling, men who are afraid. But men of faith, who had bold fronts and foreheads made of brassmen who never shook and never trembled, but believing in God, lifted their eyes to the hills, from where comes their strength.

Never was a marvel done upon the earth, but it had sprung of faith. Nothing noble, generous, or great, but faith was the root of the achievement. Nothing comely, nothing famous, but its praise is faith. Leonidas fought in human faith as Joshua in Divine. Xenophon trusted to his skill and the sons of Matthias to their cause. Faith is mightiest of the mighty. It is the monarch of the realms of the mind. There is no being superior to its strength, no creature which will not bow to its Divine prowess. The lack of faith makes a man despicable, it shrivels him up so small that he might live in a nutshell. Give him faith and he is a leviathan that can dive into the depths of the sea. He is a war horse that cries, aha! aha! in the battle. He is a giant who takes nations and crumbles them in his hand, who encounters hosts and at a sword they vanish. He binds up sheaves of scepters and gathers up all the crowns as his own. There is nothing like faith, Sirs. Faith makes you almost as Omnipotent as God, by the borrowed might of its Divinity! Give us faith and we can do all things!

I want to tell you how it is that faith helps Christians to overcome the world. It always does it homeopathically. You say, That is a singular idea. So it may be. The principle is that, like cures like. So does faith overcome the world by curing like with like. How does faith trample upon the fear of the world? By the fear of God. Now, says the world, if you do not do this, I will take away your life. If you do not bow down before my false god, you shall be put in yon burning fiery furnace. But, says the man of faith, I fear Him who can destroy both body and soul in Hell. True, I may dread you, but I have a greater fear than that. I fear lest I should displease God. I tremble lest I should offend my Sovereign. So the one fear counterbalances the other. How does faith overthrow the worlds hopes? There, says the world, I will give you this, I will give you that, if you will be my disciple. There is a hope for you. You shall be rich, you shall be great. But, faith says, I have a hope laid up in Heaven. A hope which fades not away, eternal, incorrupt, eternally beautiful hope, a golden hope, a crown of life. And the hope of glory overcomes all the hopes of the world. Ah, says the world, Why not follow the example of your fellows? Because, says faith, I will follow the example of Christ. If the world puts one example before us, faith puts another. Oh, follow the example of such an one, he is wise, great and good, says the world. Says faith, I will follow Christ, He is the wisest, the greatest and the best. It overcomes example by example. Well, says the world, since you will not be conquered by all this, come, I will love you. You shall be my friend. Faith says, He that is the friend of this world, cannot be the friend of God. God loves me. So he puts love against love; fear against fear; hope against hope; dread against dread. And so faith overcomes the world by like curing like!

In closing my discourse, Brothers and Sisters, I am but a child. I have spoken to you as I could this morning. Another time, perhaps, I might be able to launch more thunders and to proclaim better the Word of God. But this I am sure ofI tell you all I know and speak right on. I am no oratorI just tell you what springs up from my heart. But before I have done, O that I may have a word with your souls. How many are there here who are born-again? Some turn a deaf ear and say, It is all nonsense. We go to our place of worship regularly. We put our hymn books and Bibles under our arm and we are very religious sort of people. Ah, Soul! if I meet you at the bar of judgment, remember I saidand said Gods WordExcept you be born-again, you shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Others of you say, We cannot believe that being born-again is such a change as you speak of. I am a great deal better than I used to be. I do not swear, now, and I am very much reformed. Sirs, I tell you it is no little change. It is not mending the pitcher but it is breaking it up and having a new one! It is not patching the heart, it is having a new heart and a right spirit. There is nothing but death unto sin and life unto righteousness, that will save your souls!

I am preaching no new Doctrine. Turn to the articles of the Church of England and read it there. Church people come to me sometimes to unite with our Church. I show them our Doctrines in their prayer book and they have said they never knew they were there! My dear Hearers, why do you not read your own articles of faith? Why, without a doubt, you do not know what is in your own prayer book! Men, nowadays do not read their Bibles and they have, for the most part, no religion! They have a religion, which is all outside show, but they do not think of searching to see what its meaning really is! Sirs, it is not the cloak of religion that will do for you, it is a vital godliness you need. It is not a religious Sunday, it is a religious Monday. It is not a pious Church, it is a pious closet. It is not a sacred place to kneel in, it is a holy place to stand in all day long. There must be a change of heartreal, radical, vital, entire. And now, what do you say? Has your faith overcome the world? Can you live above it? Or do you love the world and the things thereof? If so, Sirs, you must go on your way and perisheach one of youunless you turn from that and give your hearts to Christ! Oh, what do you say, is Jesus worthy of your love? Are the things of eternity and Heaven worth the things of time? Is it so sweet to be a worldling that for that you can lie down in torment? Is it so good to be a sinner that for this you can risk your souls eternal welfare? O, my Friends, is it worth your while to run the risk of an eternity of woe for an hour of pleasure? Is a dance worth dancing in Hell with howling fiends forever? Is one dream, with a horrid waking, worth enjoying, when there are the glories of Heaven for those who follow God? Oh, if my lips would let me speak to you, my heart would run over at my eyes and I would weep myself away until you had pity on your own poor souls! I know I am, in a measure, accountable for your souls. If the watchmen warn them not, they shall perishbut their blood shall be required at the watchmans hands. Turn you, turn you, why will you die, O house of Israel? thus says the Lord. Besotted, filled with your evil wills, inclined to evilstill the Holy Spirit speaks by me this morning, If you turn unto the Lord, with full purpose of heart, He will have mercy upon you. And to our God, He will abundantly pardon.

I cannot bring you. I cannot fetch you. My words are powerless, my thoughts are weak! Old Adam is too strong for this young child to draw or drag, but may God speak to you, dear Hearts. May God send the Truth home and then we shall rejoice together, both he that sows and he that reaps, because God has given us the increase. God bless you. May you all be born-again and have that faith that overcomes the world!

*Have I that faith which looks to Christ,   
Overcomes the world and sin   
Receives Him Prophet, Priest and King,   
And makes the conscience clean?   
If I this precious Grace possess,   
All praise is due to Thee!   
If not, I seek it from Your hands;   
Now grant it, Lord, to me.*

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #2757 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

VICTORIOUS FAITH   
NO. 2757

A SERMON   
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
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For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that overcomes the worldour faith. Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God? 1 John 5:4, 5.

WHAT is this world that we have to overcome? Did not God make the world and did He not see everything that He had made and, behold, it was very good? Yes, He did. But after sin entered this world, men came under its power and, now, by the world is meant all mankind who remain under the power of sin and are enemies of God. The world means the whole corrupt mass of human society out of which God has taken a people whom He has chosen for Himself, whom He quickens by His Divine Spirit and whose business it is to overcome the world. They will find that the worldthe power of evilwill war against them and they also must war against it! And the issue of the battle must not long be doubtful. There remains for us only one of two courseseither the world must overcome us and we must yield to itor else we must overcome the world and cause it to submit to us.

The Apostle helps us to understand what he means by the world by what he says in the third verse. This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not grievous. Now, anything which makes us think that Gods will is grievous is of the spirit of the world, against which we have to fight. If, for instance, we are tempted to think that the restrictions of Gods LawHis commandments and precepts are too stringent, it is the spirit of the world which tempts us to think so, for, His commandments are not grievous to those who truly love Him. It is only to the rebellious world that the restrictions of God appear to be too stringent, or that the commands of Christ become burdensome. If we are suffering pain or poverty, or whatever form of trial we may be called to endure, if we are tempted to say, God is dealing harshly with us, He is unkind to us, that, also, is manifesting the spirit of the world against which we are to contend until we conquer it. For Gods wil1 is always right and if we really love Him, we shall acknowledge that it is right and though, for a while, we may have to fight against the spirit of rebellion, yet if we are, indeed, Gods children, we must get the mastery over that spirit of evil and, so, the will of God, even when it involves pain, weakness, shame, or death, itself, shall still be perfectly agreeable to us because it is the will of God! We have not completely conquered the spirit of the world until we can truthfully say that the commandments of God, so far from being grievous to us, are acceptable simply because they come from Him.

Now I propose, as God shall help me, first, to speak of the conquest itself. Then, of the conquering nature. Whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And, thirdly, of the conquering weapon. This is the victory that overcomes the worldour faith.

I. First, then, concerning THE CONQUEST ITSELF. What is it to overcome the world?   
Certainly it is not to go about the world blustering and bullying everybody until they all lie prostrate at our feet! If we could accomplish such a feat as that, the world would, in such a case, have overcome us and we would not have conquered it. We would have displayed a spirit and temper betokening the pride of power, the desire to rule over othersand this love would have mastered us. Alexander the Great, when he was master of the whole world, was the greatest slave within it, for he was discontented even with his victories. The pride of conquest held him in captivity by its iron chain. No, he who aims at the highest greatness in this world may only be more greatly selfish than the rest of mankind and what is that but to be really little? He is truly great who is the most unselfish! And he is the least of all who lives for himself alone.   
Neither is it overcoming the world if you try to get out of it and to live by yourself so as never to be tempted to sin. I have seen a man on his knees by the hour, together, reading some pious Latin book, living in a monastery where he never spokehe had evidently conquered his tongue because he gave no answer to anybody who ever spoke to him. He was reckoned, by his brother monks, to have overcome the worldbut had he really done so? Ask any soldier whether a man who slinks away in the day of battle and hides among the baggageand does not fight at allis a conqueror! That would be a very easy way of winning a victoryjust to escape from the fightto be of no service in the battle between good and evil, but just to hide away in your own little snuggery over there, in the monastery, or the convent, or the hermitage! It might be an easy way of believing that you had conquered because you had ceased to fightbut that delusion would not make the victory yours. No, Brothers and Sisters, you and I have to roll up our shirtsleeves and go into the world and work like other peoplewe have to mingle with our fellow men and, as the Lord God said to Adamin the sweat of our face have we to eat our bread.   
It may be our occupation to have to add up those long columns of figures, or to measure up those bales of goods, or to talk to our fellow men on various matters, but, whatever our employment may be, we have to be in the world and we have to conquer it! To be in the world, yet not of it as much separated from the rest of mankind as if we belonged to an alien raceconquerors of it wherever we go, not by getting out of it, but by mingling with the men and women in itdoing all that is lawful and right and all that is expected that a man should do to his fellow men, yet, all the while being conquerors over the evil spirit of the world!   
Now, having shown you what this conquest of the world is not, let us turn to the positive side of the question and see what it is. The first thing that is necessary with many who are seeking to overcome the world is to cut themselves loose from the worlds customs. They were born into the worldone man has his own little world and another man has another little worldbut every man, sooner or later, finds himself in a world of sin. There are ungodly companions with whom he is linkedevil associations to which he is bound. There are some men who, in their unconverted state, give themselves up entirely to the pleasures of the world, the amusements and frivolities of what is called, Society. Now, if such men ever expect to overcome the world, the very first thing they must do is to cut their old connections altogether, to sever all the bonds which unite them to those who lead them into sin.   
Such a thing has often happened as for a man who has been the best of company and the choicest of good fellows among worldlings, to sit down in quietness for half an hour, and God the Holy Spirit has worked so mightily upon his heart that he has said to himself, What have I been doing but playing the fool to make other fools laugh? How am I spending my time? I must honestly say that I am doing no real good with it. What am I making of my manhood? Here it iswell-near six feet of it and it will soon lie in six feet of earthwhat am I doing that is really worth doing? Am I not really wasting my time? This style of living will not do.  
Ah, the blessed Spirit has begun working in the man and he has wept before his God as he has thought over his wasted life. Further, he has, by faith, looked to Jesus on the Cross and he has said, You, blessed Savior, have redeemed me, so, henceforth, I will be Yours. As I live by You, I will live for You and for my fellow men. After arriving, by Gods Grace, at that decision, he has become a different man from what he used to be! His old companions could not get him back to his former haunts, however much they might try to do so. Even if he should go there, they would not long want him with them, for he would not, any longer, be of their way of thinking or their way of acting, for he would be a changed man altogether.   
There are many of you who would like to come to that decision, but you never appear willing to actually decide to serve the Lord. You are always going to do it, yet you never do it. You hesitating people are the most unhappy folk in the whole world, for you neither get comfort out of your present condition, nor out of that better condition after which you sometimes aspire, but which you have not the courage to resolutely seek after until you find it! Some men have just enough conscience to make them miserable, but they have not enough force in it to make them determine that things shall be altered. Their religion is very much like the experience of certain boys who, professedly, go out to bathe in the early morning. They put their toes into the water and shiver all over with the cold. But the brave swimmer takes a header, plunges right in, is soon in a fine glow and comes out praising the delightful bath he has had! I would urge every man who is just now upon the point of decidingand I pray God the Holy Spirit, with His almighty energy, to back up my urgingthat he may now say   
*Tis donethe great transactions done, I am my Lords and He is mine!*   
I pray that he may henceforth be a changed man, that he may forsake his former evil ways and live wholly unto God. That is the first part of overcoming the worldbreaking loose from its bonds so that one can say, I am not tied down by it any longer. By Gods Grace, I am a free man in Christ Jesus.   
But that emancipation is merely a beginning. Overcoming the world consists further in maintaining that freedom. Oh, what a work is this! It is no childs play for a man to say, No, I will never again be the slave that I used to be. By Gods eternal Grace, I have broken off this fetter and that, and never again shall those chains be fastened upon me. Great God, by Your almighty love, You have loosed my bonds. I am Your free man! I am free, indeed, and I will fight for my freedomand under no possible circumstances will I go back to my old slavery. Yes, but that fight is the difficultyand I shall have to show you that nobody can be victorious in that fight unless he is one of a peculiar racethose who are born of God, born from above! This is a stern battlewhen the world surrounds us everywherewhen pleasure tempts uswhen gain tries to corrupt uswhen poverty assails uswhen evil company seeks to sway usit is hard for us to come right straight out of all our former associations and then to stay outremaining conquerors over the world throughout the whole of the rest of our life and being conquerors even in death, having vanquished the world even on our dying bed.   
Part of the overcoming of the world consists in our being raised above circumstances. Remember how the Apostle Paul had conquered the world? He sat in prison shivering with cold but he said, I know how to be abased. He went, by-and-by, into the houses of some of his friends where they gave him all that he could desire and he said, I know how to abound. It is not an easy thing to be such a master of the world that the utmost poverty cannot make you miserable, yet God can give you Grace to say, I can be poor, but I will be upright. I can lose every stick that I have, but I will stand fast by Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. And while I have Him, I cannot be cast down.   
I say that the fight against poverty is a very stern one, but the battle against the seductions of wealth is a far sterner one. Perhaps some of you think that you would like to fight that battle. I daresay you would, but you do not know what you are wishing. I see many men who are very gracious under all sorts of needand I see many other men who, in proportion as they grow rich in worldly things, grow poor as to spiritual things. Very often, just in proportion as men get high in earthly position, in that proportion they cease to do anything that is of any particular service to anybody. I do not know what would become of any of us if we were made peers of the realm. It is, I have no doubt, a great trial to anybody to be so exalted, but there is scarcely a person here who could wear a coronet and yet faithfully serve the Lord! And probably there is not a man or a woman among us who could endure the trial of being made a king or a queen. It needs more than a world of Grace to overcome the world when the world makes much of you! When God does give us piety in high places, as, blessed be His holy name, He sometimes does, we ought to be most grateful for it, for it is a plant that does not grow well in such a situation as that. The old couplet is still true   
*Gold and the Gospel seldom agree,   
Religion always sides with poverty.*   
It has been so from the first and I suppose it will be so to the last. But the true conquest of the world is to be indifferent about all such things to be grateful for abounding mercies and to be grateful even for straitened circumstances. They used to say, Philosophers can be merry without music and, certainly, Christians can be happy without having their cup perpetually full. I have learned, said the Apostle Paul, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content. Happy are all they who have learned the same lesson, for it this is overcoming the world!

Once more, dear Friends, to overcome the world is to be above its threats and above it bribes. You working men who are Christians often have a hard time of it, but when your work-mates mock and jeer at you, and call you evil names, never mind them. Overcome the world by patiently enduring all the persecution that falls to your lot. Do not get angry and do not become downhearted. Jests break no bones and if you had any bone broken for Christs sake, it would be the most honored one in your whole body! Still, you need not wish to have the friendship of this world and you must not expect to have it, for the world does not love Gods people. Look how it served them in ages gone byhanging was thought to be too good for them, so it roasted them alive!   
The world would have exterminated the saints if it could have done so and, today, what does the world say of Christians? Oh, they are either fools or fanatics, or else they are a set of canting hypocrites. If a man preaches the Gospel, and many are drawn to hear him, quibblers cry, Oh, he is an imposter! If any Christian man is very precise and particular, they say, Ugh, he is one of the sniveling Puritans! They never know anything bad enough to say of genuine Christians. They do not like us! It were a pity if they should, for they did not like our Master, and they do not like our Father. If we will consent to hide our doctrines, or to daub them over with the philosophical luminous paint of the preterit period, they will put up with us. But if we bring out pure Gospel Truth, straightway they will be down upon us!   
Yet there are some of Gods people that the world does love when they do the world a good turn. If their love to man leads them to a high philanthropy and if the world can get anything out of them, it does not mind loving them. It has a cupboard love even to saintsand if there is any profit to be made out of them, the world will love them, though not their saintship! They like Mr. So-and-So as a politician, but when it comes to his religion, they say, That is his weak point. They do not care to interfere with that. They admire another man because of his care for the poorthe widow and the fatherlessbut they hate the Doctrine of the Cross which he delights to preach and which is to him the very joy of his heart.   
On the other hand, when the world cannot frighten us by frowns, it often tries to woo us by smiles. Oh, it cries to us, you really are too righteous, you are too good. You need not be so precisecome just a little way with usyield only an inch, that is all we ask. No, Brothers and Sisters, yield no inches for all the smiles on this Jezebels painted face! But stand out just as boldly against her blandishments as against her thunderbolts. Care nothing for her opinion or her action either way, for, if you do, you will not have overcome the world. God help us, by His gracious Spirit, to be conquerors in that sense!   
To overcome the world, further, means to be above the influence of the worlds example. As I said before, we have, each one of us, our own little world and we all are, to a certain degree, subject to the influences of those who surround us. The young man in business who begins as a Christian is too often influenced by the pernicious maxims and customs of the trade with which he is connected. Men mingle in society and each one, to some extent, affects the others. How often is a pious child grievously affected by an ungodly parent! How frequently a gracious servant is ill-affected by an ungodly master or mistress! But if you really overcome the world, you will live above its influence. You will be like one who is obliged to go where the air is foul and disease is rife, but who has such a healthy constitution that he does not catch the disease and is not polluted by the impurity. There is no seed-plot within him for the disease to grow upon. Blessed is that man who is himself an example to his fellow menwho does not so much come under the influence of others as cast his own influence over others. God make all of you, Beloved, such true leaders of mankind in the right direction because you have, yourselves, overcome the world!   
If you want to see the portrait of a man who overcame the world, look at Abraham. He was at home with his father in Haran and God said to him, Come forthand away he went, with Sarah, and Lot, and their flocks and herds! The well-watered plain of Jordan lay before him and he might have settled in it, as Lot did, but it did not tempt himhe dwelt alone with his flocks and his herds, where God had bid him go. The king of Sodom and Abrahams nephew, Lot, were carried away captive and, for the sake of Lot, Abraham went with a band of men, smote the allied kings and delivered the prisoners. The king of Sodom said to him, Give me the persons and take the goods to yourself. Now, according to the rules of war, the spoil were all Abrahams, but, oh, how grandly did he behave! He was not going to be conquered by the world, so he said to the king of Sodom, I will not take from a thread even to a shoelace. I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, I have made Abram richwhich was as much as saying, I have a right to it if I wish to take it, but I waive my rights. I act from higher motives than the ordinary rules of men can supplythe Lord Jehovah is my Helper and Provider and I live upon what He gives me. He can make me rich without the help of the king of Sodom, so take your goods and go.   
See also how nobly he overcame the world on that memorable day when God said, I will now see whether Abraham does really love Me best of all. He has one boythe child of his old ageand I will tell him to offer him up in sacrifice. And grandly did the Patriarch, in that fiery trial, overcome the world, for Isaac was, practically, all the world to him on that day when he unsheathed the knife and proved that his love to God was superior to everything else! And this is the kind of conquest to which you, Beloved, are also called. May God grant that you may be well equipped for it and be truly victorious in it!   
II. Now, secondly, I think you will be prepared, after my giving this explanation of what it is to overcome the world, to hear about THE CONQUERING NATURE. Whatever is born of God overcomes the world   
Do you all know what it is to be born of God? I do not think I can tell you, in so many words, exactly what it is, though I know for myself. It is not simply to be improved and reformed. It is a grand thing when a man who has been degraded, lives in a better fashion. But a cobbler might take an old shoe and mend it, yet that would not make it a new one. Being born of God is also more than being made anew. It includes that, but that is not all that it includes. For God, who makes all things, can newmake them when He pleases, yet that does not make them to be born of Him. We all know what it is for one person to be born of anotheryou were all born of your father and of your motherand so you became partakers of your parents nature. In like manner, only in a far higher sense, regeneration is more than creation, for there is in it a kinship with God. So, being born-again makes us something more than Gods creatures we are Gods children.   
You know that blessed truth of adoption, by which God takes men and adopts them into His family, but regeneration is a great deal more than adoption. A man may have an adopted child, but yet it is really no child of his. There is nothing of himself in it and he cannot put his nature into it. But we are not only Gods adopted children if we are, indeed, born from above, we are Gods newborn children! The Divine Nature is actually put into us when we are born of Godis not that a wonderful thing? And that miracle of mercy must be worked in all of us who are ever to overcome the world.   
For notice this, no nature but the Divine Nature will ever try to overcome the world. By nature, we are of the world, and that which is of the world will not fight against the world, it will not even think of doing so. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. And flesh will not fight against flesh. Our Lord Jesus said to the Jews, You are of your father, the deviland the devil will not fight against the world, or try to overcome it, for his course is the course of this world, he is the prince of it! But where the Divine Nature come, it comes to fight against the world! The holy Nature of God never enters into a man but what that man cries, Now will I be wholly free from sin! Now will I shake off every fetter of it. Now, he says, under the power of this Divine inner life, I do scorn the thought that I, who am born of God, should be a slave to sinthat I, who bear within me something of the DeityI, who am a twice-born man, begotten again by God the everlasting Father, of whom I have become a childI loathe the very idea of yielding to sin. That is the kind of man to overcome the world because of the Divine Nature within him!   
For, see, the regenerated man is sure to overcome the world when he goes to fight against it because, first, he has the Spirit of the Father in him. Now God the Father is the worlds Creator, so the world can never be a match for its Creator! He made it and He can destroy it whenever He pleases to do so. It is not possible that sin should overcome God, for, as the Apostle James tells us, God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts He any man. He is by Nature perfectly holy and when this Divine Nature is put into a man, it is still holy and it cannot sin because it is born of God!   
This new Nature is also akin to the Nature of Christ. And you know how the Second Person of the blessed Trinitythe Christ of God, dwelt here among men and the world could never overcome Him. Men could kill Him and they did, but they could not make Him sin. They could drive Him from place to place, but they could not make Him angry. They could not provoke Him to speak any word that He might afterwards regret. They could never get anything from Him which was worthy of reproach or of rebuke. They called all the witnesses they could to testify against Him, but even the false witnesses could not agree, for He was holy

, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. And even on the Cross of Calvary, when they hung Him up to die, His dying pangs could extort from Him nothing but a prayer, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. And thus He conquered the world, for the Human Nature in Him, blended with the Divine, could not be conquered by the worldit was not possible!  
Further, we become akin to the Divine Spirit by being born of God and the Holy Spirit cannot be conquered by the world. It is He that convinces the world of sin! It is He that shall yet win this world for Christ! He is Omnipotent, so when the Spirit of God dwells within us, as He does when we receive the Divine Nature, it is not possible that He should be conquered, or that we should be conquered by the world.   
Now, Brothers and Sisters, listen to these words. Do you not see that you must overcome the world or else you will perish? But you cannot overcome the world as you are. You must, therefore, be born-again! Your only hope lies in your being born of God! And this, if it is to take place, must be Gods work. It is God alone who can do it, so you are like ships on their beam-endsyou cannot right yourselves. Cry, therefore, with your whole heart to God and ask Him to work this miracle in you! Salvation is of the Lord. He can save you. He can take away the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. He can breathe upon the dry bones and make them live. Yes, He, the mysterious Father of our spirits, can create in us a new spirit that shall be begotten of Himself and be like unto Himselfand this we must haveor we can never overcome the world.   
III. Now, thirdly, and lastly, I have to speak of THE CONQUERING WEAPON WHICH IS USED BY THIS NEW NATURE. This is the victory that overcomes the worldour faith.   
It never entered into my head that the most of professing Christians would ever overcome the world. I do not think they ever will, for the world has, to a large extent, overcome them. You may hear some of them asking, How far may we go in worldly amusements? You really want to go, do you not? Then go, for it does not matter much where such people as you are go. Oh, but we should like to go as far into the world as we might! Would you? Then my Lords message to you is, You must be born-again! It is quite evident that you have not the Nature of God in you, for the Divine Nature in the soul makes it start back, and say, How far can I get away from anything that looks like wrong? I hate the very appearance of evil.   
The Christian does not deny himself this or that, merely because he feels under an obligation to do so, or because he dreads the lash of Gods whip. No, if he could indulge his new Nature to the fullest, he would continually swim in the sea of perfection! If he could be what he wishes to be, he would never think a wrong thought, much less speak an evil word. Now, the Divine Nature that is in him fights against sinit cannot help doing soand it clings to that which is good and craves after that which is right. Just as the ox longs to drink water and stands in a pool of it on a hot day and drinks and drinks again, so does the Christian seek to drink in the life and purity of Godnot because he is told to do so, or because some outside force operates upon him, but because the new Nature is within him and he longs, therefore, to indulge it to the fullest! And that new Nature, being the Nature of God, longs after that which is pure, lovely and of good report.   
The instrument with which this new Nature fights against the world is faith. And faith conquers, first, by regarding the unseen reward which awaits us. The world comes and offers pleasure as the reward of sin. But faith says, There are greater pleasures to be had by abstaining from sin. The world says, Take this gain today. But faith says, No, I will put what I have out at interestthere is something infinitely better to be had hereafter. In its beginning, faith generally works in that wayit despises all the treasures of Egypt and values far more the eternal rewards that Christ has laid up for it in Heaven. But do you not see that there is a measure of selfishness there in both cases? The sinner sins in order to be happy, as he thinksand the newborn man abstains from sin in order to be happy! Well, that is a good thing to do, though the motive is not the most commendable. But there is a measure of faith about it, for faith is looking for the future rewards, and believes in the Heaven which God has prepared for them that love Him.   
But as faith grows, it attains to something better than that, for it recognizes the unseen Presence which is with us. The world says, Come with us and go our way. We will pat you on the back and say that you are a good fellowand you will have a fine time if you come with us. But faith says, I do not trouble about how I appear in your eyes, for there is another eye which I can see, but which you cannot see, for God is looking at me and I am most of all concerned to be right in His sight. Faith realizes that the newborn nature is in the Divine Presence and thus makes Gods Presence to be just as real and just as vivid as the presence of men. And that Presence of God altogether outweighs the presence of menand the believing soul says to the world, To please you, I dare not do that which is wrong in the sight of God, for who are you, compared with the Most High God? I will not do wrong in order to escape your frown, for, by so doing, I should receive the frown of God. And I must maintain my integrity before Him.   
That, you see, is a higher position than the one I first mentioned, for faith not only regards the unseen reward which awaits the Believer but faith recognizes the unseen Presence of God and is moved by an allconstraining desire to please Him.   
That was a very striking incident in the life of our dear Brother Oncken, of Germany, when the burgomaster of Hamburg said to him, I hear, Sir, that you have been baptizing at night. I have, Sir, he replied, because the law will not permit me to do it by day. How dare you immerse these persons? asked the burgomaster. I dare to do it, answered Mr. Oncken, because it is the Law of God And you have done it in defiance of the law of the land! Now, Sir, do you see this little finger of mine? Yes, replied Mr. Oncken, I see it. Well, Sir, as long as that little finger lives, I will keep you down, for I am determined to put an end to this movement. But, Mr. Burgomaster, said Mr. Oncken, not only can I see your little finger, but I can also see a great arm which you do not see. That is the arm of the eternal God and, as long as that arm can move, you will not be able to put me down, for I am only doing the will of Jehovah. Years after that stormy scene, I went to Drench in Hamburg in connection with the opening of my Brother Onckens Chapel, and among the notable gentlemen who helped to honor that occasion by their presence was that very burgomaster. He still had his little finger, but he was not there to put Mr. Oncken down! He came to contribute to Mr. Onckens work and to show that the great arm of God had beaten the little finger of the burgomaster! That kind of experience has been many times repeated in the world. The men of the world resolve to put us down, but it cannot be done! If we were simply of men, we might be put downbut we are of God and the Divine Nature in us must conquer in the long run!   
When faith rises still further, it feels that the soul so loves God and so wishes to delight in Him, and becomes so closely united to God that it takes pleasure in all that in which God takes pleasure. It is true faith that believes that God takes pleasure in the humble actions of poor creatures such as we are, but our faith has that confidence. It believes God to be a kind and tender Father, delighting in what His children do and, therefore, faith says, I cannot grieve Him, so, be gone from me, sinful world! Away with your gold, and your silver, and your smiles, and your frowns! I dare not be influenced by any of these things and so grieve my God. And, daily, as faith grows stronger and stronger, it tramples the world more and more under its feet and altogether abhors it.   
To the genuine Christian, Christ is lifes one aim. He sets that mark before him and shoots at it. I once saw a colonel shooting at a target. There were two targets near each other and he made a center at one of them. The attendant called out, Which target was that gentleman shooting at? The one on the left, was the answer. I thought so, said the man, for he hit the one on the right. There are some people who are always shooting at the world and it seems to be their great aim to hit it, but the Christian is always aiming at Christand if he has not made the center yet, he will shoot again and again until he does, for his great desire is that he may live for Christ, alone, and be found in Him, not having his own righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, So, I hope you see that if faith is the conquering weapon and we intend to be conquerors, we must become Believers in the invisible God! And in order to exercise faith in the invisible God in Christ Jesus, we must be born-again, for, until that new Nature comes into us, we never believe in Christ! We may believe a great deal in ourselves. We may believe in worldly society, in its threats, or in its bribes, but we do not believe in Christ. But how blessed is that man who, at the last, will be able to say, I have faithfully served my God. I have turned neither to the right hand nor to the left. I have not considered myself. I have courted no mans praise, I have not sought pelf or gain. What I had to spare, I gave to Gods cause and to the poor. What I could gather, I distributed according to the necessities of my fellow men. I have lived for God, for Christ and for the TruthI have not lived for myself. The man who can truthfully say that is a saved man!

Whether you know it or not, my Friend, that is salvationto be saved from sin and from selfand there is no getting salvation from the groveling meanness of selfishness except by being born-again! For self clings to every man until he is born-againand it is not always gone even then. Satan spoke the truth when he said to the Lord, Skin for skin, yes, all that a man has will he give for his life. But he will not be ready to part with life itself until he gets a higher life and a better one imparted to him by the Spirit of God!   
Again I say that this Truth of God throws us on our beam-ends. If we are to be saved, we must look to God! We must seek salvation at His hands. We must ask Him for faith and what a mercy it is that He waits to give it! You are nothing and God will be everything to you. Get to the end of yourself and that will be a proof that God has already begun with you! Cease to believe in your own merits, or your own virtues. Put away all trust in yourself and come and trust in God as He is revealed in His Son Jesus Christ and you have received that salvation which will keep on progressing until all sin shall be driven out of you and you shall dwell forever where Jesus isas unselfish as Jesus isas pure, as blessed, as glorious as He is! God grant this to us all, for Christs sake! Amen.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #3252 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

BY WATER AND BLOOD   
NO. 3252

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 1, 1911.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
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This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ not by water only, but by water and blood.   
1 John 5:6.

BY the terms water and blood we understand the purifying and the pardoning effects of Christs work for His people. He came to purify them from the power of sin, that they might no longer live in it. This is indicated by the declaration that He came by water. He also came to put away the guilt of their sin, that they might not be condemned for it. This is set forth by the intimation that He also came by blood. We might say that all the Lords Prophets who came before Christ, in a certain sense, came by water. That is to say, they all sought the purification of the Lords people. Whether it was Isaiah, whose lips had been touched with the live coal from the altar, or Jeremiah, whose eyes were fountains of tears as he wept over sinners, or Amos, who spoke as a herdsman, or Ezekiel, whose message was one of grandeur and sublimity, the objective of every one of them was to purge the people from their sins. It was against sin that they all lifted up their voices, yet none of them could pardon sin and no one of them ever professed to be able to do so! Of the whole of them it must to said that they came by water only, and not by blood.

But Jesus Christ does what the Prophets could not do. It is true that He does seek to make His people holy, but it is by His blood that all their sins are forever put away. John the Baptist was the last and the greatest of all the Prophets who came before Christ yet he had to say, He that comes after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear. John never spoke of his own blood having any power to take away sin, but he pointed to Christ and said, Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world. So far as our Lords first disciples were concerned, He certainly came by water, for contact with His unique Personality must have tended to purify their lives. Yet He also came by blood as well as by water, for it was by virtue of His atoning Sacrifice that their sins were blotted out and that they became accepted in the Beloved.

The two ordinances of our holy religion were intended, I take it, to sum up the teaching of Christ. The one is Baptism, which represents the cleansing of the conscience as the body is washed with water, the death of the soul to the old carnal life, its burial with Christ and its resurrection to a life of holiness. Then comes the ordinance of the Lords Supper which sets forth, in the broken bread and the poured-out wine, the great Truth of Christs Atonementthe fact that He has, by His death, perfected forever all those who have been set apart unto Him.

It is very important that we should always carry in our minds the remembrance of these two Truths of Godfirst, that Jesus Christ came by water, that is, it was His Divine purpose to purify His people and make them holy. And, secondly, that Jesus Christ came by blood, that is, it was His grand aim and objective to deliver His people from the guilt of sin. These are the two topics upon which I am going to speak to you as the Holy Spirit shall graciously guide me.

I. So, first, JESUS CHRIST CAME BY WATERit was His Divine purpose to purify His people.   
It is manifest that there was an urgent necessity for this purification, for all of us had become as an unclean thing in the sight of God. Even our righteousnesses were as filthy rags. We could not cleanse ourselves, neither could we obtain cleansing through the works of the Law. Yet it was imperatively necessary that we should be made holyotherwise, where God is and where His holy angels dwell, we could never beand, therefore, what we ourselves could not do, and what the Law could not do, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh has perfectly accomplished!   
If any of you ask me how Christ makes His people holy, I would remind you that when the Spirit of God reveals Jesus Christ to our heart, we then begin to perceive the exceeding sinfulness of sin. What? Did sin stab my Savior to the heart? Did sin nail my Best-Beloved to the Cross? Then I hate sin with a perfect hatred and will be revenged upon it! The Atonement of Christ gives such an exhibition of the guilt of sin as is not to be seen anywhere elseno, not even in the flames of Hell! And when a soul sees Christ despised, rejected, wounded, bleeding and dying because of sin, it realizes how foul and vile a thing sin is and so is moved to hate it, not only because of its foulness and blackness, but also out of gratitude to Christ who has put it away. Did my Savior love me so much as to bear the dread penalty of my sin? Then I will give sin no quarter, but seek to utterly destroy it   
*The dearest idol I have known,   
Whateer that idol is*   
shall be cast down from the throne which it has usurped that I may worship my gracious God, and Him alone!   
This gratitude to Christ begets a more and more intense love to Christ and the more we love Him, the more we become like Heand becoming like He is, sin is cast out and virtue is nourished. Ask any Christian whether he has not found that the best weapon with which to smite his sins has been a nail from Christs Cross or the spear that pierced His side! Men have tried to overcome sin by the reasoning of philosophy, or by arguments fetched from common sensebut those blunt wooden swords have been powerless to destroy it! It is only the sharp two-edged sword of the Spiritthe grand Doctrine of the love and Grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that can pierce our sin to the heart and lay it in the dust! You have, Beloved, but to meditate upon His passion to receive the virtue of the water which flowed from His side, and that shall enable you to trample upon your lusts and to consecrate all your powers and passions to His service.   
I appeal to the experience of every Christian here to confirm what I have saidmy Brother or Sister in Christ, was there not great need for Christ to come by water to you? For, first, what was your nature? No, what is it? If you were left to yourself, what might you not become? If circumstances put temptation in your way and Gods Grace did not restrain you, what sin might you not commit? Have you not, sometimes, when your feet have almost gone and your steps have well-near slipped, looked down into the depths of the horrible pit of human corruption and shuddered with alarm at the discovery of possibilities of evil which you had scarcely suspected? Well, then, if you have such a nature as this, you do indeed need the purifying streams from the heart of Christ to make it clean, and you may well pray to Him, with Toplady   
*Let the water and the blood,   
From Your split side which flowed,   
Be of sin the double cure,   
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.*   
Then, next, what about our thoughts? As I walked to this House of Prayer tonight and tried to concentrate my meditations upon the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, I could not help feeling how mysterious it is that the more we try to guide our thoughts into right channels, the more determined they seem to be to run towards evil. Have you not sometimes found that even in your most hallowed moments, some unchaste and vile thought which you abhor as you hate the very fiend, himself, will suddenly come into your mind? Does not blasphemy at times intrude into your prayers? Does it not occasionally happen that the hymn you are singing suggests something the very reverse of praise to God and that the text of the sermon, or some part of the discourse, itself, becomes a peg upon which the devil hangs a temptation to sin? Alas, alas, our thoughts, if left to themselves, are as a cage of unclean birds or a den of wild beasts! And as Hercules needed to turn a stream of water to clean the Augean stable, our Lord Jesus Christ needed to pour rivers of water out of His own heart to cleanse the foul stable of our corrupt thoughts!   
Then think of our words. I am not now speaking of carnal manI am talking of professing Christians!. Would any of us like to have all our words printed for a single week? If any of you would, I can honestly say that I would not. One does earnestly try to keep the tongue from evil and the lips from speaking guile, but oh, how many idle words, how many frivolous words, how many sharp, angry, hot, unkind words fly from our lips almost before we are aware of it! God forgive us for the sins of the tongue! If we had nothing else for which to praise Christ, we ought to bless Him to all eternity that He came by water to cleanse that tongue which is naturally so foul!

Then look at our actions. John writes truly, Whoever is born of God does not commit sin, for His seed remains in him and he cannot sin, because he is born of Godthat is to say, he does not sin willfully, he does not continue sinning, yet he does sin. Need I try to prove that he does? O Beloved, look at your lives since you have known the Lord, and see what sin there has been in them! Can you set even one weeks action in the light of Gods Countenance and say, O Lord, my life this week has been perfectly pure? You know that you cannot! Well then, if with the utmost possible guard upon your own conduct, with the most diligent check upon your conversation, with the greatest watchfulness concerning your thoughts, you are still made to feel that there is a corrupt nature within you and that the flesh still lusts against the Spirit, how thankful you ought to be that Jesus Christ came by water that He might purge your nature and make it clean!   
Thus have I shown you the necessity for this purification. Now let me try to set before you the power of this water which makes the Christian clean. It is not a matter of speculation as to whether Christ makes sinners into saintsHe is constantly performing this blessed work, which no power but that which is Divine could ever accomplish! Think for a minute or two of the forces which it has to overcome. There is the old nature of which I have been speaking, and that is not an enemy that can be easily overthrown. Have you ever tried to bind it fast with fetters and to keep it in chains? That old Adam is very strongand even in aged Christians who sometimes seem to fancy that their corruptions have grown as aged and as feeble as they are, it has been, alas, only too sadly proved that the old Adam does not become weak as easily as the old man does! The opposition of our carnal nature to the Grace and work of Christ is so strong that nothing but Omnipotence, itself, can overcome it, yet Jesus Christ so gloriously came by water that He completely conquers the flesh!   
Then there is the enmity of the world, which is always in antagonism to Christ and to His people, too. Worldlings are always ready to turn us aside to sin, and they will never help us to walk the narrow way that leads unto life. The way of the world is always towards evilthe habits and customs of the world are evil, only evil, and that continually! As the Apostle John says, All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.All these evils continually beset us and powerful, indeed, must be that stream which can counteract and overcome them! Yet Jesus Christ does this through coming by water as well as by blood!   
There is also the devil to be overthrown and we must never think lightly of his powers. He has overcome many mighty men and he would easily overpower us if we were left to contend with him in our own unaided strength. Bunyans pilgrim found it to be no childs play to fight with Apollyon, nor shall we! We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. But, blessed be God, we go not to this warfare at our own charges! And greater is He who is with us than all that can be against us!   
Yes, that awful trinity of evilthe world, the flesh and the devilshall not be able to overcome even one Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ! Think of this, Beloved, and let your eyes sparkle with the delight of anticipationyou shall one day have no tendencies to sinyou shall then be as pure in nature as the holy angels! You shall then be fit to consort with cherubim and seraphim and the glorified spirits that day without night circle the Throne of God! And even the Lord God, Himself, the Infinitely Pure and Holy One, shall not disdain to dwell among you, for then you shall be perfectly free from sin, without fault before the Throne of God. Not even the all-piercing eyes of God shall be able to discover in you any thought of wrong, any word of evil, any act of sin, any corruption of nature, any sloth, or pride, or lust, or temper, or anything contrary to His holy will! Free from all sin forever are all those who shall stand before the Throne and before the Lord, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. And I shall be there and you shall be there, if here we are trusting in Him who came by water to purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Have no doubt concerning it, my Brother or Sister in Jesus! Strong are your foes, but far stronger is your glorious Helper! Many and mighty are your enemies, but Almighty is your Friend! Stern is the conflict that has to be faced, but sure is the victory that shall, in due time, be won! So press on bravely day by day, and moment by moment, resisting even unto blood, striving against sin!   
How many of us have already proved the purifying power of this water by which Christ came? Of course, I need hardly point out to you that there is no support here for the unscriptural doctrine of baptismal regeneration! The water that flowed from Christs side is typical of the cleansing work of the Truth that He has revealed, even as He said to His disciples, You are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you. Have you, Beloved, felt the cleansing power of the Truth as it is in Jesus? If not, God grant that you may realize it nowand to Him shall be the praise forever!   
II. Now, secondly, I have to remind you that JESUS CHRIST CAME BY BLOOD AS WELL AS BY WATER. Not by water only, but by water and bloodthat is to say, it was His grand aim and objective, by His atoning Sacrifice, to deliver His people from the guilt of sin!  
There are some who are continually trying to get the Doctrine of the Atonement out of the Bible. Certain philosophical divines, who have just a smattering of theological knowledge, and who seem to forget the couplet   
*A little learning is a dangerous thing   
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring* try to hold up Christ for our admiration as a great Teacher, as a mighty Prophet, and as our perfect Exemplarbut as to the idea of Christ shedding His blood to wash away sin, they cry, Away with it! Away with it! And yet, my dear Friends, Christ cannot be of the slightest service to any of us if He did not come by blood to put away the guilt of our sin as well as by water to purify us from its defilement! For, supposing you and I could, by some mysterious influence, become from this time forth perfectly holywhat would be the good of that to us? I do not know that it would be any benefit to us at all if there were no Atonement! I think that it would be a curse rather than a blessing, for we would still be under condemnation on account of the sins which we have already committed! We are even now in the position of condemned criminalsand if there is no atoning Sacrifice of Christ to put away the guilt of our many transgressionsand we have to pay the penalty which is the inevitable consequence of our past sins, how intense and, indeed, intensified must be our anguish as after being made holy, we have to suffer for the iniquities which we committed before that great change was worked upon us! I have only to state the matter thus for you to see that such a condition of things is utterly impossible. Oh, no! If I must be lost, I will remain as I am! If there is no pardon for my past transgressions, it is of no use for me to have purity for the future! If I could become perfectly holy for a time, but would, after all, be cast away from Gods Presence, I do not want a temporary holiness of that sort, for I do not see how it could be of the slightest possible use to me! And my very nature recoils against even a good thing which would only increase my misery to an intolerable degree.   
But, Beloved, I have only been supposing for the sake of argument, what is not true, for Jesus Christ did come by blood as well as by water. Paul truly wrote to the Hebrews, Once in the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And He has forever put away all the sin of everyone who believes in Him. That great Sacrifice was once and for all completed on Calvaryand it is made efficacious to each one of the innumerable host for whom Christ died as soon as, by faith, he appropriates the blessing to himself! As Joseph Hart sings   
*The moment a sinner believes,   
And trusts in his crucified God,   
His pardon at once he receives,   
Redemption in full through His blood.*  
It was by virtue of Christs atoning Sacrifice that Paul was able to say at Antioch what we can truthfully repeat in your hearing today, Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses. The precious blood of Jesus Christ, Gods Son, cleanses from all sin all those who put their trust in Him! It is no sooner applied by the Holy Spirit to the heart and conscience than every sin that a man has ever committed ceases to be! And the virtue in Christs blood is so great that it covers all the sin that the man will ever commit, as John Kent sings   
*Heres pardon for transgressions past,   
It matters not how black their cast!   
And, oh, my Soul, with wonder view,   
For sins to come heres pardon too!*   
A Believer in Jesus has no record against him in Gods Book of Remembrance. The Lord says to him as He said to Israel of old, I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions and, as a cloud, your sins. They are as completely obliterated, annihilated and destroyed as if they had never been committed! It is this glorious Truth of God which sets Christ apart from all the Prophets that came before Himand all His servants who have or will come after Himthey all came by water, seeking to make their message the means of purification to the Lords people. But Christ came not by water, only, but by water and blood, for He came both to purify His people and to put away the guilt of their transgression!

Those who deny the Atonement of Christ must have very low views of what God is and of what is due to His offended Majesty. According to them, God is to be insulted, His Throne is to be attacked, His crown is to be assailed and His honor is to be impugnedand yet no adequate recompense is to be made to Him! Such persons must also have very low views of sin. They make it out to be a mere trifle which God is to forgive without exacting any penalty for it. They seem to think that in His mercy, He can put away sin without any reparation to His broken Law and without any satisfaction being rendered to His offended Justice! But he who reads his Bible aright knows that all such notions are altogether erroneous! He has learned from the Scriptures that God is inflexibly stern in His Justice although He is supremely gracious in His Love. God hates sin so much that He had to turn away His face even from His well-beloved Son when He was, by imputation, bearing the sins of His people upon Calvary! And it was that desertion by His Father that wrung from Christ that saddest of all the cries from the Cross, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? But now that Christ has endured the full penalty for His peoples sin, God can be just and the Justifier of him who believes in Jesus. Gods love can be displayed to the utmost without in any way infringing the rightful claims of His Justice. And all His attributes remain absolutely unsullied after the vindication they have received through the atoning Sacrifice of Christ.

All this has been accomplished because Jesus Christ came not by water only, but by water and blood. Oh, the power of the precious blood of Jesus! Did you ever feel it, dear Friends? If so, you will never doubt the truth of the Atonement, for it will be very real to you. Never can I forget the day when I first felt in my soul the power of the blood of Jesus! Christs blood has the power to put away sin from the sight of the all-seeing Jehovah, but it also has the power, so far as man is concerned, to give peace to the troubled conscience, rest to the weary heart, joy to the miserable life! No one could ever have been more wretched and sad than I was, when under a sense of sin, life had become almost unbearable though I was but a lad. But oh, what a leap my soul gave from the very depths of despair up to the heights of overflowing joy when I realized that Christ had come to menot by water only, but by water and blood and that He had put away my sins as far as the East is from the West, so that they should be remembered against me no more forever!

*Ever since by faith I saw the stream   
His flowing wounds supply,   
Redeeming love has been my theme,   
And shall be till I die.*

Remember, my dear Hearer, that Jesus Christ must come to you by blood or else He will never come to you by water. Christ never gives a man holiness of life unless that man accepts Him as the great Propitiation for sin. Do you ask, How can Christ come to me by water and by blood? The only way that I know is the one that I have pointed out to you over and over again. It is thisyou are a sinner, lost and undone. Jesus Christ came to seek and to save the lost. To do this, He had to take the sinners placeto bear the sinners guilt and to suffer the penalty that the sinner deserved to suffer. He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed. Have you faith enough to appropriate His work? Perhaps you question whether you may do so. Well, rest assured of thisthere never was a sinner who trusted Christ and then was told that he had no right to trust Him. Oh, no! He, Himself, said, Him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out, and He will not cast you out if you come to Him! Can you believe that His blood was shed for you? Dare you rest your souls salvation upon the great work of which He said, It is finished, before He bowed His head and gave up the ghost? Will you now trust Christ as your Substitute and Savior? You know the verses that we often sing

*Just as I amwithout one plea   
But that Your blood was shed for me,   
And that You bid me come to You,   
O Lamb of God, I come.   
Just as I amand waiting not   
To rid my soul of one dark blot,   
To You, whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come.*

Is this the language of your heart? Then I venture to say that Christ has come to you, not by water only but by water and blood, that Christ died for your sins according to the Scriptures and that God will never punish you for your transgressions as Christ has borne the full penalty for them all! Then if you have received Christ, thus, as coming to you by blood, I feel sure that you will also believe that He has come to you by water, to purify you from all defilement and, therefore, you will not any longer knowingly and willfully continue in sin! The gratitude which you must feel in your heart for all that Christ has done for you will constrain you to walk before Him in holiness and humility, and to seek to obey His will at all times!

Now, many of us are coming to the Table of our Lord to commune with Him and with one anotherand there we must especially think of how He came to us, not by water only, but by water and blood. The broken bread will remind us of His body broken for us, and the wine in the cup will bring to our remembrance His precious blood of the New Covenant shed for us for the remission of our sins. Oh, what a wonder it is that we, who once were as the prodigal son in the far country, wasting our substance in riotous living, or perhaps even herding among the swineare now welcomed at our Fathers board among His happy forgiven children! A few years ago, no, even a few months ago, some of us would not have been spending the Sabbath evening among the Lords people in a House of Prayerand it would never have entered into our thoughts that we should be found sitting as honored guests at His Table! Our ideas of enjoyment, then, were very different from what they are now. The laughter of fools was then in our mouth and perhaps the song of the drunkard issued from our lips. But now, by Gods Grace, a blessed change has been worked in us, for we are washed, we are sanctified, we are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God! So, as we come to this Table of Communion, let us come humbly remembering what we once were, thankfully recollecting what Christ has done for us and earnestly entreating Him to continue and complete His good work in us by purifying us with water even as He has already put away our guilt by His blood! And to Him shall be the Glory forever and ever! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **I JOHN 5.**  
Verse 1. Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. [See  
Sermon #979, Volume 17FAITH AND REGENERATIONRead/download the entire sermon, free of

charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Take comfort, Believer, from that declaration! You have accepted Jesus as the Christ, the anointed of God, so the Apostle affirms that you are born of God. It may be only lately that you have been born-again. You may be only a babe in Grace, but if you have a true faith in Christ as Gods Anointed, you are born of God.

1. And everyone that loves Him who begot, loves him also that is begotten of Him. If you truly love God, you also love His well-beloved and onlybegotten Sonand you also love all His children! There cannot be a true love to the Father and a hatred to His family, that is impossible. Judge, therefore, by this test whether you love God or not.

2, 3. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments and His commandments are not grievous. Love is a practical thing. Love without obedience is a mere pretense. True love shows itself by seeking to please the one who is loved. May God the Holy Spirit work in us perfect obedience to the commands of God, that we may prove that we really do love Him!

4. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. [See Sermons #14, Volume 1THE   
VICTORY OF FAITH and #2757, Volume 47VICTORIOUS FAITHRead/download both sermons, free

of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] This is the conquering weapon! He who truly believes in Jesus cannot be overthrown by the combined forces of the world, the flesh and the devil! Remember the lesson that Haman learned when he contended in vain against Mordecai because Mordecai was of the seed of the Jewsand learn that they who belong to Christ shall, like Christ, be more than conquerors!

5. Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God? Let that Truth of God be firmly fixed in your mind and nerve you in your conflict with the world. The old cry, Athanasius contra mundum, Athanasius against the world, may be uttered by every Believer in Jesus into Christianus contra mundum. Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

6, 7. This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these Three are One. Thus all the Persons in the blessed Trinity confirm the faith of the Christianthe Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit bear united witness to the faith which God, Himself, gives us.

8. And there are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. [See Sermon #1187, Volume  
20THE THREE WITNESSESRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] Three candles in the room, but the light is one. Three witnesses to our heart, but the witness is the same. If we have the witness of the Spirit, the water, and the blood, we know that we have received the Truth of God!

9, 10. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself. [See Sermons #1250, Volume

21THE PRIEST DISPENSED WITH and #1428, Volume 24THE TRUE POSITION OF THE WITNESS WITHINRead/download both sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] What   
better witness than this, could he have?   
10. He that believes not God has made Him a liar[See Sermon #1207, Vo  
lume 20A SOLEMN IMPEACHMENT OF UNBELIEVERSRead/download the entire sermon, free of

charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.] He need not actually say that God is a liarthe fact that he does not believe Him has practically made out that God is a liar. How many of us are there to whom this passage applies? He that believes not God has made Him a liar

10. Because he believes not the record that God gave of His Son. Is this true concerning anyone here? If so, perhaps you have not been aware of the extent of your guilt. You have remained unbelievers out of sheer carelessness, out of neglect of the Word. I pray you, rest not in such a state of mind and heart now that you are informed by the Spirit of God that by your unbelief, you are making God a liar! Who would willfully commit that great sin? Let us shudder at the thought of the bare possibility of such guilt as this!

11. And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. Our only hope lies in Christ! But there is life for us in Christ and life eternal, if we do but believe in Him!

12. He that has the Son, has life, and he that has not the Son of God has not life. You exist, and you always will exist, but true life is not yours if you have not Christ as your Savior. Life is something infinitely superior to mere existence! He that has the Son, has life, and he that has not the Son of God has not life.

13-15 . These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God. And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us: and if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him. A very wonderful thing is prayer, yet it is not every mans prayer that is heard. But he that has the life of God within him shall have his petitions granted because the Holy Spirit will move him to ask in accordance with the will of God!

16-18 . If any man sees his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and He shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death. We know that whatever is born of God sins not; but he that is begotten of God keeps himself, and the Wicked One touches him not. He who has committed the sin which is unto death has no desire for forgiveness. He will never repent, he will never seek faith in Christ, but he will continue hardened and unbelieving. He will henceforth never be the subject of holy influences, for he has crossed over into that dark region of despair where hope and mercy never come!

Perhaps some of you think that you have committed that unpardonable sin and are at this moment grieving over it. If so, it is clear that you cannot have committed that sin, or else you could not grieve over it! If you have any fear concerning it, you have not committed that sin which is unto death, for even fear is a sign of life! Whoever repents of sin and trusts in Jesus Christ is freely and fully forgiven, therefore it is clear that he has not committed a sin which will not be forgiven. There is much in this passage to make us prayerful and watchful, but there is nothing here to make a single troubled heart feel anything like despair. He that is born-again, born from above, can never commit this unpardonable sin. He is kept from itthe Wicked One cannot even touch him, for he is preserved by Sovereign Grace against this dreadful damage to his soul!

You need not be curious to enquire what this unpardonable sin is. I will give you an old illustration of mine concerning it. You may sometimes have seen a notice put up on certain estates in the country, Mantraps and spring guns set here, but if so, did you ever go round to the front door of the mansion and say, If you please, will you tell me where the man-traps are, and whereabouts the spring guns are set? If you had asked that question, the answer would have been, It is the very purpose of this warning not to tell you where they are, for you have no business to trespass there at all. So, all unrighteousness is sin, and you are warned to keep clear of it. There is a sin unto death, but you are not told what that sin is on purpose that you may, by the Grace of God, keep clear of sin altogether!

19-21 . And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children keep yourselves from idols. Amen. After the Reformation in England, there was a certain part of the Church called the roodloft, where the crucifix used to be, and it was ordered by the Reformers, when the holy rood was taken away, that these words should be printed in capital letters in its place

LITTLE CHILDREN KEEP YOURSELVES FROM IDOLS. This was an admirable arrangement and this text might very profitably be put up in a good many Ritualistic churches now, instead of the Agnus Dei and the crucifixLittle children, keep yourselves from idols. Might we not also say to many a mother and many a father concerning their children, and to many a lover of money and hunger after gold, Keep yourselves from idols? Idolatry will intrude itself in one form or another. Some idolize themselves they look in the mirror and there see the face of their god! O beware of all idolatry! Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen. We may very well say, Amen, to that!

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1187 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE THREE WITNESSES   
NO. 1187

A SERMON DELIVERED OF LORDS DAY MORNING, AUGUST 9, 1874, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

There are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.   
1 John 5:8.

CHRISTIANITY puts forth very lofty claims. She claims to be the true faith and the only true one. She avows her teachings to be Divine and therefore Infallible, while for her great Teacher, the Son of God, she demands Divine worship and the unreserved confidence and obedience of men. Her commands are issued to every creature and though, at present, her authority is rejected by millions of mankind, she confidently looks forward to a time when the Truth of God shall obtain universal dominion and Jesus the Lord shall take unto Himself His great power and reign. Now, to justify such high claims, the Gospel ought to produce strong evidence, and it does. It does not lack for external evidences, these are abundant, and since many learned men have spent their lives in elaborating them, there is less need for me to attempt a summary of them.

In these days scarcely a stone is turned over among yonder eastern reins which does not proclaim the truth of the Word of God, and the further men look into either history or Nature, the more manifest is the truth of Scriptural statements. The armory of external evidences is well stored with weapons of proof. The Gospel also bears within itself its own evidenceit has a self-proving power. It is so pure, so holy, so altogether above the inventive capacity of fallen man, that it must be of God. But neither with these external or internal evidences have we to do this morning. Rather I call your attention to the three witnesses which are spoken of in the text, three great witnesses still among us, whose evidence proves the truth of our religion, the Deity of our Lord and the future supremacy of the faith.

Our text speaks of three witnesses, the Spirit, the water and the bloodmay the Holy Spirit who is our Interpreter, lead us into the full meaning of this very remarkable passage.

I. I shall note, first, that OUR LORD HIMSELF WAS ATTESTED BY THESE THREE WITNESSES. If you will carefully read in the 29th chapter of the Book of Exodus, or in the eighth chapter of the Book of Leviticus, you will see that when a priest was ordained, (and a priest was a type of Christ), three things were always usedhe was washed with water in every case, a sacrifice was brought and his ear, his thumb and his toe were touched with blood. And then he was anointed with oil, in token of that unction of the Spirit with which the coming High Priest of our profession would be anointed. So that every priest came by the anointing Spirit, by water and by blood, as a matter of type. And if Jesus Christ is, indeed, the Priest that was to come, He will be known by these three signs.

Godly men in the olden times also well understood that there was no putting away of sin except with these three things, in proof of which we will quote Davids prayer, Purge me with hyssopthat is, the hyssop dipped in bloodand I shall be clean; wash methere is the water and I shall be whiter than snow. And then, Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation and uphold me with Your free Spirit. Thus the blood, the water and the Spirit were recognized of old as necessary to cleanse us from guilt. And if Jesus of Nazareth is, indeed, able to save His people from their sins, He must come with the triple giftthe Spirit, the water and the blood.

Now it was evidently so. Our Lord was attested by the Spirit. The Spirit of God bore witness to Christ in the types and prophecies, Holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. And Jesus Christ answers to those prophecies as exactly as a well-made key answers to the wards of a lock. By the power of the Holy Spirit our Lords humanity was fashioned and prepared for Him, for the angel said to Mary, The Holy Spirit shall come upon you and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you; therefore, also, that holy Thing which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God. When our Lord, in due time, commenced His public ministry, the Spirit of God descended upon Him like a dove, and rested upon Him. And a Voice was heard from Heaven saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

This was, indeed, one of the surest seals of our Lords Messiahship, for it had been given by the Spirit of Prophecy unto John as a tokenupon whom you shall see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizes with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit abode in our Lord without measure throughout His whole public career, so that He is described as full of the Spirit and led of the Spirit. Therefore His life and ministry were full of power. How truthfully He said, The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind. Well said Peter, God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him.

Mighty signs and miracles were the witness of the Divine Spirit to the mission of the Lord Jesus. The Spirit abode with our Lord all His life, and to crown all, after He had died and risen again, the Holy Spirit gave the fullest witness by descending in full power upon the disciples at Pentecost. The Lord had promised to baptize His disciples with the Holy Spirit and they tarried at Jerusalem in expectation of the giftnor were they disappointedfor all of a sudden they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Those cloven tongues of fire and the rushing mighty wind, were sacred tokens that He who had ascended was Lord and God! The Apostles said, We are witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to them that obey Him.

The word of the Apostles, through the Holy Spirit, convinced men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, as the Master had foretold. And then the Spirit comforted the penitents and they believed in the exalted Savior and were baptized the same day. The words of Jesus were abundantly fulfilledWhen the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceeds from the Father, He shall testify of Me. Thus from our Lords birth, throughout His life, and after His Ascension, the Holy Spirit bore conspicuous witness to Him. It is also manifest that our Lord came with water, too. I have shown you that every priest was washed with water. Our Lord was not unclean, and therefore one would have thought He might dispense with this. But to fulfill all righteousness His first step was to be washed in Jordan by the hands of John the Baptist, coming thus to the door of His ministry by that Baptism in water which indicates that by death, burial and resurrection, He was about to save His people.

As soon as that Baptism had been accomplished, yes, and before that, you could see that He had come with water, for by water is signified that clean, pure, hallowed life which the outward washing was meant to typify. His first years of obscurity were years of holiness. And His later years of service were spotless. In Him was no sin. Who exercised a ministry so pure as His? Where else can we find such immaculate holiness? He came not by the water, merely as a symbol, but by that which the water meantby unsullied purity of life. His doctrine was as pure as His example. Point me to a single syllable, of all His teaching, which would create, foster, or excuse sin! He was the Friend of sinners, but not the apologist for their sins. His tenderness to sinners was that of a physician whose aim is to remove the disease. His whole doctrine is fitly comparable to purifying and life-giving waterand it operated upon mens hearts in that manner.

In this last sense, especially, He came by water. It is very remarkable how Johns Gospel is both the exposition and the text of Johns First Epistle, for if you turn to it you find our Lord Jesus coming by water at the outset of His teaching. To Nicodemus He says a man must be born of water and of the Spirit. To the woman of Samaria He speaks at large of living water. And on the great day of the feast He says, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. In His ministry He not only issued the invitation, but to all who believed on Him He gave freely of the water of the Fountain of Life. Thus our Lord came by water in the sense of communicating a new, pure and purifying life to menfor the water is the emblem of the new life which springs up within the soul of Believersa life fresh and sparkling, leaping up from the eternal fountains of the Divine Existence.

It is a life which will flow on forever and widen and deepen like Ezekiels river. It will increase in fullness of power and joy until it unites with the ocean of immortal bliss. Jesus came to pour forth this living flood among the sons of men. Blessed be His name! Our Lord closed His life with washing His disciples feeta fit conclusion to a life which had, by its example, been cleansing throughoutand still remains as the most grand corrective of the corrupt examples of the world. Even after death our Lord retained the instructive symbol by giving forth from His pierced heart, water as well as blood, which John evidently thought very significant. For when he wrote concerning it he said, He that saw it bore record, and his record is true: and he knows what he says is true, that you might believe. So that from the Jordan to the Cross, both the symbol and the substance were with our great Master, while His own personal purity and His gift of life to others proved His mission to be from above.

With Jesus also was the blood. This distinguished Him from John the Baptist, who came by water. Jesus came, not by water only, but by water and blood. We must not prefer any one of the three witnesses to another, but what a wonderful testimony to Christ was the blood! From the very first, He came with blood, for John the Baptist cried, Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world! Now, the lamb which takes away sin is a slaughtered lamb, a bleeding lambso that at the time when the baptismal waters were upon HimJohn saw that He must bleed for human sin. In His ministry there was often a clear testimony to His future sufferings and shedding of blood, for to the assembled crowd He said, Except a man eat My flesh and drink My blood, there is no life in him.

To His disciples He spoke of the decease which He should shortly accomplish at Jerusalem. Then at the last, taking all our sins upon His shoulders, in the agony of Gethsemane, the blood bore witness that He was, indeed, the Lamb of God, and on yonder tree where He

*Bore all Incarnate God could bear,*

*With strength enough, but none to spare.*   
And He disinterestedly died for His enemies, unselfishly suffering an ignominious doom that He might redeem those who had rejected and scoffed at Him! His invincible love triumphed over death, itself, and endured Divine wrath without repining, as none but the Son of God could have done. Now Messiah was to be cut off, but not for HimselfHe was to make His soul an offering for sin. He was to make His grave with the wicked and lie in the heart of the earth. The blood of the Covenant was to be shed, the Paschal Victim was to be slain, the Shepherd was to be smitten, the Lamb was to be led to the slaughterand therefore only by the shedding of His blood could Jesus prove Himself to be the Messiah so long foretold.

However pure the life He led, had He never died He could not have been the Savior appointed to bear the iniquity of us all. The blood was needed to complete the witness. The blood must flow, with the waterthe suffering with the serving. The most pious example would not have proven Him to be the Divine Shepherdif He had not laid down His life for the sheep. Take away the Atonement and Jesus is no more than any other Prophet the essential point of His mission is gone. It is evident that He who was to come was to finish transgression and to make reconciliation for iniquity. Now, this could not be done except by an expiationand as Jesus has made such an expiation by His own bloodwe know Him to be the Christ of God. His blood is the seal of His mission, the very life of His work!

I have thus shown that our Lord, Himself, was attested by these three sacred witnesses.  
II. Now, secondly, may God the Holy Spirit help me to show that THESE THREE REMAIN AS STANDING WITNESSES TO HIM TO ALL TIME. And first, the Holy Spirit is witness at this hour that the religion of Jesus is the Truth of God and that Jesus is the Son of God. I say not that He bears such witness everywhere, for there are many that preach in the wisdom of men and in carnal excellency of speech. God the Holy Spirit does not work with them because He has chosen other instruments. I do not say that He bears witness to the Truth of God when it is defiled by a lukewarm ministry and a prayerless Churchbut I do say that the Spirit of God, wherever Jesus is fully preached, is the great Witness to the truth of His Wordfor what does He do?   
By His Divine energy He convinces men of the Truth of the Gospeland these so convinced are not only persons who, through their education are likely to believe it, but men like Saul of Tarsus who abhor the whole thing! He pours His influences upon men and infidelity melts away like the iceberg in the Gulf Stream! He touches the indifferent and careless, and they repent, believe and obey the Savior! He makes proud men tremble and wicked men quake for fear. The conversions which are worked where Christ is truly preached are the miracles which attest the Truth of the Gospel! He who can make the harlot to be chaste, the drunk to be sober, the thief to be honest, the malicious to be forgiving, the covetous to be generous and, above all, the self-righteous to be humble, is, indeed, the Christ of God! And when the Spirit does all this and more by the Gospel, He bears conclusive witness to the power of the Cross!

Then, too, the Spirit goes forth among Believers and by them He bears witness to our Lord and His Gospel. Great is the variety of His operations, for which cause He is called the Seven Spirits of God. But in each one He witnesses to Jesus. Whether He quickens, consoles, enlightens, refreshes, sanctifies, anoints, or inflames the soul, He does it always by taking the things of Christ and revealing them to us. How mightily does He comfort the saints! Have you not been consoled by Him in deep distress? Have you not endured the loss of dear ones without repining because your heart has been sustained by the Comforter? Now, that wondrous influence which worked peace in you through the Gospel, must have confirmed you in the belief of the Truth of God! And others who have seen your serenity under heavy trial, if they are not convinced, at least are led to inquire what strange thing this is which makes the Christian suffer without repining! The Spirit bears witness to Christ, then, when He comforts the saints.   
And He does the same when He gives them guidance, enlightenment and elevation of soul. I will, however, for a moment, dwell upon utterance. Some reject the idea, but for all that it is true that in the same hour, it is given to Gods servants to speak in His name. Look at the martyr times! How wondrously feeble women like Anne Askew baffled all their foes! How ignorant weavers stood up before bishops and doctors and confounded them! Even now, in answer to prayer, the Spirit comes upon chosen men who yield themselves to His influence and bears them along with a whirlwind, making them eloquent in the Divine sense, speaking out of their hearts that which God gives them to deliver. Some of us know this, for we have cast ourselves upon that eternal Spirit and thoughts have been given us, and mouth and utterance, also.   
By this, also, the Spirit bears witness to the Truth of our faith. I have not time to go into all the operations of the Spirit, only let me say that His sustaining, His consoling influences have been very especially seen in persecuting times. Men of God have been subjected to tortures which our mind finds it painful to dwell uponyet they have not been vanquished by their foes. Neither nakedness, nor peril, nor sword have separated them from the love of God. Blandina tossed in a net by a wild bull and burned with hot plates of brass, wearies out her tormentors! And Lawrence, on his gridiron, finds joy enough for mirth! One cries aloud amid the flames, None but Jesus! And another claps his blazing hands and shouts victory as his soul quits the body!   
The Spirit of God in the Church has preserved her amid furious and long-continued persecutionsfilling the saints with a dauntless courage and a serene invincibility which has both amazed and alarmed their enemies. So mightily has this patience convinced the world that it has passed into a proverb, The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. With equal power does the Spirit of God bear witness to the Gospel in great revivals of religion. How wondrously did the Spirit of God testify to Christ during the Reformation! Scarcely had Luther opened his mouth to proclaim the Good News than straightway men received it eagerly! They sang Psalms as they plowed the field or threw the shuttle. The precious Word of God was in all mens mouths. They said that angels carried Luthers writings all over the worldit was not so, but the ever-blessed Spirit makes the Truth of God to fly like flames of fire.   
So it was in Whitfields day and in many revivals which we have read of, and some which we have seen. Sometimes men have been struck down and convulsedat other times, without outward violence, they have been, with equal power, renewed in their souls. Who that has been at Edinburgh and seen many hundreds of people rushing through the streets to one appointed Meeting Place, to fall on their knees and cry for mercy all at once, could doubt but what the Gospel must be true? The Spirit of God, Omnipotent in the realm of spirits, and able to guide the human will without violating it, has enlightened mens darkened minds and made them see that Jesus Christ is God and Savior! Overwhelmed by the love of Jesus, they have yielded at once to His commands! A formal Church, with a minister to stand up and talk officially, and a people who come and go mechanically, bears no witness to religion, but rather creates infidels. But where we see what some have called, real Methodist fire, and others, the old Protestant enthusiasm, or, rather, where we see the Holy Spirit attended by marvelous conversion, deep repentance, singular illumination, the angelic and general lovewe have indisputable evidence of the Divinity of our faith!   
The next abiding witness in the Church is the waternot the water of Baptism, but the new life implanted in Christians, for that is the sense in which Johns Master had used the word, water. The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. Where the Spirit of God comes, He creates in the man a new nature pure, bright, fresh, vigorous, like a fountainand the fact that this new nature does exist in multitudes of men is a standing evidence that the Gospel is truefor no other religion makes men new creatures! No other religion even pretends to do it! They may propose to improve the old nature, but none of them can say, Behold, I make all things new.   
This is the sole prerogative of Jesus our Lord. The existence of the new life is matter of fact. We, ourselves, know many whose lives are pure and blameless. They have faults before God, but before the eyes of men they are perfect and upright, blameless and harmless. The godly lives of Christians are good evidence of the Truth of the Gospel. Did I hear someone object, But many professors of Christianity are not holy? I grant you it, but, then, everybody knows that they are inconsistent with the religion which they profess. If I heard of a lustful Muslim, I should not consider him inconsistent with Mohammedanismis he not allowed his harem? If I heard of a licentious Hindu, I should not consider him to be dishonoring his religion, for some of its sacred rites are disgusting and unmentionable. The same may be said of all the idolatries.   
But everybody knows that if a man professes to be a Christian and he is guilty of a gross fault, the world rings with the scandal, because it recognizes the inconsistency of his conduct with his profession. Though some may, at first, breath of a slander and blazon it abroad and say, This is your religion, the world knows it is not our religion, but the lack of it! Why do they, themselves, make such a wonder of a fallen professor? Are adulterers so very scarce that such a noise should be made when a minister is, truly or falsely, charged with the crime? The worlds conscience knows that the religion of Jesus is the religion of purityand if professed Christians fall into uncleanness the world knows that such a course of action does not arise out of the religion of Christthey know it is diametrically the opposite to it. The Gospel is perfect, and did we wholly yield to its sway, sin would be abhorred by us and slain in us, and we should live on earth the life of the perfect ones above. Oh, may God produce in His Church, more and more, the witness of the new life, the testimony of holiness, love, meekness, temperance, godliness and Gracethese are the Gospels logicits syllogisms and demonstrations, which none can refute.   
The third abiding witness is the blood. The blood of Christ is still on the earth, for when Jesus bled it fell upon the ground and was never gathered up. O Earth, you still are bespattered with the blood of the murdered Son of God! And if you reject Him, this will curse you. But, O Humanity, you are blessed with the drops of that precious blood, and believing in Him it saves you! Now, does the blood really save from guilt, terror, and despair? Does it operate among men? Let us ask our memory. Its answer is clear and full. I speak what I know and testify what I have seen. I have preached the blood of Jesus Christ and the love of the Incarnate God, and I have seen proud, stout-hearted men shed tears in floods! The rock has wept when smitten with this wondrous rod of the Cross. Men who could resist yon thunders of Sinai have melted before the tender notes of Calvary.   
Yes, and, on the other hand, I have seen the desponding, whose soul chose strangling rather than life, look up to that dear Cross and their faces have been brightenedand an unspeakable joy has chased away despair! The blood has worked miracles of consolation! We have seen men at war with God and opposed to holiness, to whom the blood has spokenthey have seen a God reconciled to themand they have been reconciled to Him. We have seen them beneath the spell of the blood throw down their weapons and cry   
*I yield, by Jesus love subdued   
Who can resist its charms?   
And throw myself to be reserved   
Into my Saviors arms.*   
The blood of Jesus, after speaking peace to the conscience, inflames the heart with fervent love and full often leads men to high deeds of consecration, self-denial and self-sacrifice, such as can scarcely be understood till they are traced back to that amazing love which bled upon the tree!   
Well might the martyrs bleed for Him who was crucified for them! The blood is working mightily in men to will and to do for the glory of God. Yes, Brothers and Sisters, the blood has such a melting, such a converting, such a subduing, such a sanctifying, such a joy-creating power to every conscience which hears its matchless voice that it remains, with the Spirit and the water, a convincing witness to the Christ of God!   
III. In the third place, let us observe that THIS TRIPLE, YET UNITED WITNESS, IS PECULIARLY FORCIBLE WITHIN BELIEVING HEARTS. John tells us, He that believes on the Son of God has the Witness in himself. Now, Brothers and Sisters, these three witnesses bear testimony in our souls abidingly. I speak not of years ago, but of last night, when you bowed your knee in prayer and prayed and were heard. Did not the Spirit, when He helped you to pray, bear witness that the Gospel was no lie? Was not the answer to your prayer good evidence? And that Sabbath morning when you prayed that you might gather up your thoughts and forget the weeks caresand you did so by the Spirits aiddid not this sacred rest of your soul prove that Christ is, indeed, a Savior?

Sitting here this morning as your soul has burned within you, and your Master has been near you, has not that communion, given you of the Spirit, been to you a fresh witness to Christ? The other day, when you were so sad and the Holy Spirit comforted youwhen you were so rebellious and He made you quiet, even as a weaned childdid not this confirm your faith? The other day when you were so in the dark and He enlightened you. When you were in such dilemmas and He guided you had you not, then, fresh evidence that there is a life, a power, a Divinity about the Gospel? These sweet feelings of yours came to you by the Spirit of God revealing Jesus to you! He did not comfort you nor elevate you by the Law, nor by the fleshbut by the love of God shed abroad in your heartthat precious love which comes streaming down from the Cross of Jesus Christ our Lord!   
Ah, dear Friends, I feel sick to death of the common talk about the healthiness of doubting and the beauty of modern thought. This talk is only the self-praise of a set of concealed Infidels treacherously lurking in Gods Church! There is a short way with skeptics which I commend to your use. Ask themDo they know the Holy Spirit? Did they ever feel Him in their own souls? If they say, No, we believe them. So let them believe us when we declare that we do feel the operations of the Holy Spirit. There is the end of the controversy. If they are honest, so are we, and we are witnesses to the Divine working of the Holy Spirit in our own souls. If they never felt His power, their negative statements cannot in the least degree affect the truth of ours.   
The next witness in us is the water, or the new and pure life. Do you feel the inner life, my Brethren? I know you doyou feel it fighting, struggling, contendingsometimes winningand at other times captive and groaning. You feel it often aspiring, desiring, hungering, thirsting, yearning, sighingand sometimes singing, shouting, dancing and leaping up to Heaven. You are conscious that you are not what you used to be. You are conscious of a new life within your soul which you never knew till the date of your conversionand that new life within you is the living and incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever. The fact that you know you are born of God forbids a doubt as to the Truth by which you were begottenthe sense that you are forgiven forbids all skepticism as to the fact that Christ is come in the flesh and that He is the Son of Godand that His Gospel is the Truth of God. To you all these things are clear.   
Witnessing within us is, also, the blood. Beloved, this is a witness which never fails, speaking in us better things than the blood of Abel. It gives us such peace that we can sweetly live and calmly die. It gives us such access to God that sometimes, when we have felt its power, we have drawn as near to our Father as if we had seen Him face to face. And oh, what safety the blood causes us to enjoy! We feel that we cannot perish while the crimson canopy of Atonement by blood hangs over our head! What victory it gives us, making us cry, Thanks be unto God, who gives us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. These are mysterious sensations, not to be accounted for by fleshly enthusiasm, for they are strongest when we are calmest. They are not to be accounted for by any natural predilections to such emotions, for we are, by nature, as easily perturbed as others, and as apt to forget Divine things. In times of trial we have looked to Jesus flowing wounds and we have been comforted. We have found communion with Jesus to be so blessed that we would not envy Gabriel his angelhood!   
Now, then, you young men, you need not read, Paleys Evidences. The evidence of the Spirit, the water and the blood is better. You do not have to study, Butlers Analogy, though you may if you please, but such books, excellent as they are, only prove the skin and shell of our religion the vital matter is the kernel. If you come by simple prayer and ask to have the blood of Jesus applied to your souland if the Spirit of God works mightily in your spirit so that you obtain a new inner principle and lead a new life as the resultyou will have the best evidence in the world! You will laugh at doubters and make a fire of Colensos objections! And, Essays and Reviews, Tyndals challenge, Huxleys dreams and all that heap of worthless muck which has polluted the Church and defiled the souls of men.   
O heavens, may we never live to see the day in which ministers tell us that it is good to doubt! When poets almost deify that very skepticism of which John says makes God a liarand which, therefore, is to be denounced as an insult to God and the curse of the age! Go, fling your doubts away, you doting men and dreaming women, and bow like penitents at Jesus feet, for there you will find far more than all your fancied learning can bestow! But if you will not do this, yet know that in vain you arraign your Maker! In vain do you re-judge His judgment and act as if you were the gods of God!   
Thus I have tried to show that these three witnesses testify in our souls. I beg you now to notice their order.   
IV. These three bear witness in us thus, the Spirit, the water, and the blood. Why in this order? Because in this manner they operate. The Spirit of God first enters the heart, perhaps long before the man knows that such is the case. The Spirit creates the new life which repents and seeks the Savior, that is the water. And that new life flies to the blood of Jesus and obtains peace. The Spirit mightily working, the new life is secretly created and then faith in the blood is begottenand the triple witness is complete. We have also found this to be the order of our consolation. I have said to myself, Do I know that the Spirit of God is in me? And I have been afraid that it is not. I have then turned to my inner life, the water, and have not always been certain concerning it. But when I have looked away to the blood, all has been clear enough! Jesus died. I throw myself once again into His arms. When I do not know whether I have the Spirit and when I am in doubt as to whether I have the living water, I still know that I believe in the blood and this brings perfect peace.   
Having observed their order, now note their combination. These three agree in one, therefore every true Believer should have the witness of each one. And if each one does not witness in due time, there is cause for grave suspicion. For instance, persons have arisen who have said the Spirit of God has led them to do this and that. Of them we inquire what are your lives? Does the water bear witness? Are you pardoned? Does the blood testify for you? If these questions cannot be answered, they may rave as they like about the Spirit of God, but the witness to their salvation is open to the most grave suspicion! We have known some who will say, Look at my life. I am very different from what I was. I am a sober, honest, excellent man. Yes, but do you rest in the blood of Jesus? Practical evidence is good, but it must arise out of faith. If you do not believe in Jesus you have not the essential witness and your case is not proven.   
Many also say to us, I believe that Jesus died for me, but we must ask them concerning their lives. Are you cleansed in act? Are you an altered man? For remember, unless the water speaks with the blood, you have not the three-fold testimony. There may be some who say, Well, we believe in Jesus and our lives are changed. But remember, you may say that, but is it so? If so, the Spirit of God has changed youif you have merely excited yourself into the belief that it is so, or if you were born by your own free willyou have not the Witness, because the truly saved are born not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of the Spirit of God.   
The three Witnesses agree in one. He that believes in pardon by the blood, believes, also, in sanctification by the water. He who rests in Jesus Christs blood always honors the Spirit of God, and, on the other hand, he that believes in the Holy Spirit values both the inner life and the cleansing blood. God has joined these three togetherlet no man put them asunder. The old theologians spoke of baptismus flaminis, baptismus fluminis and

baptismus sanguinis. May we know all these, and rejoice in the Spirit, the flood, and the blood.

V. Lastly, THESE WITNESSES CERTIFY TO US THE ULTIMATE TRIUMPH OF OUR RELIGION. Is the Spirit working through the Gospel? Then the Gospel will win the day because the Spirit of God is Almighty and complete master over the realm of the mind. He has the power to illuminate the intellect, to win the affections, to curb the will and change the entire nature of man, for He works all things after His own pleasure and, like the wind, He blows where He wishes. When He puts forth His Omnipotent energy, none can stand against Him. He has converted 3,000 in a dayand He could as readily convert three million! Or three hundred million! He can do this and He will!

The wind, at times, blows so gently as scarcely to stir the wings of a butterfly, but at another time it rushes in a tornado, sweeping all before it. Do not judge from its soft breath what its full tempest would be, for nothing can stand against the wind when once it speeds forth with power. Let the Spirit of God blow across this land and it will at once drive away the fog of superstition and the clouds of ignorance! The Holy Spirit is compared to fire. What can resist the energy of fire? There may be so little of it that a person may carry it in his lantern, but lo, it sets a city on a blaze! One match contains all the fire on yonder prairieit is flung into the dry grass, and lo, the heavens, themselves, are scorched with the exceeding heat! Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? Is anything too hard for the Lord? Behold, the universe was once chaos, and the Spirit brooded over it and this fair world came forth! Let Him, in like manner, incubate over this chaos of sin, and a new Heaven, and a new earth, in which dwells righteousness, shall rise! The Gospel must conquer because the Holy Spirit, who works with it, is Almighty.

Next, the Gospel must conquer, because of the water, which I have explained to be the new life of purity. What does John say? Whatever is born of God overcomes the world. It is impossible for the Gospel to be vanquished so long as there remains in the world one soul that is born of God. Living and incorruptible seed abides forever! Those who would destroy the Church only scatter her living seedsand when Satan raises a hurricane it only bears those seeds further afield! Satan once sat down for weeks together to scheme, and he called in all the devils one by one till Pandemonium all met in one conclave, and what do you think came of it all? The Papal Inquisition! They set that horrible machine to work to crush out what they called heresy. They said they would ride up to their saddle girths in the blood of Lutherans and they almost kept their promise.

But their cruelty availed not, the living faith survived and their murders and infernal cruelties did but stir the world to a groan of sympathy which helped the progress of the Gospel. They cannot destroy the Gospel! Do not talk about the Pope of Rome, or the Ritualistic or the infidel party destroying the Gospel Churchthey can as soon annihilate the Lord, Himself, because the inner life of Christians is a spark struck from the eternal Sun of Life and can never be extinct while God lives.

Lastly, the Gospel must spread and conquer because of the blood. Has that power? Oh, yes, I will tell you how. God, the Everlasting Father, has promised to Jesus, by Covenant, of which the blood is the seal, that He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. As surely as Christ died on the Cross, He must sit on a universal throne! God cannot lie to His Son! He cannot mock His wounds, or be deaf to His death-cries! Therefore, Christ must have what His Father has promised Him, and He has said, Ask of Me and I will give You the heathen for Your inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for Your possession. They that bow in the wilderness shall bow before Himand His enemies shall lick the dustfor He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet.

Beloved, the inference from all this is, if you are not on Christs side it is ill with you, for you will be surely conquered in the battle. But, if you are on Christs side, never speak hesitatingly or despondingly. When they bring out a new book to disprove Genesis and another to evaporate the Atonement, do not be afraid. As long as the Gospel is in the world the devil will find somebody to write books against it. Take no notice of themthey cannot stand against facts. A philosopher once wrote a book to prove that there is no such thing as matter! And a certain reader believed it till he chanced to knock his head against the bedpostand then he abandoned the theory.

When a man feels the power of the Holy Spirit, or the power of the inner life, he does not care to arguehe has a homespun philosophy of facts which answers his purpose better. Though others may ground upon him and say, You are not learned, he feels that it does not need learning to prove that which is a matter of personal consciousness any more than we need proof that sugar is sweet when we have a piece in our mouths. Do you doubt the Gospel? Try it! The men who speak against the Bible, as a rule, have never read it. Those who rail against Christ do not know Him. And those who deny the efficacy of prayer have never prayed. Nothing is more convincing than fact. Get out of the realm of word-spinning and wind-bag-filling into practical Christian life, proving personally that these things are so, and you will soon be convinced by the blessed witness of the Spirit, the water, and the blood!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON1 John 5.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK335, 451, 331.  
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #1213 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

FAITH, AND THE WITNESS UPON WHICH IT IS FOUNDED   
NO. 1213

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which He has witnessed of His Son. He that believes in   
the Son of God has the witness in himself:   
he that believes not God, has made Him a liar;   
because he believes not the witness that God   
witnessed of His Son.   
1 John 5:9, 10.

YOU observe that I have somewhat corrected the translation. The same word is employed in every case in the original, but for the sake of variety of expression the translators have used four different words in our version and so, instead of improving the sense, which, indeed, never can be in the case of the Holy Spirits writing, they have rather darkened the meaning. Put the word, witness, or, testimony, in each case, and you get the true meaning.

Last Thursday night I tried to show the great importance of faith and that while it was a most simple thing it was also most sublime. While it appeared to be weak, it was really the strongest of all motive principles, and produced the most amazing results. If, on this occasion I shall run in the same strain, for me, indeed, it will not be grievous, and for you it will be safe, for we cannot too often review the Truths of God which are the vitals of our holy religion. Faith stands, under the Covenant of Grace, in a leading position among the works of the regenerate man and the gifts of the Spirit of God.

Righteousness is no longer to him that works, but to the man that believes on Him that justifies the ungodly. The promise no longer stands to the man who does these things, that he shall live in them, else we were shut out of it, but, The just shall live by faith. God now bids us live by believing in Him. He saw that we were not willing to yield obedience to Him and remained rebellious. Perceiving, with a glance, that the root of that rebellion lay in lack of love to Him and in need of confidence in Him, He now begins, at the very foundation of the whole matter, and by a wondrous act of Grace, to claim our confidence. He gives us proof that He deserves it and then comes to us, and says, Trust Me. Trust My Son, who has died for you, and you are reconciled to Me by His blood.

Begin, then, the new life, with confidence in Me as the mainspring of all your actions, and thus shall you be saved. If I threaten you, you will only revolt more and more. If I strike you, you will sooner die under the

rod than repent. Nothing remains with which to influence you but love. And now, in the Person of My Son, I commend My love to you and show you what good intents I have towards you. Come and trust Me. Let us be Friends again. Rely upon what I have worked in the Person of My Son, that you might be forgiven. Trust Him and you are saved.

Men are willing enough to accept a Gospel which requires them to do something. They admire the impossible way of salvation by works. Man is afraid, when Sinai is altogether on a smoke, and begs that the terrible words of the Law may not be spoken to him again. And yet he still loves to wander around the foot of Sinai and is unwilling to come unto Mount Zion. The old spirit of Hagar is upon usand until the Lord causes us to be born again we remain children of the bondwoman and will not rejoice in the promise. To accept the gift of Free Grace is contrary to our proud nature! The power of God is needed to induce us to throw down the tools with which we work for salvation and take, with joyful hands, the full, free and finished salvation which Jesus bestows on all who trust Him. One would have thought this plan of trusting in Jesus for salvation would be joyfully accepted by all, but, instead of that, no man receives the witness of God, though it is Infallible.

I wish to speak, this evening, a little upon the grounds of testimony the reasons of faithand may God grant, while we speak about them, Believers may be refreshed and unbelievers may be led to Jesus! First, in our text, we have the external evidence, or the witness of God to usIf we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which He has witnessed of His Son. Then, secondly, we shall consider the internal evidence, or the witness of God in us. He that believes on the Son has the witness in himself. And then, thirdly, we shall inquire how we are treating the witness of God, especially dealing with those of whom we find it said, He that believes not God, has made Him a liar, because he believes not the witness that God witnessed of His Son.

I. First, then, dear Friends, since our great business is that we believe God, let us see what reason we have for believing Him. THE EXTERNAL EVIDENCE given is stated in the first verse of the text, as the evidence of God to us, and it is prefaced by the remark that, we receive the witness of men. We are accustomed to receive the witness of men. David said, All men are liars, but he spoke in haste. There would be no history if we did not receive the witness of men. If we neglected human evidence there could be no courts of law, no trading between man and man except for cash money. Confidence would cease and the bands which unite the social fabric would be snapped. We do and must believe the testimony of men as a general ruleand it is only right that we should account witnesses honest till they have proven themselves false.

The principle may very readily be pushed too far, and we may take the witness of men and find ourselves deceived. Still, for all that, the evidence of honest men is weighty and, in the mouth of two or three witnesses the whole shall be established. Now God has been pleased to give us a measure of the witness of men with regard to His Son, Jesus Christ. We have the witness of such men as the four Evangelists and the 12 Apostles. These men saw Jesus Christ. Some of them were familiar with Him for years. They saw evidence of His Deity, for they saw Him walk on water and heard Him say to the winds and the waves, Peace, be still, and there was a great calm! These witnesses say that they saw Him heal lepers with a touch, open blind mens eyes and even raise the dead.

Three of them tell us that they were on the Mountain of Transfiguration with Him and saw His Glory, and heard a Voice out of Heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son: hear you Him. These persons were very unsophisticated individuals. They mostly belonged to a class of men who are rather celebrated for their bluff honesty, namely, fishermen. They certainly had nothing to gain by saying that they saw all these thingsin fact, they had everything to lose. Their names are famous, now, but they could little have reckoned upon such fame. And they do not appear to have been men who cared about fame at all.

They lost their all. They were despised and maltreated, and most of them met with a cruel death on account of having borne witness to what they saw. Their witness is by no means of a doubtful character. They were very positive that they saw the things of which they are witnesses. One of them has said, he that saw it bore record, and he knows that his witness is true, and he knows what he says true. No part of history has come down to us so well attested as the life of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Now, a man takes Tacitus, and he believes what Tacitus tells him, although, very likely, Tacitus did not see the things and only got them second hand. But as a reputable historian, his witness is received. Surely the witness of Matthew and Mark, and Luke and John, and Peter and James and Paul is as good as the witness of Julius Caesar or Tacitus! And it is rendered the more trustworthy from the fact that they died for adhering to itwhich neither Caesar nor Tacitus were made to do. Besides, for the Gospel narrative we have many witnessesthe number of names was about 120and they all agreed and stood fast. And even the one who did, for a time, seem to forsake his testimony, bad as he was, returned to it and threw down the money for which he had sold his Master and said, I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood.

We have the witness of men as to the facts that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, lived and died and rose again and ascended into Heaven. Further, we have the testimony of men as to the present power of that same Jesus to forgive men their trespasses and to save them from the power of sin. From the first day when our Lord was taken up till now, men and women have come forward and have said, We were once lovers of sin. Whatever our neighbors are, such were we, but we are washed! We are sanctified! And all this by faith in Jesus. Those who knew these people have confessed the change, although they have often been, at the same time, angry with them for it. They have acknowledged their virtues and have persecuted them on that account.

Now these converted people have stood to it that they obtained a new heart and a right spirit through believing in Jesus. They have been put in prison for saying this and for declaring that faith in the crucified Savior had delivered them from the dominion of sin, from despondency and despair. That it had made them love God, given them hope and joy and peace, taught them to love their neighbors, to do justice and to expect a home in Heaven. These people have been among the best in the world, all along, even as we read in history of the Albigenses and the Waldenses, or the Vaudois or the Lollards. They are described as detestable fanatics and enthusiasts, but they are admitted to have been sober, honest, chaste, quiet citizens and industrious parentsso that the very kings who put them to death regretted that it was necessary to sacrifice such subjects.

Now, it is a very singular thing that these people should so constantly and continuously come forward and say, The witness of God is true. He has sent His Son into the world and those that believe on Him are saved. We are saved and we will burn at Smithfield, rot in the Lollards tower, or lie in a dungeon till the moss grows on our eyelidsbut we will never deny or cease to assert this Gospel. All ages have supplied the witness of men. Some of you, beloved Friends, have had this witness in a very pointed and practical manner. I may be addressing one who is irreligious, but he never can forget his mother, or his sister, or some other beloved relative now gone to Heaven. You are never able to laugh at religion, though you do not believe in it, because these sainted ones rise up before your mind.

You are persuaded that they were under a delusion, but, for all that, they were so happy that you half wish you were deluded, too. You would sooner put your children in a school with godly people than with skeptics like yourselfyou know you would! There is a something about a Christian which is a witness to you. To me, I must confess, the witness of the lives of some Christians has been wonderfully confirmatory when I have seen how they suffer without repining and even bless the Lord in the midst of agony. If this is the essence of the Christian religion it must be true! And so, on dying beds, when we have seen the remarkable peace and, sometimes, the extraordinary joy of persons departing, we have felt quite sure that faith in Jesus is no fiction.

I have heard dying children speak like doctors of divinity about the things of God! I have heard dying women who were quite uneducated, speak of the world unseen in a style of inspiration which has struck me with awe. I do not believe that a faith which enables a man to die triumphantly, rejoicing in his God, or to die calmly in the midst of pain, looking for a world to come, can be, after all, a myth! O, if it were so, and the wise man could prove it was all a mistake, I would almost ask him to forego his workfor this has charmed away our fears and turned our desert life into a garden of the Lord! The Gospel has smoothed the pillow of the dying and wiped the tears of the desponding! Alas, for you, O Earth, if this could be proven a dream! Then were your sun quenched forever and it had been better for us all that we had never been born!

But it is not so! The witness of men about the things of God is very clear. Some years ago there went into a Methodist class meeting, a lawyer who was a doubter, but at the same time a man of candid spirit. Sitting down on one of the benches, he listened to a certain number of poor people, his neighbors, whom he knew to be honest people. He heard some 13 or 14 of these persons speak about the power of Divine Grace in their souls, and about their conversion and so on. He jotted down the particulars and went home, sat down, and said to himself, Now, these people all bear witness. I will weigh their evidence. It struck him that if he could get those 12 or 13 people into the witness box, to testify on his side in any question before a court, he could carry anything.

They were persons of different degrees of intellect and education, but they were all of the sort of persons whom he would like to have for witnessespersons who could bear cross-examination and by their very tone and manner would win the confidence of the jury. Very well, he said to himself, I am as much bound to believe these people about their religious experience as about anything else. He did so and that led to his believing on the Lord Jesus Christ with all his heart! Thus, you see, the testimony of God to us does, in a measure, come through men and we are bound to receive it.

But now comes the textIf we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. God is to be believed if all men contradict Him! Let God be true and every man a liar. One Word of God ought to sweep away 10,000 words of men, whether they are philosophers of today or sages of antiquity. Gods Word against them all, for He knows Infallibly! Of His own Son He knows as none else can. Of our condition before Him, He knows! Of the way to pardon us He knows! There is nothing in God that could lead Him to err or make a mistakeand it were blasphemy to suppose that He would mislead us!

It were an insult to Him, such as we may not venture to perpetrate for a moment, to suppose that He would willfully mislead His poor creatures by a proclamation of mercy which meant nothing, or by presenting to them a Christ who could not redeem them! The Gospel, with God for its witness, cannot be false! Whatever may be the witness against it, the witness of God is greater! We must believe the witness of God! Now, what is the witness of God with regard to Christ? How does He prove to us that Jesus Christ did really come into the world to save us? He proves it in three ways according to the context of this passage. Gods witnesses are three the Spirit, the water, and the blood.

God says, My Son did come into the world. He is My gift to sinful men.

He has redeemed you and He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto Me by Him. And in proof that it is so, the Holy Spirit has been given. He descended at Pentecost. He abides with you forever. He has not gone back again. He is in the WordHe is with the Word. He is in the ChurchHe is with the Church. Whenever God the Holy Spirit is pleased to work, whether in revivals, or by individual conversions, the wonderful phenomena which are worked by Him, which are miracles in the world of the mind, are as astonishing as the miracles of Christ in the world of matter. God is saying, I declare Christ to be My Son and your Savior, for I have sent the Holy Spirit to prove it. I have converted yonder sinner, I have comforted yonder saint, by the Holy Spirit. I have instructed the ignorant, I have sanctified the impure, I have guided My people safely by the Holy Spirit. He is My witness. If you need any evidence that Jesus is really My Son, behold My Spirit going forth among the sons of men, converting whom He wills by the Truth concerning Jesus.

Then the water, that is to say, the purifying power of the Gospel is also Gods witness to the Truth of the Gospel. If it does not change mens characters when they receive it, it is not true. If it does not purify and produce virtue and holiness, do not believe it! But as God everywhere among the most savage tribes, or among the most refined of mankind makes the Gospel to be sacred, it has the power of cleansing the hearts and lives of men. He gives another witness that His Son is really Divine and that His Gospel is true

the blood also witnesses. Does believing in Jesus Christ do what the blood was said to do, namely, give peace with God through the pardon of sin? Does it, or not?

Hundreds of thousands all over the world affirm that they had no peace of conscience till they looked to the streaming veins of Jesusand then they saw how God can be Just and yet forgive sin. Wherever God gives peace through the blood, that blood witnesses with the Spirit and the water on Gods behalf. He says to us sinners, I have spoken to you a Word of love, and that word is My Son. What I have said to you is Jesus. He is My communication to men. I have delivered Him as My message to your souls. And in proof that He is my message to youa message of love and mercy and pardonbehold, I send the Holy Spirit forth among the sons of men! Behold, I work a purifying work among the sons of men and I give peace in the heart through the blood of the Atonement. These three agreeing in one, are My witness concerning My Son.

Now, dear Brothers and Sisters, remember that the evidence of faith to every soul hangs here. I shall soon speak to you of the witness in you, but the faith demanded of men rests not upon the ground of any witness in them, but of the witness to them. I am to believe God because He cannot lie. I am to believe Christ because God gives me the witness concerning Christ. And if I will not do so I shall have no other witness. The inward evidence only comes to those who, first of all, accept the evidence of God. Witness in us is not given first, but witness to usand if the evidence to us is rejected, we shall be cast away and lost forever.

II. I come now TO THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE, or the witness in us. He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in Himself. When a man is led by the Spirit of God to believe that God cannot lie, he enquires what it is that God says. And he hears that atonement has been made and that whoever believes in Jesus shall have eternal life. He sees the witness to be good and he believes it. That man is saved. What happens next? Why, this man becomes a new creature! Old things have passed away. He loves what he hated and hates what he loved! He believes what he denied and disbelieves what he formerly accepted. He is radically changed.

Now, says he to himself, I am sure of the Truth of the Gospel, for this change, this wonderful change in me, in my heart, my speech and my life, must be of Divine origin! I was told that if I believed I should be saved from my former self, and I am! I know not only by the external witness, nor even because of the witness of God, but I have an inner consciousness of a most marvelous birth and this is a witness in myself. The man then goes on to enjoy great peace. Looking alone to Jesus Christ for pardon, he finds his sins taken from him and his heart is unburdened of a load of fear. And this rest of heart becomes to him another inward witness.

To be forgiven makes his very soul dance for joy and he cries, Now I know that Christs blood can wash away sin, because mine has gone. Oh, believe me, if you were ever reduced to despair under a sense of sin. If you were ever dragged through a thorn hedge, laid by the feet in the stocks of conviction and beaten with the great ten-thonged whip of the Law till there was not a sound place on you and you were utterly ready to dieif Jesus then came to you and said, Be of good comfort, your sins are forgiven youyou knew that it was so and doubted His existence no more! From that moment you learned to say, I once hated the testimony of Matthew and Mark, and Luke, and John, and Paul, but I do not now. I believe and am sure, for I have felt it myself, and know it in my soul.

Perhaps a skeptical neighbor will sneeringly say, It is fanaticism. Yes, but you will feel just like a man who went to the Ophthalmic Hospital as blind as a bat and came out able to see clearlyand somebody said it was fanaticism and he saidWell, I do not know what that hard word means, but one thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see. It is a wonderfully hard thing to drive a man out of his consciousness. Prove that you are alive, said somebody, and the man who was asked for the proof walked across the room. Instead of a syllogism he gave a fact! So does the joy and peace which the Lord gives to His people from Himself become to them the very best evidence of the power of the precious blood and of the Divine mission of Jesus!

As the Christian thus goes on from strength to strength, he meets with answers to prayer. He goes to God in trouble, tells the Lord about it, and he gets out of his trouble, or he is enabled to bear it and to see it all works for his good. In great perplexity he hastens to the Lordlight comes and he sees his way through it. He needs many favors. He asks for them and they are bestowed. He does not need Elijah to come and say, God hears

prayer, for He answered my cries on Carmel and sent rain. He wants no Old Testament saint to declare to him that God answers His peoples requests. He is glad of their testimony, but he has the witness in himself!

I sometimes hear of even professed ministers of Christ who have doubts about these things. I should like to ask them a question or two. I should not enquire as to what they believe or do not believe, but I should begin thusDo you know Jesus Christ in your own soul? Were you ever converted? Do you feel the power of the Holy Spirit resting upon you? If I came to close questioning with some of these skeptical gentlemen, I guarantee you they would soon take themselves off to some other company! I do not believe in this modern doubtingI have no faith in its honesty and no belief in its depth. The most foolish men I know of take up with it just as small boys like to wear mens clothes.

But when a man knows anything about God by fellowship and has really experienced these things, doubts and fears may flit across his souljust as the migratory birds in the end of autumn may be heard flying overhead in the airbut they will not alight on his soul to rest! Infidel theories find no dwelling place in a soul that is really born unto God and has daily and continual dealings with Him. A man does not doubt things that are an integral part of his daily existence. Very few skepticisms arise in a mans mind about the facts of pain and pleasure, or the phenomena of hunger and thirst. So, when it comes to living and feeding upon Christ, practical experience soon puts an end to questions. He that believes has the witness in himself.

O, Brothers and Sisters, the Lord gives to His people answers to prayer! And he gives them such a sense of nearness to Himself and sometimes such overpowering joys in His Presence, or such an overwhelming sense of awe when He comes near to them, that they believe and are sure that it is even so. He that believes has the witness in himself and there is no witness like it! Expect the witness of God, which stands first and which we are to receive, or perishthere is nothing equal to the witness within yourself. Somebody wants to prove to me that sugar is sweet. My dear Sir, you may spare yourself the trouble. I had some in my tea, just now, and I am quite sure about it.

He wants to prove to me that seawater is salty. Sir, I do not question it, I have tasted it quite often enough to have no doubt about it. Things of religion must be tasted to be provedO, taste and see that the Lord is good. First believe the Gospel to be true, because of the witness of God. And if, having so believed, you would be deepened and strengthened in faith, go on to enjoy the blessings of Divine Grace and you will grow in faith. Christian people, I ask you this question and I know your answer If you ever doubt about the truthfulness of God, is it not when your piety is in a low condition? If you have neglected prayer. If you have lost fellowship with Jesus. If you have dropped out of accord with God. Is it not then that you are plagued with questions?

But if we walk in the Light, as God is in the Light, and abide in Him whom we have received, is it not true that though we may be quite unable to meet, in the ways of logic, the objections that are raised, there is a something within, an inward indisputable assurance which is not shaken and cannot be? It is said of a Roman Catholic priest that he took away the New Testament from a child on one occasion, but the childs teacher had taught the boy 12 chapters of the Gospel according to John, and so he said to the priest, But you cannot take it all away, Sir. Why not? Because I have learned 12 chapters by heart.

Now, if the critics begin tearing away at our precious Bookthough I would not let them have a verse of ityet, if they could obliterate some of its promises, they could not tear it all away because we have it in our hearts. We know it is true. Many a poor man and woman could illuminate their Bibles after the fashion of the tried saint who placed a, T and P, in the margin. She was asked what it meant and replied, That means, Tried and Proved, Sir. Yes, we have tried and proved the Word of God and are sure of its Truth!

III. I have shown you that the Gospel is proclaimed to men and they are expected to believe itnot upon the ground of any witness that is in them, but because of the witness of God to them. And I have also shown that the witness in them follows in due course as a reward of faith rather than a ground of faith. But here is the practical pointHOW ARE WE TREATING THE WITNESS OF GOD? For it is written in our text, He that believes not God, has made Him a liar; because he believes not the witness that God witnessed of His Son.

Now, are we believing the witness of God? I believe that the most of you here present entertain no doubt, whatever, that the Bible is the Word of God. Do not, therefore, I pray you, think it superfluous for me to ask you! Do you believe it? Do you believe it? You reply, of course I do. Well, I am not sure that it is, of course, because there are persons who believe in a wayand that way is a false one. I have heard of a poor curate who was upbraided for not believing the articles of his Church and replied that he believed at the rate of 40 pounds a year.

There are persons who believe at a very cheap rate. They believe in the Westminster Assemblys Catechismit is true they never read itbut they believe it. The Church has a creedthey do not know what it isbut they still say they believe it. They believe what the Church believes. But what does the Church believe? It believes what I believe. And what do you and the Church believe? We both believe the same thing. That is what it comes to. Such a faith will not save your soul! There must be an intelligent reception of the testimony which God has given. There are many in whom this faith does not exist, because if it did they could not act as they do.

Do you unconverted people believe that the wrath of God abides on you? Then you must be insane if you do not seek to escape from that wrath! If you believed that at this moment there was a snake in your pew, I guarantee you, you would soon rush out into the aisle! I should not need to argue with you about it, either! I might try to persuade you to sit still, but you would not be persuaded. If you really believed that your sins had destroyed you, you could not be careless any longer. Do you believe that Jesus Christ has come into the world to save sinners and that He is able to save you? Yes, you are sure you do.

I am not so sure, because if it were certain that there was outside yonder door a purse of gold worth 50,000 pounds and that whoever chose to take it should have it, you would be glad to hear me pronounce the benediction, the most devout of you, so that you might get the treasure! You would not need any exhorting to go, for natural instincts would lead you to make haste and seize the golden opportunity. If you believe that Jest Christ saves from sin and gives to the soul a treasure far beyond all price, you should make all speed to obtain the precious gift! Is it not so? He who believes in the value of a gift will hasten to accept it unless he is out of his mind!

Many of you who think you believe, and say you believe, do not believe at all! And, I put it to you, do you know what you are doing? You are calling God a liar! So the text says. No, I would not do that, says one. Friend, I hope that your case is well described in that prayer, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. But after to-night you will know what you do. If you do not believe what God says, you call Him a liar. I do not see that, says one. You cannot help seeing it if you will but look at it, for if any person bears witness to you concerning some important matter and you say, I do not believe you, you call that person a liar!

When God bears witness in any way, He ought to be believed. To deny the Truth of God is a fearful insult to Him. To every man and to every good man, especially, his truthfulness is a jewel. He cannot endure to have his truth impugned, and do you think that God can? The more pure a man is, the more indignant he is when his truthfulness is assailed. And to doubt God is to assail a truthfulness which is unimpeachable and ought never to be questioned! Besides, look at the whole case. You have quarreled with God. You have broken His Law. You have sinned. You deserve to be cast into Hell! And yet, in His mercy, He says, Sinner, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but would rather that he should turn unto Me and live. And in order that I may be able to forgive you and yet be Judge of all the earth, I have given My own Son to bleed and die on Calvary, that whoever believes in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life. Come, He says, Sinner, trust in My Son, and I will forgive you.

And your answer is, I do not believe You. Now that is, in addition to the insult of unbelief, exceedingly provoking to the loving heart of God! I have met with persons who have been generous to the poor until the murmuring words of some whom they have tried to benefit have quite wearied them from their benevolent course. Most persons who are doing generous actions are very sorely hurt if their conduct is misrepresented and their kindness treated with ingratitude. Now, when so splendid an act of generosity, so unparalleled a deed of Grace as the gift of His own Son is made a subject of undeserved unbelief, it touches God in a very tender place. I am not using too strong language when I remind you that He whom He gave to us was His own Son, very dear to Him, and yet He put Him to grief on our account.

The bloody sweat of Gethsemane and the wounds of Calvary show how greatly God pressed and bruised that matchless clusterHis own Son. And, after all that, for you to say No, I do not believe in Jesus. I will not have His Atonement and I will not trust in Him, is cruel of you, Sinner! It is cruel of you to the last degree! To stand at Calvarys Cross and see Him bleed, whose unspeakable beauties might put the very sun to blush for the dimness of His lightto see Him die for His enemies and to hear Him say, Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest, and then to turn your back on Him? This is the direst proof of the depravity of human nature that ever was presented under Heaven!

All the iniquities and transgressions that are committed by men. All the crimes that have ever stained humanity do not equal, in extent of enmity to God, the hatred that lurks in the resolve sooner to be damned than owe salvation to the Free Grace of God! He hates God, indeed, who hates Him so much that he will even dwell forever in Hell sooner than be forgiven by Him and saved through the blood of His Son! Man shows his deadly enmity against God to the fullest extent when he will destroy himself to indulge it! I think I hear one say, I would believe if I felt something in my heart. You will never feel that something! You are required to believe on the witness of Godand will you dare to say that His evidence is not sufficient?

If you will believe on the Divine testimony you shall have the witness within, by-and-by, but you cannot have that first. The demand of the Gospel is, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and believe upon Gods testimony. What more testimony do you need? God has given it to you in many forms. By holy men who have gone before, as I have told you. By His Inspired Bible. By the various works of His Spirit. And by the water and the blood in the Church all around you. Above all, Jesus Himself is the best of witnesses. Believe Him. But I wish I could have a very striking dreamperhaps that would convert me. Would you put more confidence in a dream than in Gods Word? O, but I hear of persons who have received revelations from the Spirit of God.

Do not tell me about the Spirit of God speaking to anybody more than is in the Bible! What is in the Scriptures the Spirit of God will apply to the heart. But if you need the Spirit of God to speak to you over and above that, you will never have it! You have Moses and the Prophetshear themand if you do not, neither will you be converted though one rose

from the dead! But nobody will rise from the dead. You have, upon the strength of the Divine testimony, to trust your soul in the hands of Jesusand if you do so you shall be saved. May the Holy Spirit lead you to do so at this very moment.

That is an easy matter, says one. I know it is, and that is why it is so hard. If it were a hard thing, you would do it, or try to do it. But because it is so easy, your pride will not come down to it unless my Master moves you to consent. It is simply, wash and be clean. Believe and live, trust and find it true. Ah, may the Lord grant that this simple matter may be clear to youthat you may accept it eagerly, lay hold upon it earnestly and then, having believed, you shall have the witness in yourself which will prove it to be true.

Doctor, you say, will your medicine heal me? Yes, he says. But doctor, you say, I cannot believe till I have the witness in myself that it will make me well. But, he says, you wont be able to take my medicine on those terms because you cannot have that witness till you have taken it! Will you have it on my witness that I have prescribed this in many similar cases and I know, from what I understand of the anatomy of the body, that the drugs suit your disease and will remove it. No, doctor, says the man, I must feel better before I can have confidence in you. What? Feel the power of the medicine before you take it? Yes. Then your demand is preposterous. You must surely be weak in your intellect.

Moved by this reproof, you take the medicine. He comes the next day and you feel relieved front the pain. A new tone is given to your system and you cheerfully exclaim, Now, doctor, I have the witness in myself. But, if you had been foolish enough to insist and not take the medicine till you had proved itand yet you could not prove it till you took ityou would have behaved like an idiot! And the man who will not take God at His Word, but needs something else besides the Lords witness, not only insults God, but plays the part of an insane suicide and deserves to perish! God give you Grace to accept the Gospel! Then you shall have the witness in yourself and He shall have the praise, and you shall have the comfort.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON1 John 5.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK531, 486. Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307. Sermon #1207 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

A SOLEMN IMPEACHMENT OF UNBELIEVERS   
NO. 1207

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 13, 1874, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

He that believes not God has made Him a liar; because he believes not the record that God gave of His Son.   
1 John 5:10.

NO doubt if our Lord Jesus were on earth He would find many persons for whom He would pray, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. It is no doubt true of many who are living in great sin that they do it ignorantly, not knowing the full measure of their guilt or its real character in the sight of God. It is the duty of the Christian minister and, indeed, of all Christians, to render sins of ignorance impossible by imparting Scriptural knowledge. We must let men know what they are doing and never suffer them to go on in the dark. If they will commit sin, let them at least know what is involved in it, for that the soul be without knowledge is not good.

It is not meet that any man should continue in darkness now that the true light has dawned upon mankind. It is true, our testimony will not always be received, for men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. But our duty remains the samewe are to bear witness of the Truth of God and to be, in the hands of God, the instruments of convincing the world of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. The great sin of not believing in the Lord Jesus Christ is often spoken of very lightly and in a very trifling spirit, as though it were scarcely any sin at all. Yet, according to my text, and, indeed, according to the whole tenor of the Scriptures, unbelief is the calling God a liarand what can be worse?

I earnestly desire that every unbeliever may see his unbelief at this time in its true colors and, perhaps, as the Spirit of God enables him to see the evil of his past unbelief, he will be so shocked at himself and horrified at his crime, that he will continue in it no longer, but yield himself to the faith. My soul longs, yes, even faints, that Divine Grace may be given to the unbelievingthat they may now believe in the Lord Jesus Christ!

When our race had been lost by sin, it was infinite mercy on Gods part to provide a way of salvationand infinite condescension to make that way of salvation suitable to our lost condition. If it had been salvation which depended upon works, it would have been impossible for us. It would have mocked our sorrow, but could not have relieved it. In abounding mercy God has set forth Jesus Christ to be a Propitiation for sin and He bids guilty men believe in Him as the atoning Sacrifice and see in Him the love of God made manifest. He bids sinners lay hold upon eternal life by accepting Jesus Christ by faith as their Savior.

Now, had not man been very vile and grossly wicked at heart, he would have leaped for joy at the proclamation of the Gospeland have believed, at once, the Truth to which God bears witness! But, being desperately set

on mischief, man does not believe in Jesus Christ, and if you preach Christ to him and set the Crucified One before him, still, except where the Holy Spirit works effectually, he remains in his unbelief, refuses to receive the witness of God and rejects the Redeemer.

What I desire to do, this morning, is to bring every man who is in that condition to look at himself as in a glassand see clearly what he is doing. I wish to make him feel, as he hears this discourse, Yes, I see what I am doingby not believing Jesus I am despising the blood of Atonement and I am telling God to His face that He is a liar. It is always well for every man to know exactly where he is. On the sea of life the more often we take observations as to our longitude and latitude, the better. Many bankruptcies arise from careless trading. And in such cases the traders have no mind to consult their account books, but go on, with their eyes half open, hoping that things will take a turn, which turn is never taken.

It is always good for a man to know who he is, what he is, where he is and where he is going. I would plead with the unbeliever to look well to his position, to see how God regards it, and to judge himself that he be not judged. If I should not seem to speak very tenderly at this time, you must not be astonished. I believe there is such a thing as pitying sinners and comforting them till they consider themselves to be no longer blameworthyand even regard themselves as unhappy people who deserve sympathy!

I talked not long ago with a troubled one and after much battling I brought her to this pointThere is the way of salvation. Jesus Christ has come into the world to save sinners and whoever believes in Him is saved. She replied, I cannot believe in Him. And then I came to the push of the bayonet and said, Will you, then, stand up in the sight of Almighty God and declare to Him that you cannot believe Him, which, of course, is the same thing as saying, in other words, that God is a liar? Rise, then, and let me hear you say what is in your heart. She replied most earnestly, I could not say anything of the kind. My answer was, But you did say so just now. And by your unbelief you have been saying so for years! You are practically saying it every moment that you remain in unbelief. That troubled one said to me as she left, I thank you for not trying to comfort me. I wanted to be faithfully dealt with and I bless God that you have done so.

Now I will, out of love to the souls of those who do not believe in Jesus, deal fairly with them. I will give them no comfort, for there is no comfort for those who believe not. I will try to make them see what their sin is, that they may be ashamed and confounded, and repent of their wicked unbelief. May the Spirit of God make them see that he that believes not God has made Him a liar, because he believes not the record that God gave of His Son.

First we shall see the sinners inability to believe dissected. Then, the nature of his sin detected. Then, the unbelievers sin abhorred. And fourthly, his fate predicted.

I. First, THE SINNERS INABILITY TO BELIEVE DISSECTED. He pleads that he cannot believe. He often says this and quiets his conscience with it. When he is aroused and awakened he declares that he cannot believe in Jesus Christ and cannot believe Godand goes off to his deadly sleep, again. He quotes the Scriptures to back up his excuse and perhaps reminds us of the Words of the Lord Jesus, HimselfNo man comes to Me except the Father who has sent Me draws him. To which we reply that the Words of our Lord are always very weighty with us and we would not wrest one of them for a momentbut our Lord explains His own Words in another place, where He says, You will not come unto Me that you might have life.

So then the sinners inability lies in his willit is because he will not that he cannot. Let every sinner be assured of this and let his conscience confirm the truth of the statement. Listen, O Unbeliever, you have said, I cannot believe, but it would be more honest if you had said, I will not believe. The mischief lies there. Your unbelief is your fault, not your misfortune! It is a disease, but it is also a crimeit is a terrible source of misery to you, but it is justly sofor it is an atrocious offense against the God of Truth! Let me take your unbelief to pieces and show why it is that you cannot believe.

The inability of many of you lies in the fact that you do not care to think about the matter at all. A great many of you do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ because you do not care about your souls, or see the importance of being saved. You give your minds to your business, your pleasure, or your sinyou dream that there is time enough to think of heavenly thingsand you think them to be of secondary importance. This is the source of a large proportion of ordinary unbelief. Let any man who disbelieves the Bible, for instance, answer this questionDid you ever candidly read that Book with the view of seeing for yourself whether or not it is the Book of God? Did you ever seriously sit down to study the evidences of its being the Revelation of God?

It is very seldom that any infidel can be found who will say yes to those questions. They rail at what they do not understand and condemn off-hand what they have never studied! Is this right? Many, however, say, Oh, yes, I believe the Bible, I believe it is Gods Book. I believe the Gospel to be Gods Gospel. Why, then, do you not believe in Jesus? It must be because you do not think the Gospel message important enough to be obeyed. And in so doing you are practically calling God a liar, for you tell Him that your soul is not so precious as He says it is, neither is your state so perilous as He declares it to be.

You are dyingthe doctor says, Here is a medicine which will cure your disease. It is the only medicine that will save your life and you will die if you do not take it. Suppose you do not take the medicine? I shall be right in saying that however you may view the matter, you call that physician a liar in the most blunt manner! You do not say in so many words, I am not as bad as you say I am. You do not say, I do not believe in your medicine, but, by refusing to take it, you say so most unmistakably! The physician will quite understand your action, even if you do not speak a sentence and, as he sees you die before his eyes, he will feel that your death lies at your own door.

In refusing to come to the Gospel feast you do as good as tell the Lord that He makes too much of it. That He makes Heaven and earth ring with the Glory of it, but in your esteem your farm and your merchandise are far more worthy of attention. You, by your neglect of the great Salvation, declare that you are not in any pressing danger and do not stand in urgent need of a Savior. You also say that the pardon of sin, the favor of God and a good hope of Heaven are not worthy to be sought first and above all other things. You state that Jesus neither is the Chief among ten thousand, nor is His love necessary to make you truly happy. In all these points, and many others, your carelessness calls the Lord a liar!

A second reason of the sinners inability to believe lies in the fact that the Gospel is true. No, you reply, that is precisely why we would believe it. Yes, but what does Jesus say in John 8:45? He says, Because I tell you the truth, you believe Me not. Strange reason for not believing a statementbecause it is true! Yet there are thousands of individuals whose capacity for believing a lie is enormouswhile their ability for accepting the Truth of God appears to have gone from them. When religious impostors have arisen, the very men who have heard the Gospel from their youth up and have not received it because it is true, have become dupes of imposition at once!

The Truth of God did not suit their nature, which was under the dominion of the Father of Lies, but no sooner was a transparent lie brought under their notice than they leaped at it at once like a fish at a fly! The monstrous credulity of unbelief amazes me! I meet with persons who consider themselves to be bold thinkers and philosophers. They express their astonishment that I can really believe the things which I preachbut no sooner do I learn from them what

their positive creed is than the astonishment comes to be on my sideand is a thousand times greater than theirs could be! The faith which accepts Christ has but a small throat, indeed, compared with that credulity which believes, for instance, in the development of man from a monkeythat creed requires the swallow of the great fish which swallowed Jonah!

A lie you will believe, but because the Gospel is true you do not believe it. You give us a bad character, says one. It is your true character! Some of you are in the habit of accepting no teaching but that which chimes in with your depraved tastes and skeptical notions! But because the Gospel is true and, therefore, crosses your corrupt tastes, you cannot endure it! If we were to trim it a little, cut it down and make it suit you, you would accept it! But in the name of the Everlasting God we assure you we will not do itwe dare not do it for Gods sake, nor even for your sakesfor to preach to you another Gospel would only be to deceive you.

There are persons who do not receive the Gospel because it is despised among men. The Gospel is sneered at by the great ones of the earth and the mass of mankind ridicule it. And therefore cowards turn their backs upon it. If princes and great men followed after the Truth of God, then there might be something in it, but are not Believers in Jesus generally a poor company? Do you not virtually say, I cannot believe Gods witness alone, but I would believe it if a learned professor or a great lord would add his testimony. What did they say in Christs day? Have any of the rulers believed? The opinions of the rulers were evidently more considered than the witness of the Blessed God!

We know a certain class of people who always ask, Is it fashionable? And there are others of another class who cautiously inquire, What do the men in our shop think about it? They set more store by the judgment of men than by the declarations of God! They will believe their fellow creatures who are as fallible as themselves, but God they will not believe! Let me tell you that even if you were, after a fashion, to believe God because His testimony is supported by the great ones of the earth, or by the many around you, it would not be believing God at all! It would at bottom resolve itself into believing the testimony of men. Sinner, this is no small offenseto be ready to accept the verdict of your fellow menbut not ready to accept the declaration of your God!

Many, however, do not receive the Gospel because they are much too proud to believe it. The Gospel is a very humbling thing. It says to the sinner, Now, Sir, you have no merits of your own and what is more, you have no power to obtain merit in the future. The man claims to have been temperate, chaste, honest and generous. But the Gospel says to him, You have broken Gods Law, and you are condemned for it. All that you have done was but your duty and cannot blot out your shortcomings in other respects. For whoever shall keep the whole Law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of allso says the Book which cannot err (James 2:10). If you are to be saved, you must be saved as a sinner, or not at all, for Christ has not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance!

You must be saved through the merits of Another and washed from sin in the precious blood of Jesus! Your own works must not have a finger in it. It must be by Grace and Grace, alone. Of course the proud man cannot believe that. He turns his back upon it in scorn! Why cant he believe it? Because he will not believe it! He is so proud that it offends him. It goes against the grain, and he will not endure it. Many of you must confess that you do not like the Gospel because it does not leave you room to stow away your pride. If it said to you, Attend to the sacraments, why, you would be baptized tomorrow and come to the Lords Table, if that would save you!

And if I were allowed to preach that if any man walked barefooted from his house to the Lands End he would be saved, you would start off this afternoon, wet as it is! If there were any great thing for you to do, you would do it. But because there is nothing for you to do but to accept what Another has done, you will not have it! Your detestable pride is at the bottom of your rejection of Free Grace! If this is the secret of your inability, does it excuse you? Or does it make your offense the greater?

Another reason why men cannot believe Gods testimony concerning Jesus lies in the holiness of the Gospel. If the Gospel came to them and said, You can confess your sins, obtain absolution and then go and sin again, would not that suit many of you? That is the religion for sinful men! Do you think there ever will be a time when such teaching will cease to be popular? It is a most attractive religion Satan, himself, invented and it shows his genius in lying! Confess your sin to a priest! Pay a shilling! Get absolved and go away and live as you like till next time! Rub sin off as you go along with a little penance! Human nature rejoices in that

religion!   
But the Gospel says to the man, You must forsake your evil ways.   
What is more, the very nature that suggests these sins must be changed.   
You must be born again. The Gospel cries, Repent! Let the wicked forsake his ways and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him turn   
unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him. The Gospel proclaims   
Jesus, who saves men from their sins, but you do not want that! The impurity of your hearts is that which makes it hard to believe a pure Gospel.   
O Souls, I pray you, look at this Truth of God! When you say, I cannot   
believeit is either because you are too careless, or else because your   
nature, itself, is too deceitful and too impure to accept the Truth of God! It would be easy enough to believe if these things were gone. Do the angels find it difficult to believe? Would pure spirits find it difficult to believe? No, your sin lies at the foundation of your unbelief! It is the root   
which bears this wormwood. We cannot expect a spendthrift to believe in  
the excellence of economy, or a vicious man to believe in the pleasures of   
chastity. Loose men even deny that anyone is pure! What an opinion bad   
men have of all mankind! Why do they think so ill of others? Because they   
judge them by themselves! When a dove flies over a landscape, it sees the   
clear streams and the fields of corn. But when a vulture passes over the   
same landscape what does it see? A dead horse here, a carcass there, or a   
piece of carrion!   
Everybody sees according to his eyes. A graceless, impure man cannot  
see purity. Christ said to the proud Pharisees, How can you believe that  
receive honor from one another? Their pride stood in the way! And in  
every case in which a man declares concerning the Lord Jesus, I cannot  
believe, the difficulty is in himself and not in the facts to be believed, nor  
in the evidence of those facts. There is one excuse for unbelief, and only  
one. How can they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? That  
excuse will do for the heathen, but not for you, for you have heard and   
read about Jesus and know the Gospel. The only excuse that can be accepted is not for you! Of you it must be said, He that believes not has   
made Him a liar.   
II. Secondly, I must now come to closer quarters and DESCRIBE THE  
NATURE OF THE SIN OF UNBELIEF, in that it makes God a liar. I will   
take many forms of it and show this to be the case. Those are guilty of  
this sin who deny that Jesus is the Messiah, the promised Savior, the Son  
of God. Out of Heaven, God Himself declared, This is My beloved Son, in   
whom I am well-pleased. Peter truly said at Pentecost (Acts 2:22) that Jesus of Nazareth was a Man approved of God by miracles, and signs, and   
wonders, which God did by Him. God says in many ways He is my beloved Son, and if you say He is not, you make God a liar! That is clear  
enough.   
There are some who deny His Deity. Now, over and over in Scripture we  
are told that Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh. The Word was   
God. By Him were all things created that are in Heaven and that are in   
earth, visible and invisible (Col. 1:16). He is called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God. The miracles which Christ worked and especially His Resurrection from the deadall prove His Deitythe Father bearing witness that He is His equal and His fellow. When a man says that Jesus is not God, and the Father says He is, there is no question God is being called a liar. But, as I believe there are very few of that kind of unbelievers   
here, I will leave such persons and pass on.   
A poor trembling, weeping sinner comes to me and among other things   
he says, My sins are so great that I do not believe they can be pardoned.  
I meet him thus. God says, Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be   
as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as   
wool. But, Sir, my sin is very great, indeed! The blood of Jesus Christ,  
His Son, cleanses us from all sin. But my transgressions have been exceedingly aggravated. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and He will have   
mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. Sir, I cannot believe it. Stand up, then, and tell the Lord so in the   
plainest mannerO God, You have said You will abundantly pardon, but   
it is a lie! I challenge you to make that statement outright, for you are   
making it in your hearts! It is idle to deny it, for it is so. God says, I will   
and I can pardon, and you say He cannotwhat is that but accusing the   
Lord of falsehood? Another will say, Oh, but my heart is so hard I cannot  
believe in the power of God to make a new man of me and deliver me from   
the love of sin. Yet God declares in His Word, A new heart, also, will I   
give them, and a new spirit will I put within them. I will take away the   
heart of stone out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh. That   
is what God says. It cannot be, you say. Very well, then, admit ityou

are calling God a liar! God says, I can. You say He cannot. There is your  
position!  
In many there exists a doubt about the willingness of God to save. They  
say, I believe that the blood of Jesus Christ does blot out sin, but is He   
willing to pardon me? Now, listen to what Jehovah says, for He says it   
with an oath, and to me it is a very startling thing that God should swear!  
He swears by Himself because He can swear by no greater. Mark that! As   
I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but   
had rather that he turn unto Me and live. Over and over again, in all   
sorts of circumstances, He gives us assurance that He delights in mercy!  
Now, then, Sinner, if you say God is unwilling and Christ is unwilling, and   
yet the Lord swears that He is willing, and Christ dies to prove itwhat,   
then, is your unbelief?   
I hardly like to utter what I feel I must sayyou do deliberately charge   
God with perjury and what could the greatest blasphemer out of Hell, or  
the blackest devil in Hell do, more than that? That is exactly what you  
have done and are doing now! Alas, cries one, my ground for doubt is   
deeper. I hear that God can pardon, regenerate and all that. And I believe   
it, but then I cannot see that any of this is for me. I do not see that these   
things are sent for me. Listen, then, to what God says, Ho, everyone that   
thirsts, come you to the waters, and he that has no money, let him come   
buy wine and milk. You skillfully reply, But I do not thirst. More shame   
for you, then!   
Listen againCome unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. But I do not labor. Do not labor? How do you get your living? I feel sorry for you if you are a rich and lazy man that you have no labor. That text includes every laboring man and every heavyladen man under Heaven. Listen, yet again, Whoever will, let him come. Does not that invite every living man who is willing to come? If you say, I am not willing, then I leave you, for you confess that you are unwilling to be savedunwilling to be reconciled to God, and that is exactly what I am trying to proveyou cannot believe, because you are unwilling to do so.   
On your own head be your blood!   
I do not know what more I can say to you. You must be mad to be willing to incur, forever, the flames of Hell and the wrath of God! It is not for  
me to comfort you when you are in such a condition as that! If you choose   
your own destruction, why, so it must be. Yet hear me once again. Jesus  
has said to His disciples, Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel   
to every creature; he that believes and is baptized shall be saved. Are you   
a creature? Yes, I am a creature. Well, Man, God has put it as plain as it  
can be putthe Gospel is to be preached to you and, therefore, it has a   
relation to you! Would God send it to you to tantalize you? When you say,  
It is not for me, you make God a liar! He says it is for every creature   
and you know you are a creaturehow, then, dare you say it is not for   
you? In speaking thus, you accuse the Lord of trifling with you and mocking you.   
Well, says one, but I cannot see how simply trusting in Christ and   
believing Gods witness of Him would save my soul. My dear Man, are   
you never to believe anything but what you can see? And how are you to  
see this thing till you have tried it? A physician says, that medicine will  
heal you. The patient replies, I need to see that it heals me before I take   
it. The man is a fool and so are you if that is how you trifle with God! You   
must believe the Gospel on the evidence of God and not otherwise, or your   
faith is not faith in God at all! The faith which He commanded in the Gospel is faith in the record which God has given concerning His Son, a faith   
which takes God at His Word.   
Believes then, on the Lord Jesus Christ and you have believed God to  
be true. Refuse to trust in Jesus Christ, unless you get some other evidence beyond the witness of God, and you have practically said that Gods   
testimony is not enoughthat is to say, you have made God a liar! Many  
a time I have heard men say, Oh, but I cannot believe it, it seems so  
wonderful. Is not that why you should believe it? What should come from  
the glorious Lord but that which is wonderful? He is glorious in holiness,  
fearful in praise, doing wonders! Another cries out, That it is too good to   
be true! Ah, poor Soul, but have you never read, As high as the heavens   
are above the earth, so are My ways above your ways, and My thoughts   
above your thoughts? A less salvation would not do you any good nor glorify God.   
Some feel that the Gospel is too simple. They want a more complicated   
system thanbelieve and live. How can it be too simple for finite minds   
like ours? Then I have heard them turn round and say, It is too mysterious, and yet after all, where is this a mysteryBelieve in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved? What can be more plain than that? Anyway, dear Friends, let me say to you, whether it is a mystery or not, God bears witness to it! And if you do not believe it, you call God a liar! Whether you think it too simple, or too good, or too wonderful, or too anything, you must either believe God or call Him a liar! There is no third course for, be it simple or mysterious, wonderful or commonplace, the Lord asserts it to be trueand if you refuse His witness you make Him a   
liar and must take the consequences.   
III. And now I pray the Holy Spirit to rest upon my words while I treat,   
for a few minutes, upon the third and most awful point, namely, THE ABHORRANCE OF THIS SIN. To disbelieve God is, indeed, a sin! It was the   
mother sin of allthe door by which all other evil came into the world.   
The devil whispered in the ear of mother Eve, Yes, has God said? That   
insinuated doubt commenced our fall. And when that had tarnished the   
brightness of her intellect, the fiend added, You shall not surely die  
calling God a liar. When she believed him and her husband joined her in   
it, our ruin was complete.   
Unbelief of God drove our race out of Eden and, in consequence, we are   
born in sore travail and plow the ground with toil. Oh, accursed Unbelief!  
It is time you were hung up on a gallows high as that of Haman! Alas, that  
any man should hug you to his heart! You destroyer of our race, you are   
loathsome, indeed! When the children of Israel were in the wilderness   
journeying towards Canaan, how was it that so many graves were dug in  
the desert? And that out of 600,000 footmen who came out of Egypt only  
two survived to enter the promised land? Who slew all these? The inspired   
Apostle tells us, They could not enter in because of unbelief. Go, today, to Jerusalem. Look beneath the buildings of the modern   
town and mark the excavations which reveal the utter ruin of the holy  
city. See how fully the prophecy was fulfilled that not one stone should   
remain upon another! Stand upon the steeps of Zion and ask, Who destroyed this fair city? Who burned her holy and beautiful house with fire?  
She was once so beautiful, the joy of the whole earth! Who cast her down   
to the dust, and why? The palaces of David and Solomon are overthrown  
and the plow has been driven over their foundationswhy all this? Why   
was the siege of Jerusalem the most bloody and horrible in all history? It was because the Jews rejected the Messiah and would not believe the  
testimony of the living God! O, accursed unbelief! It spits its venom   
against the holy God and He cannot but abhor it. How can the absolutely  
true submit to be charged with falsehood? This sin of making God a liarI  
pray you look at it very solemnly, for it is a stab at God, Himself! What is   
it that would most easily provoke you? If a person stole your goods? If he   
struck you? If he injured you in business, you might bear it patiently. But  
when a man tells you to your face that he cannot believe you, the insult is   
acutely felt! You are not truthful if you can be content to be called a liar!   
Nothing stings like itit is the unkindest cut of all! Oh, do not tell me that  
you find it difficult to believe my words, for that will cut me to the quick!   
Yet would I, a thousand times rather have you treat me thus than offer  
the same insult to the Lord my God!   
Then, remember, this unbelief insults God on a very tender point. He comes to the guilty sinner and says, I am ready to forgive. The sinner says, I do not believe You. Hear Me, says the Lord, What proof do you ask? See, I have given My only-begotten Son. He has died upon the tree to save sinners. Still I do not believe You, says the unbeliever. Now, what further evidence can be given? Infinite Mercy has gone its utmost length in giving the Savior to bleed and die! God has laid bare His inmost heart in the wounds of His dying Son and still He is not believed! Surely, man   
has reached the climax of enmity to God in this!   
Nothing proves the utter baseness of man so much as this refusal to   
believe his God! And nothing proves so much the greatness of Almighty   
Grace as that God should, after all this, condescend to work faith in a   
heart so depraved! O miracle of sin! O greater miracle of love! I would have   
you remember that you are not only calling God a liar once or twice, but   
you deny what He has, over and over again, declared! To tell a man that  
he is a liar once is a great insult. But if he continues to assert the truth  
and you still contradict him, the provocation gathers force. If the man is  
perfectly truthful, it is a piece of wickedness on your part to refuse him   
credence when he repeats his evidence again and again.   
But the Lord has gone further than repeating His WordHe has sworn  
itand yet you will not believe Him! I pray you remember that you are in   
the Presence of God at this very moment and that the Lord is now looking  
right into your heart. He sees clearly that in your inmost soul your unbelief is saying to Him, O God, the maker of Heaven and earth, You are a   
liar! O God, who gave Your Son to die, I believe that fact, but I will not

even now trust You. I do not believe in Your power or willingness to pardon me, though Your Word very clearly declares You to be both able and   
willing. You have promised to forgive all who believe in your Son, but I will   
not believe! You are ready now, at once, to put away sin from every man   
that believes Your witness with regard to Christ, but I do not believe Your   
witnessYou lie!   
I know you shudder at such sentiments and there is good need that   
you should. So why do you continue to act upon them? Did I not hear   
someone say, Ah, Sir, I have been trying to believe for years. Terrible   
words! They make the case still worse! Imagine that after I had made a   
statement, a man should declare that he did not believe me, in fact, he   
could not believe me though he would like to do so. I should certainly feel  
grieved. But it would make matters worse if he added, In fact, I have been   
trying to believe you for years and I cannot do it. What does he mean by  
that? What can he mean but that I am so incorrigibly false and such a   
confirmed liar, that though he would like to give me some credit, he really  
cannot do it? With all the effort he can make in my favor, he finds it quite   
beyond his power to believe me?   
Now, a man who says, I have been trying to believe in God, in reality   
says just that with regard to the Most High! How idle is it to talk of trying  
to believe! If a statement is true, a right judgment believes it, not of  
choice, but because the evidence commands faith. The trying lies in the   
other directionmen do not want to believe the Truth of Godtherefore   
they are careless and negligent. They raise quibbles and questions. They demand signs and wonders, and feelings, and impressions. They struggle   
against the evidence. They shut out the light.   
In you who believe the Bible to be Gods Word and yet are unbelievers,  
it is evidently so, for if Jesus is the Savior, why do you not believe Him?   
The talk about trying to believe is a mere pretence! But pretence or not, let  
me remind you that there is no text in the Bible which says, Try and believe. It says, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Son of God. He  
has proved it by His miracles. He died to save sinners, therefore trust  
Him. He deserves implicit trust and childlike confidence. Will you refuse   
Him these? Then you have maligned His Character and called Him a liar! IV. I shall leave this matter when I have, with a heavy burden on my   
soul, said a few words upon THE FATE OF THE UNBELIEVER. If this man   
continues to say he cannot believe God and that Christ is not to be   
trusted, what will happen to him? I wonder what the angels think must  
befall a being who calls God a liar? They see His Glory and as they see it  
they veil their faces and cry, Holy, holy, holy! What horror would they   
feel at the idea of calling God a liar! The saints in Heaven, when they see   
the Glory of God, fall down on their faces and adore Him! Ask them what   
they think must happen to those who persist in calling God a liar, and a   
liar in the matter of His mercy to rebels through Jesus Christ! As for me, I cannot conceive any punishment too severe for final unbelief. Only this I know, it is written, He that believes not shall be damned.   
May you never know what that meansbut you will know it as sure as  
you live if you continue in unbelief. God is not a liar, but if He does not   
damn the man who dies an unbeliever, He will be! Therefore depend upon   
it, He will do it! He has said, He that believes not shall be damned. If He   
is a liar, He may let you escape, but if He is not, He will cast you into Hell!   
There is nothing else before you. The other day an enquirer said to me, I   
cannot believe, and I gave him no answer but thisthen you must be  
damned. Had I nothing else to say? No, nothing else. I have no comforts   
to offer, no hopes to present to an unbeliever. He that believes and is  
baptized shall be saved, but he that believes not shall be damned. There is an honest intolerance about these words of our Lord. He does   
not stammer and hesitate and say, I fear some ill may occur to you. No,  
He says outright that you will be damned. Nothing on earth or in Heaven   
can save you except you believe in Jesus Christ.. You may knock at a  
thousand doors and you may cry, and pray, and groan, and agonize and   
sweatyes, even to drops of bloodbut there is only one door to Heaven  
and that door is faith in Jesus Christ. If you will not enter by that door,   
God Himself will not open another. God has been pleased to empty out the   
infinite mercy of His heart into the Person of His dear Son, and He cries,  
Whoever will, let him come and take of the Water of Life freely. But, if   
Jesus is rejected by you, and Gods witness about Him is refused, do not   
look for any other help.   
Do you think that God has another son who will die for you? You would   
not believe in Him if He had! Do you think He will alter the whole plan of   
Salvation and the Covenant of Grace, and reverse the purposes of His   
Wisdom to gratify your wicked whims? That were to make Him an accomplice in your wickedness and a patron of your insolence! Believe me, He will keep His Wordif you believe not in Christ, you shall be utterly damned at the Last Great Day! The last word I have to say is this, not only will the unbeliever be lost, but he will be lost by his unbelief. Thus says the Lord, He that believes not is condemned already. Why? Because he   
has not believed on the Son of God.   
Has he not committed a great deal more that will condemn him? Oh,  
yes, a thousand other sins are upon him, but Justice looks for the most  
flagrant offense that it may be written as a superscription over his condemned headand it selects this monster sin and writesCondemned,   
because he has not believed on the Son of God. When the Spirit of God   
came into the world to convince men of sin, He began by convincing them   
of the greatest of all. Which did He choose as the most glaring? Of sin because they believed not on Me. I am only telling you what I find in the   
Scriptures. Certain Brethren will say, This sermon is not orthodox. I   
care nothing for their criticismwhat I have advanced is Gods Word and   
Gods Word against any mans word all the world over.   
His word is sharper than a two-edged sword, and I pray Him to use it to   
cut to your very marrow this morningto wound and killthat afterwards  
Christ may make alive! If any one of you should be finally cast into the   
prison of despair, to suffer, in Hell, the wrath of God, the accusation  
which will appear over your condemned cell will run thus, This man   
knew the Gospel to be true and yet he would not believe it. That thought  
will torture you with a vengeance, I am condemned because I believed not  
the Truth of God. Because I called my God a liar. Because I trusted not in   
Christ. He told me it would be so, and it is so. This is the sting of it all,  
that for my unbelief I am justly left to perish.   
Oh, dear Hearers, do not call the Lord a liar! By your reason which is   
yet left to you. By your love to yourselves. By Heaven and by Hell. By the   
bleeding wounds of Jesus and by the Truth of God, I entreat you, accept  
Jesus! May the Holy Spirit go with my entreaties that your souls may relent, that your stony hearts may melt before the Cross and you may receive Jesus Christ to be your All in All this day. Amen and Amen!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON1 John 5.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK485, 600, 483.  
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THE PRIEST DISPENSED WITH   
NO. 1250

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 15, 1875, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself. 1 John 5:10.

IT is a part of the theory of Ritualism, that is to say, Anglicized Popery, that no man can know his sins forgiven unless he is assured so by a priest. They tell us that to know ourselves saved we must either have a revelation from Heaven, which we may not expect, or we must wait till the Day of Judgement, or else some duly authorized spiritual father must pronounce us absolved. They cannot suppose any other method of being assured of forgiveness. That is the theory and in practice it comes to this, that when anything troubles your conscience you must make a clean breast of it to this, so-called, learned minister, alias parish priest, and tell him whatever things you have done, answering all questions he may choose to put to you, whether they are clean or whether they are unclean.

And only then will he give you absolution in the name of God, claiming to bemark you, I am not saying what they do not say, for I quote from one of the most popular of their manuals, entitled, Steps to the Altar claiming, I say, to be a trustee from God, and commissioned by Him as His ministerial deputy, to hear, and judge, and absolve. That is the theory, a very attractive one, too, to human nature, for man, by nature, is an idolater, that is to say, he desires something tangible, and visible, to revere and trust in. The old spirit which cried out in the wilderness, Make us gods to go before us, for as for this Moses which brought us up out of the land Egypt, we know not what has become of him, is still alive and craves for idolsand delights to find them either in the form of priests or sacraments

As for faith in the unseen purely spiritual worship, and simple reliance upon the promise of God, these are not according to human nature, and wherever you discover them, they are the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Mans idolatry loves priestcraft and, therefore, we should not be astonished if Ritualism were to become more and more popular and subjugate the whole land. Confidence in priestly powers seems to afford the soul an easy way of coming to an anchorage. To come directly to Jesus Christ with the whole heart needs thought, consideration and heart workbut to confess to a priest and get his assurance of pardon is a method much less difficult, less spiritual and, consequently, more agreeable to human nature.

What need is there of being born again from above when a little water will do it? What need is there of feeding upon Christ when bread and wine are the same thing? What need is there of the witness from above when every curate can assure you that you are pardoned? What need is there, I ask, of the witness of the Holy Spirit, when any clerical person can pronounce you absolved? I would in all kindness speak with those who are in bondage to this delusion and suggest a few questions. You think it more

easy to believe in a man appointed by God than to believe in Christ Himself, but may there not be a doubt or two about the man? Is it not possible that he has not been rightly ordained, or that he, himself, when he speaks does not mean what he says? Remember, everything depends upon his ordination and intention!

Do you say, Oh, but he is certified by the Church? But are there not grave questions as to the Church? Can Apostolic succession be proven? It is the idlest of romances! The church of Rome has struggled to prove her own descent from Peter, but fails at the very beginningand we may be doubly sure that the Anglican Church is still more at sea. She calls the Nonconformists, Schismatic in reference to herself, but what is she in regard to the church of Rome? She has no Apostolic succession, in the sense in which the expression is ecclesiastically used, and should be ashamed of setting up the fraudulent presence!

Her godly ministers have the same Apostolic successor as all true servants of Christ have, and no more. No man has such a pedigree as to entitle him to represent the Eternal God and stand between the Father and mens souls! The claim is as gross an imposition as that of the fortuneteller who pretends to prophecy. Hark you, my Friends, have you no manliness? Does it not seem to you, as it does to me, to be a monstrously degrading thing that you should prostrate yourselves before a man, like yourselves, and believe that he can pronounce the pardon of your sins? This precious, Steps to the Altar, says, Let the manner of your confession be in an humble posture, on your knees, as being made to God rather than man. Mark you this, you are to go down on your knees to the man whom the State appoints to superintend the religion of your parish!

What is it but Brahmanism, mislabeled Christianity? The whole drift of the scheme is to elevate a clerical caste and lay all the rest of mankind at their feet! This is the reverse of the religion of the New Testament which says that all Believers are a royal priesthood, made by the Lord Jesus kings and priests unto God! Is not Ritualism quite sure to grow into Popery, no, is it not full-blown Popery, already? Will it not, once again, reduce the world to slavery under an arch-priest at Rome or Canterbury if it is allowed to have its way? And what say the Scriptures? There is one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. Why should we set up other mediators and go to them for absolution when our Lord Jesus receives all who come to Him?

Do you see in the New Testament any trace of such assumptions on the part of Gods ministers? Does the Gospel say, He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, if absolved by a priest? That interpolation is foreign to the Gospel! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved is the Gospel according to the Scriptures! Confess to the priest and you shall be forgiven is the Gospel of the Vatican! Everywhere the Scripture calls man to come into personal contact with his reconciled God in Christ Jesus. The first resolution of the awakened sinner is, I will arise and go unto my Father. It is not, I will arise and go unto the authorized minister who stands between me and my Father. It is not, I will resort to sacraments and ceremonies, but, I will go to my Father. In fact the whole objective of the Gospel is to bring us near to God in Christ Jesus and to put down every interposing medium. He who rent the veil of the temple has ended this priestly business!

This morning my business is to show that there is no need of a certificate from any man as to our being forgiven, for he that believes has the witness within himself. He does not need a new revelation. He does not need to wait till the Day of Judgmenthe is forgiven, and he knows it, and knows it infallibly, tooby a witness which is within himself. Of that I shall speak, and may the Spirit of God help us to get at the real truth! Yes, I would to God that all who hear me this day would believe in our Lord Jesus Christ and have the witness of His salvation in themselves!

Let me, first of all, say a word or two about the way in which we are saved, the modus operandi of salvation, as we find it described in the Scriptures. Here it is in a nutshell. We have all broken Gods Law and we are justly condemned on account of it. God, in infinite mercy, desiring to save the sons of men, has given His Son, Jesus, to stand in the place of as many as believe in Him. Jesus became the Substitute of His people and suffered in their stead, and for them the debt of punishment due to God was paid by Jesus Christ upon the Cross of Calvary. All who believe in Him are, thereby, cleared before the bar of Divine Justice.

Now, the Lord, having given His Son, has revealed this great fact in His Word. Here it is in this Inspired Bookthe full statement of itto this effect, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and that whoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ has everlasting life. This is Gods testimony! We, who are here present, or at least the bulk of us, know that it is Gods testimony and all we have to do in order to realize the result of Christs passion is simply to believe the testimony of God concerning it and rest upon it!

The argument runs thusChrist saves those who trust Him. I trust Him and, therefore, I am saved. Jesus Christ suffered for the sins of His people. His people are known by their believing in Him. I believe in Him and, therefore, He died for my sins, and my sins are blotted out. This is the summary of the transaction. Gods testimony concerning His Son is at first believed, simply because God says so and for no other reason. And then there grows up in the soul other evidence not necessary to faith, but very strengthening to itevidence which springs up in the soul as the result of faith, and is the witness referred to in our textHe that believes has the witness in himself.

There is no need for the intervention of any second or third party here. The man has trusted Christ and the Gospel for himself, and proved it to be truewhat service can that gentleman in a long coat render to him? What more evidence can he bring with his Prayer Book or without it? The matter is as clear as the sun! What is the need of his tallow candles? We shall try to answer three questions today by the aid of our textHow do we come to be Believers? Secondly, How do we know that Believers are saved? And thirdly, How do we know that we are Believers?

I. HOW DO WE COME TO BE BELIEVERS? Beloved Friends, you know how faith arises in the heart from the human point of view. We hear the Gospel, we accept it as the message of God and we trust ourselves to it.

So far it is our own workand let it be remembered that in every case faith is and must be the act of man. The Holy Spirit never believes for anybodyeach man must personally believe. We cannot be saved by the faith of another, even though that other were Divine. Each one of us must, himself, believe.

But, having said that, let us remember that the Godward history of our believing is quite another thing, for true faith is always the gift of God and the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit brings us to perform the act of faith by which we are saved and the process is after this manner, though varying in different individualsFirst, we are brought attentively to listen to the old, old story of the Cross. We have heard it a great many times, perhaps, but now we hear with opened ears, anxiously desiring to know the inner sense. While we are so listening, the Word commends itself to usit awes us by its majesty of holiness! It attracts us by its beauty of love and we perceive that it is truly the Word of God.

Thus faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Attentive hearers, earnestly listening, very seldom remain unbelievers long. The superficial hearer who is satisfied to sit through a sermon but does not care to understand it, misses the blessing. The diligent reader of the Bible, reading it with prayer, is very unlikely to remain unsavedbefore long the Spirit of God, who works through the Word, applies some portion or other of Holy Scripture to the soul with powerand the reader is brought to faith.

We believe, then, not because a clerical person, or a crowd of clerics assure us that the Bible is Inspired, but because the Spirit of God, working with the Word, commends it to our consciences and to our understandings and, therefore, we believe. You will generally find that unbelievers do not read the Bible, and do not hear the Gospelhow can they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? If they will not consider the Gospel candidly, how can they expect to believe it?

Further, the Holy Spirit is also pleased to make us conscious of our sinfulness, our danger and our inability. And this is a great way towards faith in Christ, for the great difficulty in believing in Jesus is that men believe in themselves. But when they discover that their lives, which they thought commendable, are censurableand when they find out that their native strength is feebleness itselfthey are, then, prepared to believe in Gods salvation! When a man can no longer rely upon himself, he cries to the Strong for strength. Thus the Spirit of God leads us to faith by driving us out of self-confidence.

Moreover, while attentively hearing, we perceive the suitability of the Gospel to our case. We feel ourselves sinful and rejoice that our great Substitute bore our sin, and suffered on its account, and we say, That substitution is full of hope to me; salvation by an atonement is precisely what I desire. My conscience can rest here. We learn that Jesus came by water, to cleanse our nature as well as to take away our guilt, and we say, That also meets my need. Studying the great doctrine of the Cross, it strikes us as being full of the wisdom and love of God, and as suitable for our case as bread is suitable for hunger, or water for thirst. And our moral instincts, by an inner witness which we cannot further describe, leap to the conclusion that this must be true and, therefore, we believe it.

You see, first we give an attentive hearing to the Gospel, then we receive, by the Spirit of God, a consciousness of our need of it, and then we discover the suitability of it to meet our need! And by that process we are led onward to genuine faith in Christ. There is but one more step, and that is, we accept Jesus as set forth in the Gospel and place all our trust in Him. He is set forth as the Savior of mankind, bringing life and peace to all who trust Him. We hear a voice that says, Whoever will, let him come and take the Water of Life freely. We see the Savior, Himself, standing with outstretched arms and crying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.

And being assured of the freeness as before we were of the suitability of the Atonement, we accept it, and thus we exercise the faith of Gods elect. We have gone through a process which has divorced us from every other confidence and brought us to rest on that which God has set forth to be a Propitiation, even the finished work, the blood and righteousness of Christ. When the soul accepts the Lord Jesus as Savior, she believes in Him as God, for she says, How can He have offered so glorious an Atonement had He not been Divine? How could God set Him forth to make propitiation for the sons of men had He not been equal to the task, a task requiring an Infinite Nature? We worship the Son of God! In Him we rest and on Him we lean! We find in Him all that we need! This is why we believe, then, and the process is a simple and logical one. The mysterious Spirit works us to faith, but the states of mind through which He brings us follow each other in a beautifully simple manner.

Now, in all this I see no room for a priest at all. For the preacher there is a niche, for, how can they hear without a preacher? But the priest with his authority as an interpolator, like the fifth wheel of a steam engine, he is of no possible service and a good deal in the way. He deserves to be called a superfluity of naughtiness. Gods Word convinces my reason, and Gods Spirit wins my heart to faith in Jesuswhat more under Heaven do I need as a reason for faith?

That gentleman with the gown on has no more to do with the business than if he did not exist! His intervention to tell me, by authority, that the Gospel is true and that I am absolved, is as ridiculous as the conduct of that little African potentate who, as soon as he has eaten the few morsels of carrion which adorn his majestic table, bids a herald proclaim east, west, north, and south, that all other kings in the world are now permitted, by his gracious majesty, to have their dinners! Probably they have never heard of the permission and have suffered no evil from being ignorant of it. Who is this fellow, that he should take so much upon himself?

Having been brought to rest in Jesus as my Savior by a perfectly reasonable process, by a chain of argument in which not one link is deficient, I care nothing whatever for any official confirmation from the gentleman in the gown, who has no argument, but bids me believe because he has been ordained! I need no confirmation of what God speaks! Twice two will be four whether the parish priest says so or not, and Gods testimony is true quite independently of all the gowns and surplices in and out of the robemakers shop. If Her Majesty should give me the title deeds of an estate,

signing the transfer with her own hand and seal, I should smile at the lackey who should kindly offer to add his authority to her Majestys act and deed!

Where the word of a king is, there is power, and this is preeminently true where the Word of the King of kings is concerned! I have believed in Jesus Christ as He is set forth on the authority of God, Himself, and who are you, Sir Priest, to come between me and God? You tell the penitent, You are to look upon the priest, as he is trustee from God, and commissioned by Him as His ministerial deputy, to hear and judge and absolve you. Away with such blasphemous lies! We need no deputies, for we have Christ Himself! You and your authority may go packing.

II. Secondly, HOW DO WE KNOW THAT BELIEVERS ARE SAVED? That seems to be a grave question with some. I trust Jesus, I believe in Him with all my heart, but am I saved? My dear Friend, you ought not to raise that question, for it is finally settled by Divine authority. But as you do raise it, let us answer it for you very briefly. We know and are sure that every Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is saved because God says so, and is not that enough? God declares in His Word, even in that sure Word of Testimonywhere you will do well to take heed as unto a light that shines in a dark placethat every Believer in Jesus Christ is saved.

The passages in which this is stated are far too many for us to quote them all. Only let us note that memorable one at the close of Marks Gospel, Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. He that believes not shall be damned. The Believer is saved! You have in those verses Gods Word for it! True, the Believer is bound to profess his faith by baptism, which follows upon his faithbut the second sentence shows that the faith is the all-important matter, for it is addedHe that believes not shall be damned.

Faith is the vital thing which, if omitted, will involve damnation. How the whole of Johns Gospel teems with this Truth of God! Turn to the blessed third of John, and see how wondrously clear it is. In the 16th verse, for instanceFor God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Read the 18th verseHe that believes on Him is not condemned, but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Follow on to the 36th verse: He that believes on the Son has everlasting life. Can anything be more plain and positive? Assuredly, he that believes in Jesus is a saved man! Turn to the 10th chapter of Romans. I shall only give you passages in which the Truth of God is as the sun in the heavens. Paul says, beginning in the fourth verseChrist is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes. For Moses describes the righteousness which is of the Law, that the man which does those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaks on this wise, Say not in your heart, Who shall ascend into Heaven? (that is to bring Christ down from above) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what does it say? The word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart (that is, the word of faith, which we preach) that if you will confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead you shall be saved.

Paul rejects all idea of salvation by works and lays all the stress upon believing in a risen Savior. To the same purpose speaks the Apostle in Romans 1:16For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. This, indeed, is the great reason why the Bible is written, that we may believe on the Lord Jesus and have life through His name! And so John tells us in the 20th chapter of his Gospel at the 31st verse.

Dont you see, then, Brothers and Sisters, if you believe in Jesus you are saved? And you can be sure that it is so because God declares it! If we, from now on, had no other witness, is not the witness of the Lord sufficient? It seems to me to be the essence of unbelief for a man to need a minister to tell him that if he believes he is saved, when God solemnly affirms that it is so! I could not conceive myself so forsaken of God as to assume that I could assure my fellow man of his pardon and affect to pronounce absolution by authority committed to me! Surely this were presumption to be answered for at the Last Great Day! God forgive those who are guilty of it!

Again, we know on the authority of Scripture that Believers are saved because the privileges which are ascribed to them prove that they are in a saved condition. Let us read in John again. John goes to the very root of every matter and in chapter 1:12 he tells us, As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name. See, Brethren, everyone that believes on the name of Jesus is a son of Godand how can a son of God be a lost soul? Will He cast away His own children? God forbid! In the same Gospel, chapter 5:24, Christ, Himself, tells as, Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears My word, and believes on Him that sent Me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

He is gone out, then, of the region of death and condemnation into that of life and acceptance, and surely no one will say that such a man is not saved! Our Lord tells us, too, that everyone that believes in Him has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him, which could not be if he were not saved. Look at John, chapter 7:38-39He that believes on me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water. This He spoke of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive. So that the Holy Spirit dwells in every Believer, and where the Holy Spirit abides, salvation is certainly enjoyed.

Our Lord also promises the resurrection to every Believer. Read John 11:25, that glorious passage in which Jesus said to Martha, I am the resurrection, and the life. He who believes in Me, though he were dead yet shall he live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this? Resurrection to eternal life is not the portion of the unsaved, for they shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on them. You see that Johns Gospel is rich with this precious doctrine. Nor does he, alone,

thus reveal the blessed results of faith. Paul also speaks of these privileges in all his Epistles. If you turn back to the Romans, how full that Epistle is of the same Truth of GodTherefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord by whom, also, we have access by faith into this Grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

You remember the passage we read just now in the Epistle of John This is the victory which overcomes the world, even our faith, so that faith brings us victory from day to day, even as faith at the very outset brings us remission of sin as the Apostle tells us in the Acts 10:43. But I need not multiply proof textsit would require several sermons to sum up the privileges of Believersprivileges quite inconsistent with the idea that a Believer can be an unsaved man. You can find these for yourselves, for they are as plentiful in Scripture as ears of corn in harvest! There are such privileges ascribed to Believers everywhere as could not be ascribed to them if they were not saved souls.

Once again, the whole tone of Scripture regards the Believer as a saved man. Believers is a common synonym for saints, for sanctified persons. And it is a truth to say the Epistles are written to Believers, for they are written to the Churches, and Churches are but assemblies of Believers. The Lord looks upon men as divided into Believers and unbelieversand between these two there is a gulf of difference as great as that between the Israelites and the Egyptians in the day when the pillar gave light to Israel but darkness to the hosts of Egypt.

Do you believe in Jesus? You are in the favor of God. Do you not believe in Him? Then no priest can help you, nor can you help yourself! You are lost and ruined and undone! The only way of escape is that you believe in Jesus Christ! Brethren, when the Word of God tells us so positively that having believed we are saved, can you see any earthly use in going to a person who says he is authorized of God, and asking him whether you are saved or not? I cannot, for one! I think it far easier, by Gods Grace, to believe in Jesus than to believe in these gowned and bedizened clerics! And to believe in Jesus and in them, too, is like seeing by the light of the sun aided by the lamp of the glowworm!

What can the little men do? In the bad old times in the South a free Negro was forced to carry his papers about with him, but in that blessed day when the Jubilee trumpet sounded, and every African throughout the States was free, I can hardly imagine some little squire or country judge saying to the emancipated Negro, Sam, I will make out papers for you, and for your consolation I will put my name, Jeremiah Stiggins, at the bottom. Why, the emancipated man would have said, I have seen the proclamation which has the name of Abraham Lincoln, the President of the United States, at its foot, and I do not care a button for your name or anybody elses!

Having believed in the Lord Jesus, I have salvation upon the authority of the Word of God, and on the Holy Spirits authority I know that there is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, and therefore I would not thank an angel for his oath if he tendered it in confirmation! When the little man in the surplice comes to me and says, I will give you a certificate that you are absolved, I reply, I am very much obliged to you, but there are softer heads than mine, and you had better exercise your arts upon them. You cannot excite in me any feeling but that of pity, bordering on contempt. Before God the whole business is blasphemy, and before Christian men it is foolery and worse!

III. The last point is this, HOW DO WE KNOW THAT WE ARE BELIEVERS? It is clear that if we are Believers we are saved, but how do we know that we are Believers? First of all, as a general rule, it is a matter of consciousness. How do I know that I breathe? How do I know that I think? How do I know that I believe that there was once a Saxon Heptarchy? I know I do, and that is enough. Faith is, to a large extent, a matter of consciousness. A man is not always conscious of what is true, for a man might be in such a weak condition that he might say, I hardly know whether my heart beats, and yet it will be beating all the time. Doubts may arise, and willbut as a general rulefaith is a matter of consciousness. I live, and if you ask me for proof I reply, I know I do. I believe, and if you ask me how I know it, I reply, I am sure I do.

Still, there is other evidence. How do I know that I am a Believer? Why, by the very remarkable change which I underwent when I believed! For when a man believes in Jesus Christ there is such a change worked in him that he must be aware of it. As in the case of the blind man when his eyes were opened he said, One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see. That poor woman who had the issue of blood so many yearswhen she touched Christs garment and was healed, how did she know it? We read that she felt in herself that she was made whole. She had touched the hem of the Lords garment and was recoveredand in the same way the Believer knows that he has believed.

Suppose a child was born in a coal pit and has seen no light except that of the candles down below, and, that he is suddenly taken up the shaft to see the sun, the green fields and the sweet spring flowers? What a surprise! I cannot wonder if the child should think itself dreaming! But if you were to say to it, Are you out of the coal pit? Can you prove that you are? Why, notwithstanding that the child would hardly know where it was because of its vast surprise, yet would it be sure that it was out of the darknessconvinced by an argument within itself which nobody could refute! So do we know, Brothers and Sisters, that we are born again, for we feel a new life and live in a new world. Things we never dreamed of before we have realized. I remember one, who, when he was converted said, Well, either the world is new or else I am. This change is to us strong evidence that faith is in us and has exercised its power.

Brethren, we have further evidence that we believe, for our affections are altered. The Believer can say that the things he once loved, he now hates, and the things he hated he now loves. That which gave him pleasure, now causes him pain. And things which were irksome and unpleasant have now become delightful to him. Especially is there a great change in us with respect to God. We said in our hearts, No God. Not that we dared say, There is no God, but we wanted to get away from Him. We would have been glad to hear that there was no God! But, now, how altered are our affections! Now our greatest joy is God! The nearer we can

approach Him the better! The very sound of His name is delicious music to us! We know that this change was produced by our believing in Him, of that we are confident, for the matter is clear.

A certain master had a servant whose mind was very much poisoned against him by slanderous tales. Everything the master did the servant misconstrued because he considered him to be a tyrant and an oppressor. Now it came to pass that this servant, one day, learned more concerning his master, and found out that everything he had done was dictated by the most generous motives and that his master, indeed, was one of the excellent of the earth. The moment that servants thoughts of his master changed and he had faith in his goodness, he acted very differently, as you may well conceive! None could be more faithful and diligent than he.

Now we prove that we believe, because we feel towards God so very differently! He is loved in our inmost souls and we delight to serve Him! This would have been utterly impossible if we had not been changed in our feelings toward Him by being led to trust Him. We know, also, that we believe because, though very far from perfect, we love holiness and strive after purity. You that have believed in Jesus, do you not now pant after holiness? Do you not endeavor to do that which is right? And when you are conscious that you have failed, does not conscience prick you? Have you not gone on your knees in bitterness of soul and said, My God, help me and deliver me, for I delight in Your commandments. Help me to keep Your statutes?

Right, truth and peace are the things we now seek after, whereas time was when these were of small account, and our own selfish pleasure and our own perverted judgement were the rule of our being. By this change of conduct we know that we have believed in Jesus Christ! And, my dear Brothers and Sisters, we know that we have believed in Jesus Christ because now we have communion with God. We are in the habit of speaking with God in prayer and hearing the Lord speak with us when we read His Word. Some of us have spoken with our Lord Jesus so often that we have grown to be near and dear Friendsand whatever we ask in prayer He grants us.

Answered prayers are sweet testimonies to faith! When the Lord is pleased to deliver us out of trouble. When His Holy Spirit cheers us in depression. When He helps us under difficulties. When He makes us patient under painall these things become proofs that we have real faith in Him! Our faith has realized Him and brought Him near! It has taught us how to live upon Him and so strengthened us in His ways. Once more, only, upon this point, and then we will come to the practical application.

We know that we have believed in the Lord Jesus because we have, over and above all this, a secret something, indescribable to others, but well-known by ourselves, which is called in Scripture, the witness of the Holy Spiritfor it is written, The Spirit, Himself, also bears witness with our spirit that we are born of God. First our spirit bears witness to our new birth, and then the Spirit of God comes in and bears witness with our spirit to the same effect! Do you know what it means? If you do not, I cannot tell you. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. There comes stealing over the soul, sometimes, a peace, a joy, a perfect rest, a heavenly deliciousness, a supreme content in which, though no voice is heard, yet we are conscious that it is there rushing through our souls, like a strain of Heavens own music, the witness of the Spirit of God! We are sure of it, as sure as we are of our own being! And by that witness we know that we are, indeed, Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now mark, we may not ask for any witness beyond the testimony of God, nor will any other witness be given. I charge all of you here present not to say, I will believe in God when I obtain the inward witness. No, you are bound to believe in God first, on the sure testimony of His Word. If you believe His Word you shall know the sweets of Divine Grace. To ask for more evidence, first, is as though a man should say, Here is a medicine prepared by a physician of great repute, and it is said to be very powerful for driving out the disease from which I suffer. I will take it as soon as I see that I am improving by its means.

The man has lost his reason, has he not? He cannot expect even a partial cure till he has taken the medicine! He cannot expect the result to come before the cause. You must take the good physicians medicine as a matter of faith and, afterwards, your faith will be increased by the beneficial result. You must believe on the Lord Jesus, because of the witness of God concerning Him, for that is all the witness you ought to wish for and all that God will give you. After you have believed, other witnesses will spring up in your soul, as the results of faith. And so your confidence will be strengthened. But just now, Beloved, believe in Jesus Christ, and having believed in Him you shall know that you are forgiven for His names sake.

In closing, let me ask every person here, do you believe in Jesus Christ or not? If you believe, you are saved! If you believe not you are condemned already, because you have not believed. Remember that. Let me next ask, are any of you seeking after any witness beyond the witness of God? If you are, do you not know that you are virtually making God a liar? For if God says such-and-such a thing is true, and you seek further evidence beyond His Word, you do, in effect, say that Gods witness is not sufficient and that God is a liar. I pray you behave not so insolently. Accept His naked Word, for it is surer than the sight of the eyes or the hearing of the ears.

Behold how the arch of Heaven stands without a single pillar, vast as it iswhat sustains it but the Word of God? See how this round world hangs on nothing and yet strays not from her spherewhat maintains her in her course but the bare Word of God? That Word which rolls the stars along and has never failed to fulfill its purpose, is that on which you are asked to lean! Sinner, will you believe your God? If you will, you shall be established, blessed and enriched! But if you still say He is a liar, then you shall be as the heat in the desert which shall not see when good comes, but suffers perpetual drought.

If you rest in Jesus, trusting Him, you have done well, but yet you have only done Him justice. There is no merit in believing what is true! Who but a man of base heart would refuse to do so? To believe One who cannot lie is by no means a meritorious action and, therefore, salvation is by faith that it may be by Grace! Yet faith will bring to you life, love, joy, peace, immortality and all that Heaven can mean! May God grant you Grace to

believe! But I pray you do not let the little man in robes stand between you and Christ. Let no one do so! I charge you, never regard anything I say as having any authority in it apart from the Word of God.

I reckon it of all crimes, the greatest, for a man to assume to mediate between men and God! Little as I respect the devil I prefer him to a priest who pretends to forgive sins! For even the devil has too much honesty about him to pretend to give absolution in Gods name. There is but one pardoning Priest and He is the Son of the Highest. His one Sacrifice has ended all other sacrifices! His one Atonement has rendered all future oblations counterfeit. Today, as Elijah stood on Carmel and cried out against the priests of Baal, so would I! I count no words too severe! If my very speech should be a thunderbolt and every word a lightning flash, it would not be too strong to protest against the accursed system which once degraded the whole earth to kiss the Popes foot and is degrading our nation still, and that through a so-called Protestant Church!

Oh, God Almighty, God of Latimer and Ridley, God of the martyrs whose ashes are still among us, will You allow this people to go back, again, to false gods, and saints, and virgins, and crucifixes, relics, and cast iron and rotten rags? For to this, also, will they come if Your Grace does not prevent it! Oh, my hearers, Jesus is the only Savior of the sons of men. Believe in Him and live! This is the only Gospel! At your peril reject it! I pray you receive it for Christs sake.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONI. John 5.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK554, 239, 232.  
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THE TRUE POSITION OF THE WITNESS WITHIN   
NO. 1428

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 11, 1878, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself. 1 John 5:10.

SOME time ago I tried to set forth the manner of the witness and sealing of the Spirit and I have no doubt that the subject will still remain upon the memory of many of you. But I am led to refer to it again and to go over the same ground because I meet with so many instances in which mistakes are made in reference to itmistakes which cause great sorrow and much sin. The letter which I will now read I received yesterday and it is one of many of the same subject. Dear Mr. SpurgeonMay I ask your prayers and the prayers of your congregation, to God, that He will, by the Holy Spirit, reveal Himself to me. I have for a long time past, I may say, years, been trying to serve Him and have a strong desire openly to join with His people, but I have not the witness in myself that I am saved and until then I dare not take the step.

Now, this letter breathes an anxious desire to be right and sincere in all things and this is to be highly commended. We ought to be jealous over our spirit, fearful of hypocrisy and resolved to do all things in truth and sincerity. We ought to abhor the idea of making a profession of that which is not true and, so far, this letter shows a spirit worthy of imitation. Everyone should be anxious that he should in nothing be a hypocrite and should not allow the profession of his lips to go one single inch beyond the feeling of his heart. It is, again, a most proper thing that every man should desire to have the very best possible evidence as to his souls salvation and if there is an evidence to be had of a very special, decisive and certain kind, it is but right that every man should cry to God for it and should feel unsatisfied until he obtains it.

But, when all this has been said, we are bound in honesty to add that it is very possible for this anxiety to become an obstacle to faith and for the desire after special evidence to become a hindrance to our receiving the evidence which the Lord has given us in His Word. In our ignorance we may be overlooking the true source of peace and assurance! While straining our eyes by looking for that which God will never reveal to us, we may be missing rare consolations which lie near at hand! While craving for something unusual we may be neglecting that which Infinite Wisdom has put within our reach, like the foolish child which utters hungry cries for the moon, but forgets to eat the bread upon its own plate!

There are many who, in their sincerely earnest desires to gain some token for good, are forgetting that earnest of the Spirit which is already within their own bosoms and thus, through darkness of spirit, they miss

present comforts and are too feeble for present duties. They sit in fetters forged by their own fancy, when they might as well arise and walk at large. May the Holy Spirit, therefore, instruct us so to handle this matter that many who are seeking for this inner witness may know that they already have it, or may at least obtain it this day through Jesus Christ our Lord. Here, then, is our textHe that believes on the Son of God has the witness in Himself.

I. Our first observation is that BELIEVING ON THE SON OF GOD COMES BEFORE THE INNER WITNESS. He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in Himselfhe believes before he has that witness and it is only as a Believer that he obtains it. This is self-evident in the text. No one can read these words without seeing that a man must be a Believer before he has the witness in himself. It does not say, He who has the witness in himself becomes a Believer, but the order is reversedHe that believes has the witness in himself. He believes first and then he obtains the inner witness.

The basis of faith is the testimony of God concerning His Sonthe testimony of God as we find it in holy Scripture. I do not believe Christ Jesus to be the Son of God because of anything I feel within myself, but because God Himself declares Him to be such! Neither do I trust my soul with Jesus because of certain emotions felt within, but because God, in the Book which I accept as His testimony, declares that He has set forth Jesus to be the Propitiation for sin. In the Bible I see that God Himself witnesses that whoever trusts Jesus is thereby forgiven, accepted and saved! And, therefore, I trust Him. We have no other foundation for our faith to rest upon than the witness of God. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. The testimony of God is surely enough for us! Dare we ask for more?

We must not go about to buttress the solid pillar of Divine Testimony. Thus says the Lord is proof enough and it is blasphemous impertinence for us to demand further evidence! Dare we look around for something which we have observed or something which we have felt to be a support to the solemn declaration of the Most High? If so, we are not believing in God at all, but are waiting for a surer witness than God, who cannot lie! In such a case we are still lost, for we cannot be saved while we are calling God a liar by refusing to believe Him till He can bring corroborative evidence! If we were to obtain that additional evidence, it is clear that our faith would not then stand in

God, but in the additional testimony and so we should remain as to God still unbelievers!

The only basis for saving faith is the testimony of God Himself concerning His Son Jesus Christ! And this is the testimony that God has given to us eternal life and this life is in His Son. Note that the words which follow our text assure us very solemnly that the rejection of this basis, namely, Gods own testimony, involves the utmost possible guilt. He that believes not God, has made Him a liar, because He believes not the record which God gave of His Son. Now, it is quite clear that this does not refer to any inward witness, because the man who does not believe Christ has no inward witness and cannot have any! He cannot be guilty of rejecting what he never hadbut God has given an outward witness to all mankinda witness contained in Holy Scripture, clear and express and therein He declares that Jesus Christ is His Son and the appointed Savior of men! And He bids men trust in Him, promising that they shall thus be saved.

It is the rejection of the Revelation of God which involves the unbeliever in transcendent guilt, because his unbelief is tantamount to saying that God speaks liesthat He has deliberately given us a Bible which is a fiction; that He has set before us hopes which will end in disappointment; that He has threatened us with a doom which is a mere bugbearthat He has sent us a Savior who cannot save, who has presented a Sacrifice in which there is no real efficacy! The rejection of Christ as our Savior is the most pointed way of calling the Lord a liar! Surely we ought to start hack from such guilt as this, for it stabs at Gods honor and, inasmuch as it impugns His truthfulness, it robs Him of one of the brightest jewels of His crown!

O beloved Hearers, be not guilty of this, I pray you, but believe your God! What if all men contradict Himbe it yours to believe HimLet God be true and every man a liar. Believe God, though every feeling of your nature should seem to controvert His testimony, for feelings deceive and consciousness may be a dreambut God cannot lieHis Word is Truth itself! This, then, is the basis of faith, and the basis of faith which cannot be rejected without the utmost sin. Let me put it another way. I hear and I read that God has sent His Son Jesus Christ to save sinnersand thus I learn that I must trust Christ and I shall then obtain the benefit of His salvation. I believe this. I trust Christ and I am saved. This salvation gives me peace and rest and I become confirmed in my belief.

Now there are many who want this peace and rest before they will believe. They expect harvest before sowing and will not sow unless their preposterous desire can be granted! My dear Friend, you cannot expect to have the natural order reversed in this fashion! Why should you need it? Has not God spoken the Truth and if it is the Truth of God, why do you not believe it? The essence of faith lies in believing that God speaks the Truth and in acting upon His Word because it is the Truth! Is this more than God has a right to expect of you? Why should there be any refusal to render what is so manifestly His due? Why should we ask for further evidence whether it is in ourselves or in others? Should we not at once say, God has said it. It is true. I will act upon it. And since He says Christ died for sinners and saves all that trust in Him, I will trust Him and I shall be saved?

Now, this basis of faith is abundantly sufficient. I feel half ashamed to have to insist upon this most evident Truth of God, for, if we were not desperately set on mischief and alienated from God, we should feel this at once! Has God said it? Then to ask any confirmation of it is a direct insult to Hima gratuitous impertinence against the Majesty of Heaven! Has God said it? Then we are more bound to believe than if all the scientific men in the world for centuries had witnessed to it! Has God said it? We are more sure of it than if all the traditions of all nations had handed it down to us! Has God said it? Then we are surer of it than if our reason

proved it by mathematical demonstration! Has God said it? Then we are more certain of it than if we saw it with our eyesfor they might be deceivedor than if we heard it with our ears, for they might be imposed upon. Our senses are deceivable, but God is not deceivable! He must be true and we may wisely cast the weight of our souls upon His faithfulness. And when we do, we may take all the consequences, fully assured that what the Lord has promised He is able to perform.

Now, though this basis is sufficient, the Lord, knowing our unbelief, has been pleased not to add to it, but to set it before us in a graciously amplified manner. He says, There are three which bear witness on earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one. That Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He can and does save sinners and that He will save all who believe in Him is proven, first, by the giving of the Holy Spirit. He descended first at Pentecost, visibly and perceptibly, in rushing wind and cloven tongues of fire and He manifested His power by the marvelous gift of speaking in languages which the disciples had never learned. The Holy Spirit was mightily with the Apostles, bearing witness that Jesus was the Son of God and that the Gospel which they preached was Divine.

The Holy Spirit has not returned to Heaven and though His miraculous power is no longer seen among us in the physical world, He is still working spiritual miracles in the Church. He still regenerates; He still enlightens; He still consoles; He is still the help of our infirmity in prayer. He is still our Comforter and Guide. In many blessed and useful ways, for which He is to be adored, the Holy Spirit is still in the midst of the Church to witness to the truth of the Gospel. Instead of miracles we have the Presence of the Holy Spiritmen quickened from death in sin, hearts renewed, eyes enlightened, souls regeneratedthese are the standing witnesses of God in the Church to the Truth of the Gospel.

Then, there is the witness of the water. By the water, I understand to be meant that Living Water of which, if a man drinks, he shall live forever. And it indicates the spiritual life which abides in the Churchthe life and the cleansing which God gives to Believers. Now, there are thousands of us who can bear witness that we possess a life to which we once were strangersbut by believing in Jesus Christ that life has been given to usas it shall also be given to all who hear me this day, upon their believing in Jesus! That Water of Life abiding in the Church and always flowing out of the very midst of her living members is another form of the witness of God, a part of the one solid basis upon which true faith must rest.

Then there is the blooda third witnessthat blood of Atonement which speaks better things than that of Abel, which brings peace to the guilty conscience and ends the strife within. There is no voice like it to believing ears! This is another and most powerful form of the witness of God. He does pardon sin and give peace to the consciencethe fact is known to thousands and is the abiding witness of God to His dear Son. The abiding power of the Spirit, the water and the blood are Gods continuance of His one testimony that Jesus Christ is the appointed Savior and that whoever trusts in Him shall be saved. Beyond this evidence, the hearer of the Gospel may expect nothing. What more can he need? What more can he desire? If you refuse Christ upon the witness of God, you must refuse Him outright, for no other witness shall ever be given unto those who believe not upon the solemn testimony of God!

And, Beloved, let me say that this basis which has been so graciously amplified in the triple witness of the Spirit, the water and the blood, has this to commend itit is everlasting and immutable! Did you believe in Jesus Christ 50 years ago? Did you then trust Him because God declared Him to be worthy of your confidence? That witness of God remains in all its potency today! A thousand years ago a poor sinner came to Jesus because God had assured him in the Scriptures that there he should find mercy. And today another sinner may come with just the same confidence, for the guarantee of faith is unaltered! What a blessing this is!

Our feelings changesometimes the inward witness burns brightly and sometimes it becomes very dimsometimes we feel tender in heart and at another time we are hard as a millstone! At one moment we are zealous and at another moment indifferent. It would never do to have such a shifting basis of our faith. Such a moving, shivering quicksand as this would never satisfy us very long! But what a rock we have in Gods Word! He has said it and it must be true, He that has the Son has life. When I look within I cannot always tell by my feelings whether I have obtained spiritual life or not. But since I know that I believe in Jesus, I know that I have eternal life because God has said so! I, trusting His Son Jesus Christ, know myself to be saved over the head of all my feelings, let them be what they may, for God has said, He that believes has everlasting life.

And you, poor Soul, are not invited to come to Christ this morning because there is something in you that is a guarantee for your coming some inward witness bearing testimony to your fitness! No, you are to come because there is witness enough in this Book! Because there is witness enough in the fact that the Spirit of God is in the Church! Because there is witness enough that the Living Water is still imparted unto men and that the blood of Jesus has not lost its power, but cleanses from all sin! If you will not believe upon this all-sufficient witness, you cannot expect to receive any other, for this is the witness of God upon which men savingly believe in Christ Jesus!

Now, dear Friends, the faith which will not and cannot rest on this basis is evidently no faith in God at all, but a proud resolve to demand other evidence than His Word. Well, says one, but suppose I were to see a

vision? I should then believe. That is to say, you would believe your vision, but that vision would, in all probability, be the result of a fevered brain and you would be deceived! Uh, but if I could hear a voice, then I could believe. That is to say, you refuse the sure Word of testimony in the Bible and will only believe God if He will condescend to indulge your whims! Voices which you might think you heard are not to be depended uponfor imagination easily creates them! When day-dreaming I have heard many voices, or thought I did, but they may have been echoes, or birds far up in the air, or mere fancies. There is nothing to be depended upon in hearing

a voice in the air!

Will you put that in competition with the revealed will of God? Oh, but if I had a special Revelation. Such a special Revelation you have no right to look for! I speak most plainly hereno additional Revelation is to be expected because the Book of God is endedthe Revelation of God is finished and he that adds to the sacred Book is cursed! If you, therefore, say that God has made a new Revelation to you, you run a dreadful risk of the curses which are written in this book! God, by His Spirit, brings old Truths of God home to the heart, gives new light to our eyes and causes the Word to exercise new power over usbut He reveals no new facts and He utters no words in any mans ears concerning his condition and state. We must be content with the old Revelation and with the life and power and force with which the Holy Spirit brings it to the heart.

Neither must any of us seek to have any additional Revelation, for that would imply that the Scriptures are incomplete. What? Has God spoken all this volume that you may believe on His Son and is not that enough for you? Must He go out of His way to make some private communication to you? Is all that which He has already spoken to be treated as a lie unless He, at your dictation, condescends to say something for you, personally? Are you too good or too great to be saved like other sinners? That is what it practically comes to! Oh, you say, but if I felt such-and-such, I would believe. Suppose you did? Then your confidence would be in your feelings and not in Godand what would that be but presumption seeing that there cannot be anything in your feelings which can make God true! God is true, feel whatever you may! Believe Him, then, for it is to that faith in His Son that He gives salvation and not to faith in your feelings!

Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. But if Abraham had stood higgling and haggling till he had seen this and that, he would not have believed nor found righteousness by faith! Let me tell those of you who will not believe in God till you get a certain experience, or sign, or wonder to be added to Gods Word, that those of His people who have been the longest walking by faith have to come back very often to the first foundation of faith in the outer witness of God in His Word! It has been the privilege of some of us to possess the inner witness for years and yet, at certain times, it departs and we have to fall back on the foundationthe Truth of God.

When the winds are out and the storms are loosed and temptation howls through the soul, we always fly to the Word of God and not to our own experience! We get away from what we feel to what the Lord has said. One ounce, of, It is written, gives more confidence than a ton of what we have felt. We are apt, in troublous times, to judge that our happy feeling was a delusion and our confidence a mistake. True, I did think that I stood and looked within the pearly gates and was full of heavenly joy. But, alas, it may have been all a dream! This is, however, no dreamthat Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinnersthere is no mistake about that fact! That God has sent forth His Son to be a Propitiation for sin there is no imagination about that!

There it stands in black and white in the Scriptures of Truth and to that witness we again fly! Whether I am saint or sinner. Whether I am an heir of Heaven or an heir of wrath, there stands the Word of GodHe that believes in Him is not condemned. I do believe in Him and I am not condemned, nor shall all the devils in Hell make me think I am, since God has said I am not! On that my faith shall stand unshaken, come what may! Let this suffice upon our first head, that believing on the Son comes before the inner witness.

II. Secondly, THE INNER WITNESS NATURALLY FOLLOWS UPON FAITH. He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself. It is quite impossible that the inner witness should precede faith and this you will clearly see if you think a minute. Here is a medicine well-known to be exceedingly efficacious in a certain disease. A sick man says that he will not believe in its power until he has some inner witness of it! It is clear to you that he cannot possibly have any evidence of its power until he has at least enough faith to take the medicine and give it a chance of operating upon him. So is it with this blessed catholicon of the precious blood of Jesusyou cannot have any inner witness to its power till, first of all, you receive it by faith!

To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed on His namebut the reception must come first! And you cannot have this witness apart from faith, because the Holy Spirit never sets His seal to a blank sheet of paper. There must, first of all, be the writing of faith upon the heart and then the Spirit of God puts His attesting seal to it! Would you have God the Holy Spirit witness to a falsehood? And yet He would be witnessing to a lie if He gave an inner witness of salvation to a man who is still an unbeliever and who, consequently, is already condemned! If you refuse to believe Gods Word, how can you think that the Spirit will bear witness of anything in you except it is to your condemnation? There must be faith beforeand then the witness will follow after.

But let it be especially remembered that a man may have the witness within him and sometimes he may not perceive it. You say, That is strange? Yet reflectyou might be the possessor of a large estate and an adversary might contest your right to it. What if you cannot find your title deeds? The estate might be clearly enough yours, but those deeds of yours might be mislaid and locked up in a forgotten drawerand you might be sorely put to it, perhaps, until the day of trial settles the dispute as to whether it is yours or not.

I believe that many a child of God has plenty of witness in his own soul, but he has not the wisdom to perceive it. Plenty of witness, but through ignorance or carelessness he does not collect it and refresh himself with it. If he believes, he has the witness within himself and he will be comforted if he has but light enough to know what the witness is. But often, through negligence in searching the Word of God, he has the witness but cannot discover it. He wishes to read it, but his ignorance has mislaid it!

Now, what is this witness within? It may be seen as followstake the verses that precede my text and you get one form of it. Jesus Christ is the

Son of God and the Savior of sinnersthat is the main point to be witnessed. First the Spirit, after we have believed, bears witness in our soul that it is so, because we perceive that the Spirit has led us to believe in Jesus and has given us repentance. The Spirit has renewed us. The Spirit has made us different from what we were. The Spirit helps us in prayer. The Spirit lifts us up upon the wings of praise. The Spirit works upon us wondrously and so we gather that this comes to us through believing in Jesus. He is, indeed, the Savior of sinners, for we are saved!

Then the water bears witness within usthat is to say, we feel a new life, we feel the Living Water in our hearts and we are conscious of being alive to things to which we were once dead! We find that now there is within us a new nature which we never possessed before. All this becomes comfortable evidence that what we have believed is true. We have proved it to be true, for we have the life which was promised to us upon our believing in Jesus. Thirdly, the precious blood within our souls bears further witness, for when it gives us peace, we sing as sinners bought with blood and rejoice before God as cleansed by the blood from all sin. And, as having access into that which is within the veil by the sprinkled blood, we feel deep peace within our souls through the voice of the blood. This is a witness, sweet and clear, within us, proving that what we received from Gods Word without any other evidence is certainly true.

Now we have confirmatory witness within our spirits, given not because we demanded it, but as a sweet reward and gracious privilege. We should never have received it if we had not first believed on the naked Word of Godonly after that does the witness flow naturally into the heart. Another part of the witness lies in this, that when we have believed we receive lifeand according to the 11th verse, this is the record that God has given us eternal lifeand this life is in His Son. We have believed and we feel that we have obtained the lifewe are doubly assured that the witness of God is true. We believed it, before, because God had said it. And now we are permitted to feel it since the life is welling up within our souls like a fountain! We now know that Jesus Christ must be the Son of God, for to whom else is it given to bestow life? Who else could have bestowed upon us this high, this spiritual, this heavenly life?

In detail, the inward evidence lies very much this way. First, a wondrous sense of change comes over the Believer. Having believed in Jesus Christ upon the simple evidence of God, there is a work of regeneration performed upon him and he feels himself altogether transformed. A young girl once said, Either the whole world is changed, or else I am. Everything seems so altered, for it is seen with new eyes! The man undergoes a radical change of feelings! All things are reversed to himhis sweets are now sour and his sours are now sweet! And finding himself so thoroughly new-created, he says, This is the finger of God, and he infers that the power which has worked all this comes from the Son of God.

Then, again, there is a wondrous power which goes with the Word of God, not always, but often. Are you not conscious, my Brethren, of often feeling, when you are reading the Word, or hearing it, as you never felt when listening to any other form of speech? Get to the foot of the Cross, for instance, and look up and view the flowing of your Saviors precious blooddo you not feel, then, as nothing else can make you feel? You are reading a religious book and it has a holy effect upon you. But if you reflect, you will see that it is only powerful because it is borrowed from the Word of God. The voice of God thrills your soul in a more than magical manner as no other voice ever can! Why, I guarantee you, a Christian blindfolded would know which was a text of Scripture and which was not by its effect upon his heart!

The very words are so majestic that none can imitate their dignityand when they are applied with power they lay us low or lift us up as only Divine Words could do! Where the word of a king is, there is power, and this becomes an inner witness to the sovereign Truth of the Gospel! The same witness is borne by a sense of being put into our right place. You were all out of place before, but having believed in Jesus Christ you are put in your right position. You stand in harmony with the Divine system and this you feel could only be effected by the Truth of Godfor a lie works to disorder and not to right. If anybody had said to the prodigal sonI doubt whether you have a father. I doubt your fathers love. I doubt whether he has any house where there is bread enough and to spare,

He might have been puzzled to answer those wretched doubts while he was standing at the swine trough, but you could not trouble him with it when he has reached his fathers house and was sitting down at the table of love listening to the sound of the music and dancing, and feasting upon the fatted calf! If any skeptic had then said to him, There is no fathers love, why, his cheeks still sweetly tingling with the kisses would have supplied him with his best reply! I do not suppose he would have deigned to answer the doubter except by a quiet smile! And he would have gone on feasting upon the fatted calf or, if he did answer, he would have said, Go, take your doubts to one who will receive them. I am right again with my dear father, for he has forgiven me and I feel his love and know for myself that he abounds in tenderness.

That deep feeling of peace which comes to us through believing in Jesus makes us feel quite sure that He can save and that we are secure in Him! We took God at His Word when we had no feeling, but having believed in Jesus Christ we are now conscious of a wonderful restThe peace of God which passes all understanding. We see that we are forgiven, justly forgiven, saved by mercy, but still not to the violation of the Justice of God and, therefore, we are perfectly at ease. Yes, and sometimes we rise beyond peace! I am not going to tell many of the high secrets of the inner life, this morning, but yet I will confess that at times

*Our joys divinely grow,   
Unspeakable, like those above,   
And Heaven begins below.*

This, again, is a part of the inner witness that the Gospel is true.

And what if I were to speak of growing holiness of character, of increased conformity to Christs image? Do not these form a good inner witness? What if I were to speak of growing strength so that the things we dare not once attempt we now accomplish with ease, or of growing patience under tribulation? Either of these would be noble proofs! What if I spoke of fellowship with God, or of peace in the prospect of death, or of a thousand other blessings which make up Christian experience? Might I not claim that all these go to make up a very powerful inner witness which abundantly seals the Truth of God which we at first accepted as matter of pure faith in the testimony of God?

III. As time hastens I will only pause for a moment to say that THIS INNER WITNESS IS EXCEEDINGLY EXCELLENT. First, because it is very plain and easy to be understood. Numbers of you have never read Butlers Analogy. And if you were set to study it you would go to sleep over it. Never mind, you may have an unanswerable analogy in your own souls! You might not understand Butler or Paley, but you will understand the witness of your own spirit! You may talk to a pauper about mastication and digestion and assimilation and he will open his eyes and wonder what you meanbut he will understand your practical meaning well enough if you give him a good dinner!

So it is with the things of Godtheological terms are difficult, but if you believe in Jesus Christ and He saves your soul, you will understand that He is the Divine Savior and nobody will be able to convince you otherwise! That is another point of its excellencethat it is unanswerable! A man is told that a certain medicine is mere quackery. See here, says he, it healed me. What do you say to such an argument? You had better leave the man alone. So when a Christian is told that the Gospel is all nonsense and he replies, It saved me. I was a drunk and it made me sober and more. I was a man of strong passions and it tamed me and more. What can you say to such facts? Why, nothing! It must be with you as with the rulers of oldWhen they saw the man that was healed standing with Peter and John, they could say nothing against them.

Such argument as this is very abiding in its results. A man who has been transformed and feels himself daily renewed by the Gospel, cannot be baffled because every day his argument is renewed and he finds fresh reasons within himself for knowing that what he believed is true! Such argument is always impossible to defeat. Sometimes if you are challenged to a controversy you have to reply, Wait till I run upstairs and consult a few books. But when the evidence is personalI have felt it, I know it, I have tasted it, handled itwhy you have your argument at your fingertips at all times! Such witness as this gives a man great boldness. He does not begin to conceal his opinions, or converse with his neighbor with an apologetical air, but he is positive and certain!

I confess that when I have to argue about the truth of Divine things it is a dreary task. I am so sure of these things, myself, by living and actual test, that I am amazed that other people are not sure, too! And while they are wanting me to argue about this point or that, it seems to me like asking a man to prove that there is a sun in yonder sky. I bask in his beams, I swoon under his heat, I see by his lightand yet they ask me to prove his existence?! Are they mad? What do they want me to prove? That God hears prayer? I pray and receive answers every day! That God pardons sin? I was in my own esteem the blackest of sinners and sunk in the depths of despair, yet I believed, by Gods Grace, and by that faith I leaped into a fullness of light and liberty at once!

Why do they not try it themselves? You want me to prove that bread is fit for food? Why, Man, I have been living upon it for years! I do not know how to begin my proof. Take a bit of bread, Man, and eat and know for yourself. Taste and see that the Lord is good. We believe and are sure and, therefore we speak, but we do not wonder if men reject our witness, for they refuse the witness of God!

IV. I close by saying that excellent as this inner witness is, IT MUST NEVER BE PUT IN THE PLACE OF THE DIVINE WITNESS IN THE WORD. Why not? Because it would insult the Lord and be contrary to His rule of salvation by faith. Because, moreover, it is not always with us in equal clearness, or rather, we cannot equally discern it. If the brightest Christian begins to base his faith upon his experiences and his attainments, he will be in bondage before long. Beloved, build on what God has said and not upon your inward joys. Accept these precious things, not as foundation stones, but as pinnacles of your spiritual temple! Let the main thing beI believe because God has spoken. If any other evidence comes to your net, accept it, but go on fishing by FAITH! Faith in God, in Gods naked Word!

Then, if the Lords hand should turn and you, in Providence, should be stripped bare like Job, so that you sit on a dunghill covered with boils, you will be able to say, I believed that God loved me when He gave me children. I believed God loved me when I had sheep and oxen. I believed that God loved me when I had camels and asses, but still, these were not the grand reasons of my faith, but God Himself and, therefore, I still believe that He loves me now that every child is dead, all my property is swept away and I am sick. Yes, though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. That is faith! God grant you to have that faith which can sing, Though the fig tree shall not blossom and there shall be no herd in the stall, yet will I rejoice in the Lord.

Though there is no evidences of Grace in me; though there are no joys; though there is a broken peace; though there is sin to mourn over and though there is hardness of heart to stagger meyet I still took the Lord Jesus as a sinners Savior at the first and I take Him as a sinners Savior now! I did not trust Him at the first because I was a saint and now I will not doubt Him because I find out more and more that I am a sinnerbut I will still go to Him just as I am and rest on the great salvation which God has provided for me! Sinner, I charge you, do not wish to put your notion of an inner witness into the place of Gods own witness which He bears to you and to every creature under Heaven in His sacred Word!

You may not say, I will trust Jesus when I have the inner witness, because you never can have the inner witness till you have first trusted in the redeeming Lord! Until you are willing to believe Gods bare Word and come to Christ in all your guilt and accept His cleansing blood and perfect righteousness, you never can have any evidence within, unless it is evidence of your own folly and sinfulness! Therefore, what is the use of your looking for it? Why seek the living among the dead? You cannot have this

inner witness before believing and you ought not to desire itfor the desire is unreasonable!

I have shown you that it would be irrational to expect the Spirit of God to set His seal to a blankhow can He do so? If you will not believe God, why should you expect to be saved? And if not saved, how can you have the inner witness? If a king were about to pardon men simply upon the condition that they would trust his mercyand they were to answer, We will not believe in your clemency unless you indulge our whimswould you wonder if he did not pardon them? Moreover, let me ask you, how can you ever be right with God if you will not believe Him? Certainly I could not count you to be my friend if you refused to believe my solemn statements. If you counted me a liar, how could I call you my friend? What peace can there be till confidence is restored? Are not those Gods enemies who refuse to believe His witness about His own Son?

Now, my Hearers, will you believe God or not? Dear Souls, will you believe God or not? Oh, you say, but!Now, that is not the question! What but can there be about this matter? Either the Lord is true or false! I know you can make a hundred buts, but will you believe God, or will you call Him a liar? O Spirit of the living God, show men the sin of unbelief and bring them to see how just and right a thing it is simply to trust God and believe His witness concerning Jesus Christ!

Now, I put you to thisIf God is not worthy to be trusted, say so and go your way! But if He is. If He has spoken the truth, why do you not believe Him? If, after this, you refuse to believe in Jesus, your doom will be upon your own heads! But if you will trust Christ, you may rejoice, for you are saved! This is the Gospel that we are commanded to preach to every creatureHe that believes and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believes not shall be damned. God give His own blessing for Christs sake. Amen.

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DEAD OR ALIVE WHICH?

NO. 755

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, JUNE 16, 1867, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

He that has the Son has life; and he that has   
not the Son of God has not life.   
1 John 5:12.

LAST Sunday morning we addressed you upon the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit in the Believer, and upon the glorious fact of His dwelling in the hearts of the regenerate. Now it frequently happens that when we discourse upon the work of the Holy Spirit, there are certain weak and uninstructed Brethren who straightway fall into questions and despondencies because they, in some point or other, are unable to discern the work of Grace within themselves. That work may be prospering within them, but through the turmoil of their spirits and the dimness of their mental vision, they do not at once perceive it, and therefore they are distracted and alarmed.

There is a consoling doctrine which is intended to yield comfort to souls thus afflicted. It is the great truth that, Whoever believes on the Lord Jesus Christ has everlasting life. If they would remember this Gospel declaration, they might also, with advantage, consider the other spiritual fact, and by weighing the two Truths of God in their minds, they might receive much permanent blessing. While at the present, by having an eye to one only, they throw themselves off balance and make to themselves many sorrows.

It is not, however, the easiest thing in the world to preach clearly, with judicious blending, the operations of the Spirit and the doctrine of complete salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. However clear our utterance, we shall seem sometimes to make one Truth entrench upon the other. It is the mark of the Christian minister who is taught of God that he rightly divides the Word of Truth. But this rightly dividing is so far from being an easy thing that it must be taught us by no less a teacher than God the Holy Spirit.

When our Lord addressed Nicodemus, He experienced the same difficulty which, at this day, every watchful minister observes in his hearers. He found that a description of the inner work must be accompanied by the publication of the Gospel of faith, or it would only cause bewilderment and depression. Our Lord began, in the third chapter of Johns Gospel, by telling Nicodemus that he must be born again, and explaining to him the mysterious character of the new birth. Whereupon Nicodemus was filled with wonder, and unbelievingly exclaimed, How can these things be?

He does not seem to have made the smallest advance towards faith by hearing of the new birth, and therefore, on the selfsame occasion our Lord turned aside from the doctrine of regeneration, the inner work, to speak to him of the doctrine of faith, or the work of Christ which is the object of saving faith. Thus it comes to pass that the very same chapter which has in it that searching passage, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God, contains also these encouraging words, As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

From which I gather, my Brethren, that those unwise revivalists who perpetually cry up, Believe and live! and by their silence and sometimes by their unguarded remarks, disparage repentance and other works of the Holy Spirit, have not our Saviors example for so doing. And on the other hand, those conservative Divines who continually cry up inward experience, and preach the work of the Spirit, but forget to publish the Gospel message, He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, these also have neither example nor precedent from our Lord Jesus Christ or His Apostles, but mar the Truth of God by leaving out a portion of it.

If we can, with all boldness and distinctness, declare the inward work which the Holy Spirit accomplishes in the soul by working in us to will and to do of Gods good pleasure, and at the same time can tell the sinner most plainly that the object of his faith is not the work within, but the work which Jesus Christ accomplished upon the Cross for him, we shall have dealt faithfully with Divine Truth, and wisely with our hearers soul. The faith which brings salvation looks away from everything that is inward to that which was accomplished and completed by our once slain but now ascended Lord! And yet no man has this faith except as it is worked in him by the quickening Spirit.

If we can preach both these Truths of God in harmonious proportion, it seems to me that we shall have hit upon that form of Christian teaching which, while it is consistent with Truth, is also healthful to the soul. Having on the previous Sunday done our best with the one subject, we now seek to give the other its fair prominence. We have in the text mention made of certain men who are living, and of others who are dead. And, as the two are put together in the text, we shall close by some observations upon the conduct of those who have life towards those who are destitute of it.

I. First, then, CONCERNING THE LIVING. Our text testifies that, He that has the Son has life. Of course, by life here is meant not mere existence, or natural life, for we all have that whether we have the Son of God or not. In the image of the first Adam we are all created living souls and continue in life until the Lord recalls the breath from our nostrils.

The life here intended is spiritual lifethe life received at the new birth by which we perceive and enter into the heavenly kingdomcome under new and spiritual laws, are moved by new motives, and exist in a new world. The life here meant is the life of God in the soul, which is given us when we are newly created in the image of the Second Adam who was made a quickening spirit. A celestial form of life inwardly perceptible to the person who possesses it, and outwardly discernible to spiritual observers by its holy effects and heavenly fruits.

This spiritual life is the sure mark of deliverance from the penal death which the sentence of the Law pronounced. Man under the Law is condemnedthe sentence of death is recorded against him. But man under Divine Grace is free from the Law and is not adjudged to death, but lives by virtue of a legal justification which absolves him from guilt and consequently liberates him from death. These two kinds of lifethe life which is given by the judge to the offender when he is pardoned, and the life which is imparted from the Divine Fatherthe heir of Heaven is begotten again unto a lively hope. These two lives blend together and ensure for us the life eternal such as they possess who stand upon the sea of glass, and tune their tongues to the music of celestial hosts.

Eternal life is spiritual life made perfect! If we live by virtue of our pardon and justification, and if, moreover, we live because we are quickened by the Holy Spirit, we shall also live in the glory of the eternal Father, being made in the likeness of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the true God and Eternal Life. This is the life here intendedlife spiritual, life eternal. By the term having the Son, we understand possessing the Lord Jesus Christ. There is the finished work of Jesus, and faith appropriates it. We trust in Christ, and Christ becomes ours. As the result of Grace in our souls we chose the Lord Jesus as the ground of our dependence, and then we accept Him as the Lord of our hearts, the Guide of our actions, and supreme delight of our souls.

He that has the Son, then, is a man who is trusting alone in Jesus, in whom Jesus Christ rules and reigns. And such a man is most assuredly the possessor of spiritual and eternal life at the present moment. It is not said, he shall have life. He has it. He enjoys it now. He is at this hour a quickened spirit. God has breathed into him a new life by which he is made a partaker of the Divine Nature and is one of the seed according to promise. And this life he has by virtue of his having received the Son of God to be his All.

I have thus briefly opened up the words of the text, and having broken the bone, let us now discuss the marrow and fatness of it. Whoever in this world possesses Christ by faith is most certainly alive unto God by a life eternal. I shall remark, in the first place, that having the Son is good evidence of eternal life from the fact that faith by which a man receives Christ is, in itself, a living act. Faith is the hand of the soul, but a dead man cannot stretch out his icy limbs to take of that which is presented to him. If I, as a guilty, needy sinner, with my empty hands receive the fullness of Christ, I have performed a living act.

The hand may quiver with weakness, but life is there. Faith is the eye of the soul by which the sin-bitten sinner looks to Christ, lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. But from the stony eyes of death no glance of faith can dart. There may be all the organization by which it should look, but if life is absent the eyes cannot see. If, therefore, my eye of faith has looked alone to Jesus, and I depend upon Him, I must be a living soulthat act has proven me to be alive unto God. Looking to Jesus is a very simple act, indeed. It is a childlike act, but still it is a living one. No sight gleams from the eyeballs of death.

Faith, again, is the mouth of the soul. By faith we feed upon Christ. Jesus Christ is digested and inwardly assimilated so that our soul lives upon Him. But a dead man cannot eat. Whoever heard of carcasses gathering at a banquet? There may be the mouth, the teeth, and the palate, and so forththe organization may be perfectbut the dead man neither tastes the sweet nor relishes the delicious. If, then, I have received Christ Jesus as the Bread which came down from Heavenas the spiritual drink from the RockI have performed an action which is in itself a clear evidence that I belong to the living in Zion.

Now, my dear Friends, perhaps some of you have hardly any other evidence of Grace but this. You know that you have received Christ. You know that you look to Jesus and lay hold upon Him. Well, then, you could not have done this if you had not obtained eternal life, and the text is evidently true, He that has the Son has life. Furthermore, faith in Jesus is good evidence of life because of the things which accompany it. Now, no man ever did come to Jesus Christ and receive Him until he had felt his need of a Savior. No sickness, no physician. No wound, no surgeon.

No soul asks for pardon or obtains it till he has felt that sin is an evil for which pardon is necessary. That is to say, repentance always comes with faith. There must be a loathing of sin and a dread of its consequences, or there is no faith. Now, as repentance is an evident sign of life, faith in Jesus must involve spiritual life. What if I say that repentance is like the cry of the new-born babe which indicates that the child is alive? That cry of, God be merciful to me a sinner! is as sure a sign of life as the song of cherubim before the Throne of God. There could have been no laying hold of Christ without true repentance of sin, which repentance becomes, in its turn, a clear proof of the possession of the inner life which springs from incorruptible seed, and therefore lives and abides forever.

Where there is faith, again, there is always prayer. Depend upon it, that if Saul of Tarsus cries, Lord, what will You have me to do? it will, before long, be said of him, Behold, he prays. No soul believes in Jesus Christ without exercising its faith and its desires in prayer. But prayer is the breath of the soul, and where there is breath there must be life. Can the dead pray unto God? Shall a dead soul cry out for mercy? No, Beloved, the falling of a tear, the upward glance of an eye when none but God is near these may be very weak prayers as men judge thembut they are as much signs of life as Jacobs wrestling at the brook Jabbok, or Elijahs prevailing with God on Carmels brow.

So, then, he that has an interest in the Lord Jesus, since his faith is attended by repentance and prayer, and many other holy Graces, has a multitude of sure and certain evidences of eternal life within the soul! And I might say that the consequences of receiving Christ are also good evidences of heavenly life. For when a man receives the Son of God, he obtains a measure of peace and joyand peace with God and joy in the Holy Spirit are not to be found in the sepulchers of dead souls. When Ezekiel saw the dry bones in the valley, I do not find that any of them were singing for joy of heart or silently musing in unutterable thankfulness.

There was a sort of peace in the valleythe horrible repose of death, the grim silence of the gravebut living, sparkling peace, flowing like a river, those dry bones could not know. Job says of the hypocrite, Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Joy in God is too wonderful a work of God for mere professors to forge a passable counterfeit of it. Artificial flowers may be very like the real beauties of the garden, but they lack the joyous perfume and honeyed stores of lifeand the bees soon find out the difference! The honey juice and the delicate aroma are not to be matched.

The like might be said of all the results of faith which are far too numerous for me to speak of in detail this morning, such as purging the conscience from dead works, enlightenment by the Spirit, godly fear, the spirit of adoption, brotherly love, separation from the world, the consecration of life, holy gratitude which mounts like flame to Heaven, and sacred affection which ascends like altar smoke. None of these can be found in the morgue of fallen humanity! They can only be discovered in the house of life where God works according to His good pleasure.

He that has the Son, it is clear, has life because the act by which he lays hold upon the Son of God, the occurring of that act and the consequences of that act, all infallibly betoken the possession of life eternal. The possession of the Lord Jesus Christ is the evidence of faith in many ways. It is Gods mark upon a living soul. See yonder battlefield strewn with men who have fallen in the terrible conflict! Many have been slain, many more are wounded, and there they lie in ghastly confusion, the dead all stark and stiff, covered with their own crimson, and the wounded faint and bleeding, unable to leave the spot where they have fallen.

Surgeons have gone over the field rapidly, ascertaining which are corpses beyond the reach of mercys healing hand, and which are men faint with loss of blood. Each living man has a paper fastened conspicuously on his breast, and when the soldiers are sent out with the ambulances to gather up the wounded, they do not, themselves, need to stay and judge which may be living and which may be dead. They see a mark upon the living and lifting them up right tenderly, they bear them to the hospital where their wounds may be dressed.

Now, faith in the Son is Gods infallible mark which He has set upon every poor wounded sinner whose bleeding heart has received the Lord Jesus! Though he faints and feels as lifeless as though he were mortally wounded, yet he most surely lives if he believes, for the possession of Jesus is the token which cannot deceive! Faith is Gods mark witnessing in unmistakable languagethis soul lives. Jesus says, Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believes on Me has everlasting life. Tenderly, tenderly, you ministers of Christ, and you blood-bought ones who care for the broken-heartedlift up this wounded one, bear him away, bind up his wounds with comfortable promisesand restore his ebbing life with precious consolations from the Book of God!

Whatever else we cannot see, if a simple trust in Jesus is discernible in a convert we need feel no suspicions but receive him at once as a beloved Brother, for this is the Fathers willthat everyone that sees the Son, and believes on Him, may have everlasting life! Moreover, the possession of the Lord Jesus Christ becomes a clear evidence of life, because, indeed, it is in some sense the source, fountain, and nourishment of life! Here is a hand, Is it alive? Many questions may be asked about it which will be unsatisfactory as evidence of life.

Has it a delicate complexion? Are the fingers well fashioned? The answers may be, as you please, yes or no, and yet life may be present or absent. Is it adorned with gold rings set with emeralds or diamonds? Or, Does it wear an elegant, well-fitting glove? The answer may be whichever you pleasenone of those things will at all effect the life of the hand. It may be white as ivory, or brown as autumn leaves. It may be clad in mailed gauntlet, or soiled with stains of blood, and yet it may be either clay cold in death or warm with life.

But here is the question which cuts at the main point, Is the hand vitally connected with a living head? If it is so, then the conclusion is inevitable, that the hand is most surely alive! Now faith, by which we receive the Son of God, is the Grace which vitally unites the members with Christ, their living Head. And where there is a vital union with the Son of God, there must be life. While the branch is vitally in the stem it will have life. If it is not always bearing fruit, yet it always has life in itself, because it is in union with the living stem, and thus, Beloved, the fact of having the Son becomes an evidence of life, because it is the Source of life!

In another aspect of it, having the Son is not only the source of life, but the result of life. When the great doors were opened at the Black Hole in Calcutta, and the pure air went streaming in, there were many lungs which did not receive that air for the simple reason that the most of those who had been so barbarously confined were dead. To them the fresh oxygen had come too late. But there were a few which gladly and at once received the breath of Heaven, and such as were still alive walked forth from amidst the corpses into the open air.

Now, when a man receives Jesus into his soul as life from the dead, his faith is the sure indicator of a spiritual and mysterious life within himin the power of which he is able to receive the Lord. Jesus is freely preached to you. His Grace is free as the air, but the dead do not breathe that air those who breathe it are, beyond all doubt, alive. Christ is presented to you in the preaching of the Gospel as freely as the water from the drinking fountain at the corner of the street. But the dead man drinks not, his lips care not for the flowing crystal. He who drinks is evidently alive. The reception of Jesus Christ is the sure result of a heavenly life palpitating within the soul!

Thus you see the evidence is good, from several points of the compass. Looking at the souls business from several ways, faith still becomes with equal clearness a witness that the man who has it possesses the Divine life within him. Let me further remark that the possession of the Lord Jesus Christ by faith is sufficient evidence of eternal life. I do not know, says one, when I was converted. My dear Friend, have you the Son of God? Do you trust in Jesus Christ? That is quite enough! If you can, from the heart, say, I trust Jesus Christ, though you have no spiritual biography worth recording, you have life!

Many aged persons have either forgotten their birthdays, or have lost the register and cannot tell exactly how old they are. But that does not at all prove that they are not alive! So your not knowing precisely when you were converted is no evidence that you are not saved! No doubt it is very comfortable to be able to refer to a distinct date and place when the great change took place, but in many instances there could be no such reference made because the change was extremely gradual. In some parts of the world the sun rises on a sudden and sets just as quickly. But here, in England, we enjoy those delightful twilights which herald the morning and foreshadow the night.

With many converts there is a long twilight of soul in which they are not all darkness, but certainly not all light. They can scarcely tell where the darkness ended and where the light began. Dear Friends, do not worry yourselves about the almanac of Grace. Care more about its present reality and less about its past history. He that has the Son of God has life. Though he may not know when he laid hold upon the Son of God, yet if he has Him now he has no need to harbor the raven of mistrust. Faith is sufficient evidence, even in the absence of any great knowledge.

I would to God that we were all taught in the Word and could enter into the doctrines which are food for strong men in Christbut even then we should know very little of Election. Though the difference between Sanctification and Justification might seem too high for us to comprehend, yet if we have the Son of God we have life. No doubt there have been some who have entered Heaven who were little better than half-witted, and yet, through simple faith in Jesus they were as surely saved as a Newton or a Locke, who, with all their understanding and all their philosophy, could not rest upon a better foundation than the merit of that condescending Redeemer upon whom the poorest fool in the kingdom may depend with safety.

If you have Christ, learn as much as you can. Seek to grow in Divine Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But if your understanding is dull, do not tremble as though your soul depended upon your knowledge, for, He that has the Son has life, however ignorant he may be! So, again, it may be that you have never passed through any special horrors and alarms. When some pilgrims come to the wicket gate, the Slough of Despond pours forth its filth and the black dog howls at them as they knock at Mercys door. But many others are brought to Jesus gently, being carried like lambs in His bosom.

Many of Christs flowers bloom in sheltered spots and feel not the frosts of sharp temptation. Jesus has bands of love to draw with as well as a scourge of small cords to draw with. Many gentle spirits are led to find their All in the Christ of God, and yet they know very little of the depths of their inward depravity, and less still of the evil suggestions of Satan. My dear Friends, do not let this distress you! I was about to say even be thankful for it. Have you looked to Jesus Christ? Have you depended alone on Him? That is, for the present, sufficient evidence without anything else. He that has the Son of God has life.

I think I hear someone say, Ah, but I have been reading the biography of such-and-such a good man, and I find him frequently in the seventh Heaven of communion, so full of joy and rapture. Oh, that I knew something about that! Well, I wish you did. I would have you covet earnestly the best gifts. But, my dear Friend, you must not think that because you have not enjoyed these raptures, therefore you are not saved. Many go to Heaven with very little comfort on the road. I do not commend them for their lack of comfort, but I do advise you, instead of looking to singular experiences as a ground of confidence, look to the bleeding Savior and restalone on Him, for if you have Him you have eternal life.

To compare ourselves among ourselves is not wise. Experiences greatly differ. All Israelites are of the loins of Jacob, but all are not of the tribe of Judah. I do not doubt that the facial features of all the Jewish tribes differed, yet the great type of father Jacob could be seen in the face of every Jew. So the spiritual features of all the children of God will differ, for there are diversities of operationsbut notwithstanding that, there is a unity of spirit which cannot be broken. Beloved, have you the Son of God? If so, you have life! And even if that life should be somewhat sickly, which is not desirable, yet it will help to make it stronger if you distinctly know that it is the life eternal.

When a mans life becomes feeble it would be of no service to him to doubt whether it is life at all! But it helps him much to know that it is the life of God and is therefore sure to be victorious over death and Hell! And though it is but a spark, it is such a spark that all the devils in Hell cannot tread it out, and all the waters of affliction cannot quench it. If you have the Son, poor feeble trembling one, you have a life which will co-exist with the life of God! You have a life which neither things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to destroybecause they cannot separate you from the Lord Jesus! Because He lives, you shall live also. It is a great mercy that having the Son is abiding evidence. He that has the Son has life.

I know what it is to see every other evidence I ever gloried in go drifting down the stream far out of sight. It is frequently my inward experience to see sin and unworthiness marked upon everything I have ever done for God. As far as He has done any good thing by me or in me, it lives. But oftentimes, as I look back upon my years of ministry and see multitudes of sermons, and prayers, and other efforts, I have thought of them all as being less than nothing and vanity, tainted, and marred, and spoiled by my personal imperfections.

I could not depend on the whole of them to make so much as a feather weight towards my salvation. When you begin to doubt your inward Graces, and to judge all your past life, and find it lacking, it is sweet, even

then, to say *One thing I know, I rest in Jesus.   
Whatever else may be false, this is clearly true Other refuge have I none,   
Hangs my helpless soul on You.*

Job says that the poor man clings to the rock for shelter, and that poor man is blessed who remains in that position, evermore clinging to that Rock of his salvation

*Forever here my rest shall be,   
Close to Your wounded side.   
This all my trust and all my plea,   
For me the Savior died.*

I suppose, dear Friends, that your experience, like mine, leads you to lean less on self and more upon the Lord. You sometimes come out in full feather, all glorious to behold, and you shine like a full developed and advanced saint. But how soon your mountain moves, for the Lord hides His face! A molting season sets in, and soon all your plumes and honors are trailed in the mire and you have even to hide yourself from your own sight, for you feel utterly ashamed. It is very probable that at such a time you have a much truer opinion of yourself than in your prosperityyou are much nearer the mark when you despise yourself than when you find somewhat where to glory.

It is unspeakably precious in hours of discouragement, then, to fly straight away to Jesus with the contrite cry of

*Just as I amwithout one plea   
But that Your blood was shed for me,   
And that You biddst me come to you.   
O Lamb of God, I come.*

I have heard of persons boasting that they had outgrown that hymn, but I know I never shall. I must be content, still, to come to Jesus with no qualification for mercy except that which my sin and misery may give me in the eyes of His free Grace. It is a thousand mercies that, although clouds may obscure other evidences, they cannot prevent our coming to the great Propitiation and casting ourselves upon His cleansing power.

Dear friends, I may close this first head by saying that having the Son is infallible evidence of life. He that has the Son has life. It is not said that he may, perhaps, have it, or that some who have the Son have life there is no exception to the rule. As sure as Gods Word is true, He that has the Son has life, be he who he may, or what he may! And this gracious assurance includes those of you who labor in the depths of poverty! You who are in the furnace of affliction! You returning backsliders who still hang on Christ! You Believers under a cloud! You who mourn your many shortcomings!

By faith you dare to rest in Jesus, and you have therefore passed from death unto life. Be of good cheer, Beloved! Drink of the well of hope, and in joyful confidence in the Lord press forward in your heavenward pilgrimage.

II. Now a word CONCERNING THE DEAD. He that has not the Son of God has not lifethat is, he has not spiritual life. The sentence of death is recorded against him in the Book of God. His natural life is spared him in this world, but he is condemned already, and is in the eye of the Law dead while he lives.

Think of that, some of you, for these words refer to you! The unbeliever has no spiritual life! He neither laments his souls need, nor rejoices that it may be supplied. He lives without prayer and he knows nothing of secret fellowship with God because he has no inward life to produce these priceless things. Consequently, he will have no eternal life. He will exist forever, but his existence will be a protracted death of life he would not taste. He will have none of the joys of Paradise, no sight of Gods face. He will not swell the song of eternal happiness, nor drink of the river of everflowing bliss.

He is a walking corpse, a moving carcass, a body in which death holds the place of life. He has not the Son of Godthat is, he has never trusted in Jesus to save him, and never submitted himself to the guidance and governing of the King in Zion. Now observe that the not having the Son of

God is clear evidence of the absence of spiritual life, for the man who has not trusted in Jesus has made God a liar. Shall pure spiritual life make God a liar? Shall he receive life from God who persists in denying Gods testimony?

How shall God blot out his sentence of condemnation while the criminal remains such an enemy to his own Creator as to count Him a liar? The history of his unbelief proves that be is not a spiritually living man, for up till now he has chosen darkness, which is the dwelling place of death, and has loved corruption, which is the fruit of the grave. Would the spiritually quickened have done this? He has quenched his conscience. He has done despite to the Spirit of Grace. He has preferred sin to righteousness, and the pleasures of this world to the joys of Heaven. He has seen no beauty in Christ, no suitability in His salvationthe man must be blind, he must be devoid of all spiritual sensein fact, he must be dead or he would not have acted so!

Let me tell you that for a hearer of the Gospel not to believe on the Son of God must be, in the judgment of angels, a very astounding crime. How they must marvel when they see that God was made flesh to redeem the sons of men, and yet men do not believe in the Incarnate Savior! The faithful saying, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, is not depended upon by tens of thousands, though it is worthy of all acceptance, yet the mass of mankind give it no acceptance. What must angels think of such men?

They, no doubt, understand the reason of it, that the mind is so perverted and corrupt that manhood is nothing better than a reeking sepulcher. Unbelief of the Gospel is the great damning sin of man. The not laying hold of Jesus is the sin of sinsit is like Jeroboam, of whom we read that he sinned and made Israel to sin. It is the egg in which all manner of mischief lies. Not believing in Jesus Christ is the condemnation emphatically. This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light.

Remember, my dear Hearers, if you have never received Christ, this is overwhelming evidence that you are dead in sin. You have been sprinkled in your infancy. You have been confirmed. Perhaps you have been immersed. Possibly you have joined the Church. But if you have not the Son of God all those outward things have not the weight of a grain of sand in the scale. Oh, but, you may say, I have been assured on good authority that I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven in my baptism!

You were so assured upon the authority of a book which has deceived many, and will, I fear, deceive tens of thousands more. It is not true that you are an inheritor of Heaven if you have not Christ! If you have believed in Christ, you have life. But if you have not the Son of God you have no heavenly life, and let all the priests that ever lived assure you of your being a child of God by your baptism, I tell them flat to their faces that they lie in their throats, and that some of them know they do! The Word of God is to be taken and not theirs, and that Word says, He that has not the Son has not life.

Away with these false priests and their infant sprinkling, toowhat have they to do to pretend to be the servants of God when they are deceivers of souls? No outward ceremonies, though they are multiplied ten thousand-fold, and rendered gorgeous by all the pomp and glory of the worldno, even though God Himself should command themcould give you spiritual life! You must have Christ, for He is the life of the soul, and without Him you are dead in sin!

Oh, but, perhaps you may say, I have always lived a chaste, upright, moral life! I have been attentive to religious duties. I could allege many particulars which might go to prove that I live unto God. Yes, but all your particulars, however well they might be alleged, would prove nothing in the teeth of such a text as this, He that has not the Son of God has not life. I tell you, Moralist, what you areyou are a corpse well-washed and decently laid out. You are daintily robed in fair white linen, sprinkled plenteously with sweet perfumes and wrapped in myrrh, and cassia, and aloes, with flowers wreathed about your brow, and your bosom bedecked by the hand of affection with sweetly blushing roses.

But you have no life, and therefore your destiny is the grave, corruption is your heritage, and your place of abode is fixed, where their worm dies not, and the fire not quenched, for, He that believes not shall be damned. With all his excellencies and moralities, with all his baptisms and his sacraments, He that believes not shall be damned. There is no middle place, no specially reserved and superior abodes for these noble and virtuous unbelievers. If they have not believed, they shall be bound up in bundles with the rest, for God has appointed to unbelievers their portion with liars, and thieves, and whoremongers, and drunkards, and idolaters.

Beware, you unbelievers, for your unbelief will be to the Judge Himself at the great assize, and to the attendant angels, most condemning evidence against you! Take him away! Christ has not known him, and he has not known Christ. He had not the Son, and he shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. Now, if such things were spoken concerning some people in Africa or New Zealand, you would be concerned about those miserable souls, though they are so far away. But they are spoken about some of yousome of you are dead! Is not this terrible?

Oh, if by some touch of an angels wand our bodies should all become as our souls are, how many corpses would fill these aisles and crowd these pews! John once wished for gains, that his body might prosper and be in health even as his soul prospered. Now, suppose our bodies were to prosper just as our souls do! Why, there would sit in one place a living woman, and side by side with her a dead husband! Further on, a living child, and then a dead gray-headed grandsire. Oh, what a sight this place would be! We should hasten to gather up our garments, those of us who are alive, and say, Let us be gone! How can we sit side by side with corpses?

The effect would be startling to the last degree, and yet, most probably, the spiritual fact does not disturb us at all! We know it to be true, but we take it as a matter of course, and we go our way with scarcely a prayer for our poor dead neighbors.

III. I close the sermon by a few observations CONCERNING THE LIVING AS THEY DWELL AMONG THE DEAD. As the living are constrained to live among the dead, as the children of God are mixed up by Providence with the heirs of wrath, what manner of persons ought they to be? In the first place let us take care that we do not become contaminated by the corruption of the dead. You who have the Son of God, mind that you are not injured by those who have not the Son.

We have heard of such accidents when the anatomist has been making an examination of a dead body. He has been prying with his scalpel among the bones, and nerves, and sinews, and perhaps he has pricked his finger and the dead matter has infected his bloodand death has been swift and sure. Now, I have heard of some professed Christians wanting to see, they said, the ways of the ungodly, going into low places of amusement to spy out the land, to judge for themselves. Such conduct is dangerous and worse. My dear Friends, I never found it necessary, in my ministry, to do anything of the kind, and yet I think I have had no small success in winning souls. I must confess I should feel very much afraid to go into Hell to put my head between the lions jaws for the sake of looking down his throat.

I should think I was guilty of a gross presumption if I went into the company of the lewd and the profane to see what they were doing. I should fear that perhaps it might turn out that I was only a mere professor, and so should taint myself with the dead matter of the sin of those with whom I mingled and perish in my iniquity. Come out from among them, and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing! The resort of the ungodly is not the place for you. Let the dead bury their dead, but as for you, said Christ, follow Me.

If we must in this life, in a measure, mingle with the dead, let us take care that we never suffer the supremacy of the dead to be acknowledged over the living. It would be a strange thing if the dead were to rule the living! The dead must be laid in their coffins and put away in their narrow cells according as the living may decree. Yet sometimes I have seen the dead have the dominion of this worldthat is to say they have set the fashionand living Christians have followed. The carnal world has said, This is the way of trade! And the Christian man has replied, I will follow the custom.

Christian, this must not be! Yes, but, says one, I must do as others do, for you know we must live. This, also, is not true, for there is no necessity for our living! There is a very great necessity for our dying sooner than living if we cannot live without doing wrong. O Christian, you must never endure that corruption should conquer Grace! By Gods Grace, if you get at all under the power of custom, you must cry out, O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me? You must wrestle till you conquer, and cry, Thanks be unto God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

What I think we should do towards dead souls is thiswe should pity them. When the early Christians dwelt in the catacombs where they could not go about without seeing graves, they must have had strange thoughts arising in their minds. Now, my Brothers and Sisters, you are in a similar plight. You cannot walk through London without thinking, The most of these I meet with are dead in sin. Some of these dead souls live in your own house! They are your own children! Your own servants! When you go out to work you have to stand at the same bench with spiritually dead men! You cannot turn aside from your daily labor to enter the House of God but you even meet the dead there!

Ought not this to make us pray for them: Eternal Spirit, quicken them! They cannot have life unless they have the Son of God. O bring them to receive the Son of God? Beloved, in connection with such prayer, be diligent to deliver the quickening message. The quickening message is, Believe, and live. Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.

Ought you not, you living ones, to be perpetually repeating the great life-word, depending upon the Holy Spirit to put energy into it? Do, I pray you, seek to win souls, and from this day, separating yourselves from the world as to its maxims and its customs, plunge into the very thick of it where you can serve your Master, plucking brands from the fire and winning souls from going down to the pit. May the Lord bless this simple word this morning, for His names sake. Amen.

Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #1791 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

HELPS TO FULL ASSURANCE   
NO. 1791

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, JULY 20, 1884, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may**

**believe on the name of the Son of God.   
1 John 5:13.**

How very simple this all is! John had an eagles wings with which to soar aloft and an eagles eyes with which to penetrate into great mysteriesand yet of all the writers of the Old or New Testament he is one of the simplest. He never endeavors to show you the greatness of his mind or the grandeur of his rhetoric. On the contrary, he speaks as a child to those who are children in the school of love. I would that all of us who try to teach others would remember this and sink ourselves in our lesson.

It is equally notable how practical John is. When he writes, he always has a worthy intention in every line. These are written, he says, and he explains the design with which he penned the record. These Epistles are not written to dazzle you, nor to lead you into speculation, nor to gratify your curiositybut these are written that you may know that you have eternal life. The practical objective may seem, to the high-soaring votaries of modern thought, to be commonplace, but John had a deep veneration for matters which moderns despise. The commonplaces of theology are the greenest of the pastures wherein the sheep of God feed and lie down. It is infinitely more to our benefit to know that we have eternal life than to be able to predict the future of empires or to forecast the destiny of kings! It is of more practical importance for us to know that we have eternal life than to be able to explain all mysteries, or to speak with tongues.

John acts according to his loving heart when he writes to lead his Brethren into the assured knowledge of their personal possession of eternal life. When he tells us his design, it is that he may help to accomplish his purposefor by informing men of understanding why he is writing, he stirs them up to see his purpose and to fall in with it. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Dear Friends, if this is the design of the inspired Apostle, let us not be slow to cooperate with him, but let us pray, this morning, for the full assurance of faith, that we may know for sure that eternal life is pulsing in our hearts! May you who have not believed in Jesus feel a fervent desire within your spirits to take that preliminary step and become believers in the Son of God! Come, then, to the text, and consider with us, first, to whom it was writtenThese things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God. Secondly, to what end it is writtenThat you may know that you have eternal life. This will lead us, thirdly, to consider how that which was written in this Epistle conduces to this blessed confidence. And then, lastly, I shall have to call your attention to an added matter which is never forgotten by John, even when he writes with the design of promoting the highest form of Christian attainment That you may believe on the name of the Son of God.

They already believed on the sacred name, yet it remained a part of Johns design to confirm them in that faith and conduct them to higher degrees of it. May the Holy Spirit make our meditation profitable!

I. First, then, briefly, TO WHOM WAS THIS WRITTEN? It is important to observe the direction of a letter, for I may be reading a communication meant for somebody else. And if it should contain good tidings, I may be deceiving myself by appropriating the news. This Epistle, and this particular text in it, were written for all those who believe on the name of the Son of God. In part of the Epistle, John says, I write unto you, little children. Then he says, I write unto you, young men. Further on he says, I have written unto you, fathers. But now he writes to babes, to young men and to fathers under the one comprehensive description of those who have believed on the name of the Son of God! Our discourse is, therefore, for all of you who are believers in Christ.

Little child, you who have just begun the spiritual life, we would have you attain to the confidence that you have eternal life! Young man, sternly battling with sin, we would have you strengthened for your conflict by knowing that you have eternal life! And you fathers, let us hope you have not come so far without this knowledge, but whether you have or not, these things are written that you, in your mature years, may rise to the full conviction that the life of God is strong within you! No person, young or old, is excluded from this text, unless he is an unbeliever. To unbelievers this text is not writtenit is for all who trust in Jesusand it is for no one else.

If you enquire why it is not addressed to unbelievers, I answer, simply because it would be preposterous to wish men to be assured of that which is not true! John never wished that a man who had not believed in Jesus Christ should even think that he had eternal life, for it would be a fatal error. He that believes not shall not see life. How, then, could he have an assurance of possessing it? Faith is a necessary preliminary to assuranceyou must have the blade of faith before you can have the ripe corn of assurance. Dear Friends, do not dream of being sure that you are saved apart from making sure that you have trusted yourselves with the crucified Savior! The Atonement presented by Jesus Christ, the Son of God, gives assurance of salvation to all who trust in it, but to no one else. It would be taking things out of their due order. It would be doing you real and, perhaps, fatal mischief if we should lead you to presume that you have eternal life before you have unreservedly believed in the Lord Jesus Christ! He that believes on the Son has everlasting life; and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.

I speak, therefore, to all of you who have come to Christ, however imperfect and undeveloped your spiritual life may as yet be. I invite no one else to the banquet of joyous confidence! As with a drawn sword of fire, Johns words guard the way like the cherub at the gate of Paradise. His words, these things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, keep back every man who has not believed in Jesus from even dreaming that he has eternal life. What have you to do with the rest, the peace and the blessedness of full assurance unless you have received the appointed Savior into your hearts trust?

We may gather from this address being made to all the people of God and to none beside, that there are some Believers in the world, and true Believers, too, who do not know that they have eternal life. A very large number of true Believers do not know this cheering fact. For instance, certain Christians believe that even if they are now saved they may yet be lostthat even if they have the life of God in them, that life may die out! Beloved, I pray for you that you may know that you have eternal lifenot a temporary life! The life which the Holy Spirit imparts to the Believer is not a thing of days, weeks, months, or yearsits dwelling place is in the region of eternity. It is, practically, a Divine life which God puts into us, whereby we are made partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. We were begotten again unto a lively or living hope in the day of our regeneration!

The new birth from above by the Spirit of God is a birth to an endless life. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever. Our Lord at the well of Samaria gives us another figureWhoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. Many imagine that this spring can fail. How much comfort Gods dear children lose by not apprehending the absolute immortality of the new life I will not venture to say. But this much I will declarethat to me it is the very crown and glory of the Gospel that if I receive Jesus into my soul and the Holy Spirit imparts to me the new life, I have received an everlasting blessing! Has not Jesus said I give unto My sheep eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand?

Again, a large number of Christs people who may be perfectly sound in the doctrinal view of the nature of this life do not know that they possess it at this present moment if they are Believers. I find even the commentators, when they try to write upon this text, and most of the preachers who have left us printed sermons upon it, read the text as if it said, that you may know that you shall have eternal life. They speak about the full assurance that we shall

one day enter into Glory. I beg their pardonthe text does not say anything of the kind! It is, that you may know that you have eternal life, even here, at this present hour! The spiritual life which is in the Believer at this moment is the same life which shall be in him in Heaven! The Grace-life is the Glory-life in the budthe same life, only less developed.

We shall not, in the article of death, receive another life than that which we have while we are sojourning here below. Death sets a seal on that which is, but it produces nothing. There is to be a very palpable change worked upon the body, but as to the spirit, the life of God which is in it now is the life which will dwell in it throughout eternity. Our believing life is eternal life. We want children of God who believe in Jesus to feel that the holy flame which kindles their lamp, today, is the same fire which will shine forth before the Throne of God foreverthey have already begun to exercise those holy emotions of delight and joy which will be their Heaven! They already possess, in measure, those perceptions and faculties which will be theirs in Glory. Let us remember this and know that, as Believers, we have eternal life.

Yet again, there are some Christians who believe all this and are perfectly right in theory, but yet they each one cry, I need to know that I have eternal life. I need a fuller assurance of salvation than I have already obtained. That is also our desire for you, for if you know you have believed in Jesus, you certainly are quickened with eternal life and ought to know it! But it is only to you that have believed that the text speaks. If you have not believed in the glorious name of the Well-Beloved, then come at once and put your trust in Him! This is the Gospel to every unbelieverBelieve in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. For, He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned. An unbeliever may have an assurance that he will be lost, but he cannot have an assurance that he is saved, or ever will be!

First, believe on the name of the Son of God, who is manifested to take away sin. Trust in His glorious Person, in His finished work, in His accepted Sacrifice, in His prevailing intercession and in His glorious advent which is yet to be. Look unto Him and be you saved! Rest alone upon the one foundation which God has laid in Zion and then to you will the word of this consolation be sent, but not till then!

II. So, secondly, I have now to mention TO WHAT END JOHN HAS WRITTEN.   
When he says, that you may know that you have eternal life, I think His first meaning is that you may know that everybody who believes in Jesus Christ has eternal life. This is not a fact about you and a few others, only, but it is a general Truth of Godevery man that believes on the name of the Son of God has eternal life! We may not doubt this. It is not a matter of inference and deduction, but a matter of Revelation from God. You are not to form an opinion upon it, but to believe it, for the Lord has said it. Listen to these words in 1 John 5:1Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. Thus says the Spirit of God and so it must be!   
We do not need any further evidence. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. The Spirit of God bears witness to this and as the Spirit is Truth, His witness is certainly true! Accept His witness and ask for no other. It is written (1 John 5:12), He that has the Son has life; and He that has not the Son of God has not life. This is the unvarying testimony of the whole of Scriptureand especially of the writings of the Apostle John. How many times over he insists upon it that the Believer has eternal life! I beseech you, never question the statement! Settle it in your mind, for if you have any doubt about it, you have undermined the Gospel and rejected the witness of the Lordand denied the Holy Spirit! You will not behave thus wickedly; therefore glorify God by believing His testimony.   
I think that John, in this passage meant, and we will consider him as meaning it, something morenamely, He would have us know that we personally have eternal life by having us know that we do personally believe in Jesus. It is one thing to know that every Believer has eternal life, but it is quite another thing to know that I am a Believer so as to have eternal life myself. I have read of one who fell into the water and, as he was sinking, he saw a rainbow in the sky above him. Ah, he thought, God has made a covenant not to destroy the earth with a flood, and yet it is no comfort to me, for I fear I shall be drowned. The largest provisions of Grace avail us nothing unless we have a personal interest in them! It is true that every Believer has eternal life, but what if I am not a Believer?   
It is a very amazing thing that people should not know whether they believe in Jesus or notfor it is an ascertainable piece of knowledge. I know whether I think. I know whether I resolve. I know whether I doubt. I ought, therefore, to know whether I believe! But you see, human nature received a terrible twist at the Fall, and it has fallen into a very foggy region so that the eyes of the understanding are all squinted and the air around is very dank. Perhaps you ask me to speak for myself and I assure you that I dobut at the same time I do not hesitate to say the same of you! You, my clever friend, who are so wonderfully clear-headed, I should not wonder but what you are the foggiest and blindest of the whole company! The worst darkness is that which so blinds a man that he thinks he can see better than other people. We are all, by nature, in such a mixed-up state that we need not wonder at any strange statement or feeling!   
When you hear Brethren assert that a person who is not assured that he believes must necessarily be an unbeliever, you may say to yourself, That friend does not know everything. There is no estimating the possible inconsistency and contradiction of the human mind. I have been in a state of mind in which I have questioned the possibility of there being a grain of Grace in me and yet, I have clung to Jesus with a death grip! At such times my mind has worked morbidly and its way has been turned upside down. Bunyan speaks of being, much tumbled up and down in his thoughts, and that nearly hits my mental condition. It is very possible for a man to be a very strong Believer and yet to question whether he has a spark of faith! I have heard ministers ridicule this state of inward questioning and, indeed, it is ridiculous to all but those who are in it!   
If you once become a sufferer under this wretched complaint, the absurdity of your disease will not lessen its painfulness. Our mental distresses need not be logicalthey can be full of anguish and yet be most unreasonable. You probably know some people who are excessively nervousthey are afraid the skies will fall or the earth will crack. This is very stupid, but the agony caused, thereby, is very real! There is little of the Christian spirit in the man who can increase mental torment by turning it into jest. This is not to pour oil into the wound, but to rub salt into it. No doubt, the doubts which many have of their personal safety are very unreasonable, but a servant of God is not, therefore, to scorn the subject of them, for the Lord Jesus Christ had compassion on the ignorant. He did not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flaxnor must we!   
I am personally taught to be tender of poor doubters, for I have often been one myself. I would sometimes give all that I have to be able to feel myself to be even the least in the Lords family. Just now I enjoy a full assurance, but I am not always on the mountain and, therefore, I have a heart for others because I am, myself, compassed with infirmity. We may not judge harshly, as if things were as we would theoretically arrange them, but we must deal with things as they areand it cannot be questioned that some of the best Believers are, at times, sorely put to it to know whether they are Believers at all! The prayer of John is that such people, yes, and all Believers, may know for surebeyond all doubtthat they have eternal life.   
So far is human nature out of joint that it is necessary for me to say what it seems superfluous to saythat full assurance of our possessing eternal life is possible. The Church of Rome teaches that no man can be assured that he has eternal life, except some few to whom supernatural revelations may be given. That sort of doctrine lingers in the air of Protestantismmany people think the same though they do not say so. Impossible to know that you are quickened? It ought to be impossible to have any doubt about it! Rationally, a living man should know that he is alive. No man should give sleep to his eyes or slumber to his eyelids while he has a doubt about his eternal state. It is possible and, if it is possible, it is very desirablefor when a man knows that he has eternal life, what a comfort it is to him!   
What gratitude it produces in his spirit! How it helps him to live above the world! With what holy ardor does he pursue the service of God, knowing that he has an eternal reward! He has not to waste time in calculating evidences and perpetually examining himself, for he has examined himself and he has cast himself upon Christand he knows that he has eternal life. With what rapidity does he make progress, for he leaves the first principles and goes on towards perfection! No longer questioning, he shows holy daring and goes from strength to strength in rapturous fellowship and ecstatic enjoyment! He advances from glory to glory, his faith proving to him, even while he is here below, the joys which are laid up for the redeemed! I say again, if full assurance is possible, it is eminently desirable.   
And I go a little furtherit is our duty to obtain full assurance. We would not have been commanded to give diligence to make our calling and election sure if it were not right for us to

be sure! I am sure it is right for a child of God to know that God is his Father and never to have a question in his heart as to his sonship. I know it is right for a soul that is married to Christ to know the sweet love of the Bridegroom and never to tolerate a cloud of suspicion to come between the soul and the full enjoyment of Christs love. Therefore, I would urge you onward to know that you have eternal life.   
My Brothers and Sisters, John, being dead, yet speaks out of this Bookhe calls upon you to know that the Son of God is come and has given us an understanding that we may know Him, who is trueand that we are in Him who is true, even in His Son, Jesus Christ. He bids us, as Believers, firmly repose our souls upon the promise of our faithful God. I sorrowfully remind certain of you that, as you have not believed, you have neither part nor lot in this matterand the Beloved disciple does not speak to you.   
III. Thirdly, I come to where I would lay the stress of the discourse this morningWHAT HAS JOHN SAID IN THIS EPISTLE WHICH LEADS US TO BE SURE OF OUR FULL ASSURANCE? How does he help us to know that we are Believers and, consequently, to know that we have eternal life? I cannot attempt a full summary of this most blessed Epistle, but I shall select a few items from very many. An exposition of this Epistle, written to show how it enables men to know that they have eternal life, would be a very valuable thing, and I feel confident that without the slightest forcing of a single sentence it could be shown that the whole letter bears upon assurance. The wish of the Apostle that all Believers might know that they have eternal life is the silken thread upon which his pearls are strung.   
Now Believers ought to know that they have eternal life and they ought never to doubt it, for Gods own Word assures them that it is so. Remember that Word of the Lord Jesus in John 6:47Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believes on Me has everlasting life? Will you doubt the Lords, Verily, verily? Christs Word unsupported by any external evidence is quite enough to satisfy every gracious mind. Let God be true, but every man a liaryes, let every circumstance be a liar! Everything that we have looked upon as evidence should be regarded as a lie if it denies the declaration of the Lord! Out of this simple faith in God, assurance comes naturally by the operation of the Spirit of God upon the heart. Take pure and unadulterated milk and let it stand, and you will soon get cream. Faith is the milk and full assurance is the cream upon itand when faith has stood long enough, you may see the rich cream of holy confidence upon the top of it! The witness of God is true and, therefore, to be believed, yes, to be believed with full assurance!  
According to all right principles, assurance should increase by the lapse of time during which faith occupies itself upon the same promise. I have trusted my soul to Christ, therefore I have eternal life. How do I know? I know because the Spirit of God has so declared it in the Word of God! Thus has He spokenHe that believes on the Son has everlasting life. I believe in the Son and, therefore, I have eternal life! Do friends assure me that they see the life in me? I am very much obliged to them, but I do not need their evidence. He that believes has the witness in himself. When the Holy Spirit has made a statement, it is something like impertinence either to ask or to offer any further evidence upon the point. Therefore, that matter is not my subject. I take it we must not offer you any other argument to prove the eternal life of Believers beyond thisGod has said it.   
The matter which may be argued about is thisDo I believe in Jesus? Am I a Believer in such a sense that I have eternal life? Let us look at the Epistle for help in this enquiry. You will find, first, that John mentions as an evidence, truthful dealing with God in faith and confession of sin. Naturally men walk in darkness or falsehood towards God, but when we have believed in Jesus, we come to walk in the light of the Truth of God. Read in the first chapter of the Epistle from verse 6 to nine. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.   
The Believer does not attempt to deal with God as if he had no sin, for that were to make Christ useless, seeing there would be no need of His blood to cleanse. He does not say that he now lives without sin, for that were to make his cleansing a thing of the past, whereas the Spirit teaches that it is a present matter, concerning our present walk with God. To claim to live without sin is to walk in the dark, for the claim is a false one. The man who walks in the light comes before God as a sinner, whom the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses from all sin. So, then, you may take this as an evidence that you are a saved man, if you deal truthfully with Godif you confess your guilt before God, if your only hope of being cleansed from it lies in the blood of Jesus Christthen you have come to act towards God on the line of truth and He accepts you.   
You that are not a believer in Christ may try to forget that you have any sin, or, by forms and ceremonies, offer some kind of palliation of your sin, but when you are brought into the honest light you will make a clean breast of it and cease to act a borrowed part. Your cry will be, Search me, O God, and try me, and your appeal will be to the boundless mercy of God in Christ Jesus! You can be sure that you are a child of God when sin is confessed and faith is looking to Jesus for the removal of it. Father, I have sinned, is the cry of a true-born child. God be merciful to me, a sinner, is the prayer of the man who goes down to his house justified. We can repeat with rapture the words of Paul to the Romans, Being justified freely by His Grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.   
Next, John gives us obedience as a test of the child of God. Look to the second chapter and begin to read at the third verseAnd hereby we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that says, I know Him, and keeps not His commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him. He that says he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked. Come, then, Beloved Brothers and Sisters, do you obey the will of the Lord from your heart? Is holiness the aim and objective of your life? Do you strive to do as Jesus bids you? Do you set your clock by the heavenly sun? Do you try to order your ways and your steps according to the Law of the Lord? Do you delight yourself, also, in the Law of God after the inner man? Do you press forward after perfect holiness? Then His servant you are whom you obey! Rest assured beyond all question that you are one of Christs sheep, for He says, My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. He that does righteousness is righteous. If Grace has made you obedient, it has given you eternal life!   
Follow me as I call attention, next, to the evidence of love in the heart. In the second chapter read at the 9th verseHe that says he is in the light and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him. Then go on to the 14th verse of the third chapter. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loves not his brother abides in death. This will greatly help you to decide your case. Do you hate anybody? Are you seeking revenge? Are you unforgiving? Then you are not dwelling in the Light of Godyou are of Cain and not of Christ! Do you feel that you love your enemies and that, in fact, you are no mans enemy because love is the principle of your life? Love is of God; and everyone that loves is born of God, and knows God.   
We must feel a general benevolence towards all men and a still more intense love and complacency towards all who are in Christ. This love must be practical and lead us to help and succor our Brethren. Have you this love? Do you feel a delight in the company of the Brethren because they belong to Christ, however poor or illiterate they may be? You would not feel love reigning in your spirit if true faith had not come to dwell there! A loving spirit evidenced by a loving life is a true sign that you belong to God, whose name is Love. Be of good courage and enter into full assurance, O you whose bosoms glow with the sacred flame of fervent love to God and men!   
Next to that comes separation from the world. Read in the second chapter at the 15th verseLove not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. This is backed up by the first verse of the third chapterTherefore the world knows us not, because it knew Him not. Have you met with opposition from the ungodly? Have you discovered that Ishmael still mocks Isaac? Do you find, when you go out to work, that your shop mates who used to drink with you are inclined to avoid you? Are you pointed at as a hypocrite because you are a Christian? Then there is a difference between you and others and the world can see it! The serpents seed will hiss at the seed of the womanGod has put an enmity between the two. Do not, therefore, be surprised at it. Did not our Lord say, If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love his own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you? Thus slander, abuse, and other forms of persecution may turn to your comfort by showing that you are of that sect which is everywhere spoken against!

Next to that, in the second chapter, we have the evidence of continuance in the faith. And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of God abides forever. Little children, it is the last time and as you have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. The longer a Christian man is enabled to persevere in holiness, the more confident may he become that his religion is the work of the Spirit of God in his soul. He that endures to the end shall be saved. Perseverance in holiness is a sure mark of election. It is the righteous who hold on their way. Mere pretenders are as wandering stars and fading flowers. That which comes and goes is not of Godthe Holy Spirit abides permanently in true Believers.   
The next evidence you will find in the third chapter, the third verse, namely, purification. Every man that has this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure. Do you every day endeavor to keep clear of sin and, when you have sinned, do you at night go with bitter repentance to God and beg to be delivered from it? Are you fighting against your besetting sins? Do you contend against the customs of the world? Have you come to be a warrior against evil? Let that be an evidence that there is in you a new spirit which was not there by nature! And let that prove to you that you are quickened into newness of lifeconflict and victory are evidences of Grace. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.   
Again, in the 21st verse of the third chapter, we meet with another blessed evidence, and that is a clear conscience If our heart condemns us not, then have we confidence toward God. They say of us that we seek ourselves, or that we are hypocrites. But if we can lay our hand upon our heart and say, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You, we have the best grounds for full assurance. A conscience purged from dead works to serve the living God is one of the seals of the Holy Spirit upon that epistle which He has written in our hearts! This Divine witness is a privilege which none possess but the regenerate! Prove yourself clear in the court of conscience that you may know that you have eternal life. Furthermore, we find an evidence in answers to prayerAnd whatever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. Does God hear your prayers? Then you are pleasing in His sight! Are you in the habit of speaking with Him and does He reply to you? Then you are agreed with God! Does He grant you the desire of your heart? Is it not because you delight in Him? He hears not those who willfully live in sin, but if any man does His will, him He hears. You may look upon every answered prayer as another token of the love of God toward you in Christ Jesus your Lord.   
Adherence to the Truth of God is another help to full assurance. Read the whole fourth chapterBeloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. In the sixth verse he says, We are of God: he that knows God hears us; he that is not of God hears us not. I read in a certain learned divine, the other day, a declaration that the evangelical doctrine which we preach is not Christianity, but Paulinism. By that utterance this divine condemned himself! John says, We are of God: he that knows God hears us; he that is not of God hears us not. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. He who hears not the Apostles, hears not their Master! He who dares say that Paul has not given us the Gospel is not of Christ, for Jesus says, He that receives you, receives Me, and he that receives Me receives Him that sent Me.   
The testimony of the Holy Spirit by Apostolic lips is as sure as the testimony by the Son of God Himself! And it is flat rebellion against the Holy Spirit to graduate His utterances, whether they be through Prophets, Apostles, or the Christ, Himself. He who makes this to be true and that to be false, or this true and that truer, still, has disparaged the Spirit of God who speaks as He pleases, but is always Infallible! He that questions what the Spirit says has not the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him. If you have taken Scripture to be your guide and hold fast by the Truth of God, you are one of Christs sheep, of whom He says, A stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers. Against the detestable spirit of this age and against everything else that would corrupt the Gospel of Christ, it is the mark of the true seed to stand opposed! If you bear witness to the Truth of God, the Truth bears witness to you! Blessed are those who are not removed from the hope of their calling.   
One of the best evidences of true faith, and one of the best helps to full assurance, is a holy familiarity with God. Read in the fourth chapter, the 16th verseAnd we have known and believed the love that God has to us. God is Love and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear has torment. He that fears is not made perfect in love. We love Him, because He first loved us. Oh, Beloved Brothers and Sisters, if you have come to speak with God as a man speaks with a man. If you dwell in Him. If every day you say more to God than you do to men and if you find more joy in fellowship with God than you do in all the world beside, then you are one of His!   
God never made a man to know Him and love Him, and then cast him away! Eternal life is surely in you if you have entered into the secret place of the tabernacles of the Most High and abide under the shadow of the Almighty. When you have no longer that slavish fear which makes you stand back, but that child-like confidence which draws you nearer and yet nearer unto God, then are you His child! The spirit of adoption is one point of sure witness from the Spirit of God. He who can call God his exceeding joy is among the living in Zion.   
IV. I would now finish, only I dare not leave out the last pointTHE APPENDIX TO JOHNS DESIGN. The Apostle puts it, That you may believe on the name of the Son of God. I think he means thisyou are never to get into such a state that you say, I have eternal life and, therefore, I need not trust simply in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. Years ago I was born again, and so I can now live without the daily exercise of faith. No, says the Apostle, I am writing this to Believers, and I tell them that while they may have full assurance, it cannot be a substitute for habitual faith in the Lord Jesus.   
Personally, I wish to sayit is some 34 years since I first believed in the Christ Jesus and I came to Him, then, as having nothing in myself, and I took Him to be my All-in-All. At this moment I possess a comfortable and clear assurance that I have eternal life, but my ground of confidence, today, is exactly what it was when first I came to Christ. I have no confidence in my confidence, I place no reliance upon my own assurance. My assurance lies in the fact that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners and, that, Whoever believes in Him has everlasting life. I believe in Him and, therefore, I know I have eternal life.   
Brothers and Sisters, do not stir beyond thatkeep to your first faith. However far you go in other directions, stand fast in your undivided faith in Jesus. If you think it wise to examine these signs and evidences which I have given you, do so. But if you think to get food out of them, you will find a bare cupboard. If you think you can live without Christ, on what you have known in the past, you are greatly mistaken! It is like trying to live on stale manna. None of you would have done that in the wilderness you would have soon turned up your noses at it. When it was more than a day old it, bred worms and stank. Everything you look to, apart from Christ, will rot in due time, so that you will loathe it.   
Beloved, every vessel, whether it is a great flagon or a little cup, must hang upon the one nail which is fastened in a sure place. If you get away from Jesus, you wander into a land of darkness and of the shadow of death. Whether I am a child of God or not is a question I will not discuss today. I am a sinner and Jesus Christ came to save sinnersand they that trust in Him are saved. Therefore I trust Him! Therefore I am saved! The Word of God declares it. Blessed be His name forever and ever! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON1 John 5.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK191, 549, 193. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #2023 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE BLESSING OF FULL ASSURANCE   
NO. 2023

DELIVERED ON LORDS DAY MORNING, MAY 13, 1888, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God.   
1 John 5:13.

JOHN wrote to BelieversThese things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God. It is worthy of note that all the Epistles are so written. They are not letters to everybodythey are letters to those who are called to be saints. It ought to strike some of you with awe when you open the Bible and think how large a part of it is not directed at you. You may read it and Gods Holy Spirit may graciously bless it to you, but it is not directed to you. You are reading another mans letterthank God that you are permitted to read itbut long to be numbered with those to whom it is directed.

Thank God much more if any part of it should be used of the Holy Spirit for your salvation. The fact that the Holy Spirit speaks to the Churches and to Believers in Christ should make you bow the knee and cry to God to put you among the children that this Book may become your Book from beginning to end, that you may read its precious promises as made to you. This solemn thought may not have struck some of youlet it impress you now.

We do not wonder that certain men do not receive the Epistles, for they were not written to them. Why should they quibble at words which are addressed to men of another sort from themselves? Yet we do not marvel, for we knew it would be so. Here is a will and you begin to read it. But you do not find it interestingit is full of words and terms which you do not take the trouble to understand because they have no relation to yourself. But should you, in reading that will, come upon a clause in which an estate is left to you, I guarantee you that the nature of the whole document will seem changed to you.

You will be anxious now to understand the terms and to make sure of the clauses and you will even wish to remember every word of the clause which refers to yourself. O dear Friends, may you read the Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ as a testament of love to yourselves and then you will prize it beyond all the writings of the sages.

This leads me to make the second remark, that as these things are written to Believers, Believers ought especially to make themselves acquainted with them and to search into their meaning and intent. John says, These things have I written to you that believe on the name of the Son of God. Do not, I beseech you, neglect to read what the Holy Spirit has taken care to write to you. It is not merely John that writes. John is inspired of the Lord and these things are written to you by the Spirit of

God. Give earnest heed to every single word of what God has sent as His own Epistle to your hearts.

Value the Scriptures. Luther said that, he would not be in Paradise, if he might, without the Word of the Lord. But with the Word he could live in Hell itself. He said at another time that, he would not take all the world for one leaf of the Bible. The Scriptures are everything to the Christian his meat and his drink. The saint can say, O how I love Your Law! If we cannot say so, something is wrong with us. If we have lost our relish for Holy Scripture, we are out of condition and need to pray for spiritual health.

This much is the porch of my sermon, let us now enter more fully into our subject, noticing, first, that John wrote with a special purpose. And then going on to assert, secondly, that this purpose we ought to follow up.

I. First, JOHN WROTE WITH A SPECIAL PURPOSE. Men do not write well unless they have some end in writing. To sit down with paper and ink before you and so much space to fill up will ensure very poor writing. John knew what he was doing. His intent and aim were clear to his own mind and he tells us what they were.

According to the text the beloved Apostle had one clear purpose which branched out into three. To begin with, John wrote that we might enjoy the full assurance of our salvation. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. Many who believe on the name of Jesus are not sure that they have eternal life. They only hope so. Occasionally they have assurance but the joy is not abiding. They are like a minister I have heard of, who said he felt assured of his salvation, except when the wind was in the east. It is a wretched thing to be so subject to circumstances as many are.

What is true when the wind is in the soft south or the reviving west is equally true when the wind is neither good for man nor beast. John would not have our assurance vary with the weatherglass, nor turn with the vane. He says, These things have I written unto you, that you may know that you have eternal life. He would have us certain that we are partakers of the new life and so know it as to reap the golden fruit of such knowledge and be filled with joy and peace through believing.

I speak affectionately to the weaker ones who cannot yet say that they know they have believed. I speak not to your condemnation but to your consolation. Full assurance is not essential to salvation, but it is essential to satisfaction. May you getmay you get it at once. At any rate may you never be satisfied to live without it. You may have full assurance. You may have it without personal revelationsit is worked in us by the Word of God. These things are written that you may have it. And we may be sure that the means used by the Spirit are equal to the effect which He desires.

Under the guidance of the Spirit of God, John so wrote as to attain his end in writing. What, then, has he written with the design of making us know that we have eternal life? Go through the whole Epistle and you will see that it all presses in that direction. But we shall not at this present time have more than a glance through this chapter.

He begins thusWhosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. Do you believe that Jesus is the anointed of God? Is He so to you? Is He anointed as your Prophet, Priest and King? Have you realized His anointing so as to put your trust in Him? Do you receive Jesus as appointed of God to be the Mediator, the Propitiation for sin, the Savior of men? If so, you are born of God. How may I know this? Brethren, our evidence is the witness of God Himself as here recorded. We need no other witness.

Suppose an angel were to tell you that you are born of God, would that be a more sure testimony than the infallible Scripture? If you believe that Jesus is the Christ, you are born of God. John has thus positively declared the Truth of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. Can anything be more clear than this?

The loving spirit of John leads him to say, Everyone that loves Him that begat, loves Him also that is begotten of Him. Do you love God? Do you love His Only-Begotten Son? You can answer those two questions surely. I knew a dear Christian woman who would sometimes say, I know that I love Jesus. But my fear is that He does not love me. Her doubt used to make me smile, for it never could have occurred to me. If I love Him, I know it is because He first loved me. Love to God in us is always the work of Gods love towards us. Jesus loved us and gave Himself for us, and therefore we love Him in return. Love to Jesus is an effect which proves the existence of its cause.

Do you love Jesus? Do you feel a delight in Him? Is His name as music to your ear and honey to your mouth? Do you love to hear Him extolled? Ah, dear Friends! I know that to many of you a sermon full of His dear name is as a royal banquet. And if there is no Christ in a discourse, it is empty and vain and void to you. Is it not so? If you do, indeed, love Him that begat, and Him that is begotten of Him, then this is one of the things that is writtenthat you may know that you have eternal life.

John goes on to give another evidenceBy this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His Commandments. Do you love God? And do you love His children? Listen to another word from the same ApostleWe know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the Brethren. That may appear to be a very small evidence. But I can assure you it has often been a great comfort to my soul. I know I love the BrethrenI can say unto my Lord

*Is there a lamb among Your flock   
I would disdain to feed?*

I would gladly cheer and comfort the least of His people.   
Well, then, if I love the Brethren, I love the Elder Brother. If I love the   
babes, I love the Father. And I know that I have passed from death unto  
life. Brethren, take this evidence home in all its force. It is conclusive  
John has said, We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the Brethren. And he would not have spoken so positively  
if it had not been even so. Brethren, never be content with sentimental comfortsset your feet firmly upon the rock of fact and Truth. True Christian assurance is not a matter of guesswork but of mathematical precision. It is capable of logical proof and is no rhapsody or poetical fic  
tion.   
We are told by the Holy Spirit that if we love the Brethren we have   
passed from death to life. You can tell whether you love the Brethren, as   
such, for their Masters sake and for the Truths sake that is in them. And   
if you can truly say that you thus love them, then you may know that you   
have eternal life.   
Our Apostle gives us this further evidenceThis is the love of God,   
that we keep His Commandments: and His Commandments are not grievous. Obedience is the grand test of love. If you are living after your own   
will and pay no homage to God, you are none of His. If you never think of  
the Lord Jesus as your Master and never recognize the claims of God and   
never wish to be obedient to His will, you are not in possession of eternal   
life. If you desire to be obedient and prove that desire by your actions,  
then you have the Divine life within you. Judge yourselves. Is the tenor of   
your life obedience or disobedience? By the fruit you can test the root and   
the sap.  
But note, that this obedience must be cheerful and willing. No doubt  
some, for a while, obey the Commands of God unwillingly. They do not  
like them, though they bow to them. They fret and grizzle because of the  
restraints of piety. And this proves that they are hypocrites. What you   
wish to do you are doing in the sight of God. If there could be such a thing  
as holiness forced upon a man, it would be unholiness. O my Hearer, it   
may be that you cannot fall into a certain line of sin. But if you could, you   
wouldyour desires show what you really are. I have heard of Christian   
people, so called, going to sinful amusements, just, as they say, to enjoy a   
little pleasure.

Ah well, we see where you are! Where your pleasure is, your heart is. If   
you enjoy the pleasures of the world, you are of the world and with the   
world you will be condemned. If Gods Commands are grievous to you,  
then you are a rebel at heart. Loyal subjects delight in the royal Law. His   
Commandments are not grievous. I said to one who came to join the  
Church the other day, I suppose you are not perfect? and the reply was,  
No, Sir, I wish I might be. I said, And suppose you were? Oh, then,   
she said, that would be Heaven to me. So it would be to me. We delight  
in the Law of God after the inward man.   
Oh, that we could perfectly obey in thought and word and deed! This is  
our view of Heaven. Thus we sing of it   
*There shall we see His face,   
And never, never sin;   
There from the rivers of His Grace   
Drink endless pleasures in.*   
We would scarce ask to be rid of sorrow, if we might be rid of sin. We   
would bear any burden cheerfully if we could live without spot. We shall  
also be without grief. His Commandments are not grievous but they are   
ways of pleasantness and peace to us. Do you feel that you love the ways  
of God, that you desire holiness and follow after it joyfully? Then, dear Friends, you have eternal life and these are the sure evidences of it. Obedience, holiness, delight in God, never came into a human heart except from a heavenly hand. Wherever they are found they prove that the Lord has implanted eternal lifefor they are much too precious to be buried   
away in a dead soul.   
John then proceeds to mention three witnesses. Now, dear Hearers, do   
you know anything about these three witnesses? There are three that  
bear witness in earththe Spirit, and the water, and the bloodand these   
three agree in one. Do you know the Spirit? Has the Spirit of God  
quickened you, changed you, illuminated you, sanctified you? Does the   
Spirit of God dwell in you? Do you feel His sacred impulses? Is He the essence of the new life within you? Do you know Him as clothing you with  
His light and power? If so, you are alive unto God.  
Next, do you know the water, the purifying power of the death of  
Christ? Does the crucified Lord crucify your sins? Is the water applied to   
you to remove the power of sin? Do you now long to perfect holiness in the   
fear of God? This proves that you have eternal life. Do you also know the   
blood? This is a wretched age, in which men think little of the precious   
blood. My heart has well-near been broken and my very flesh has been  
enfeebled as I have thought upon the horrible things which have been  
spoken of late about the precious blood by men called Christian ministers. O my Soul, come you not into their secret! Unto their assembly, my   
Honor, be you not united. Beloved Friends, do you know the power of the  
blood to take away sin, the power of the blood to speak peace to the conscience, the power of the blood to give access to the Throne of Grace? Do   
you know the quickening, restoring, cheering power of the precious blood   
of Christ which is set forth in the Lords Supper by the fruit of the vine?   
Then in the mouth of these three witnesses shall the fact of your having   
eternal life be fully established. If the Spirit of God is in you, He is the   
earnest of your eternal inheritance. If the water has washed you, then you   
are the Lords. Jesus said to Peter, If I wash you not, you have no part in  
Me.   
But you are washed, and therefore the Lords. If the precious blood has  
cleansed you from the guilt of sin, you know that it has also purchased   
you from death and it is to you the guarantee of eternal life. I pray that   
you may, from this moment, enjoy the combined light of these three lamps   
of Godthe Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and so have full assurance of faith.   
One thing more I would notice. Read the ninth versethe Apostle puts   
our faith and assurance on the ground that we receive the witness of   
God. If I believe that I am saved because of this, that, and the other, I   
may be mistakenthe only sure ground is the witness of God. The inmost heart of Christian faith is that we take God at His Word. And we  
must accept that Word, not because of the probabilities of its statements,   
nor because of the confirmatory evidence of science and philosophy, but  
simply and alone because the Lord has spoken it. Many professing Christians fall sadly short of this point. They dare to judge the Word instead of  
bowing before it. They do not sit at the Masters feet but become doctors themselves. I thank God that I believe everything that God has spoken,  
whether I am able to see its reason or not.   
To me the fact that the mouth of God has spoken it stands in the place   
of all argument, either for or against. If Jehovah says so, so it is. Do you   
accept the witness of God? If not, you have made Him a liar and the Truth  
is not in you. But if you have received the witnesses of God, then this is   
His witness, that He has given to us eternal life and this life is in His  
Son. I say again, if your faith stands in the wisdom of men and is based   
upon the cleverness of a preacher, it will fail you. But if it stands on the   
sure Word of the Lord, it will stand forever and this may be to you a special token that you have eternal life. I have said enough upon this subjectoh that God may bless it to you! May we be enabled, from what John  
has written, to gather beyond doubt that we have the life of God within   
our souls.   
Furthermore, John wrote that we might know our spiritual life to be   
eternal. Please notice this, for there are some of Gods children who have   
not yet learned this cheering lesson. The life of God in the soul is not  
transient but abiding. Not temporary but eternal. Some think that the life   
of God in the Believers soul may die out. But how, then, could it be eternal? If it dies, it is not eternal life. If it is eternal life, it cannot die. I know  
that modern deceivers deny that eternal means eternal but you and I have   
not learned their way of pumping the meanings out of the words which  
the Holy Spirit uses. We believe that eternal means endless, and that if I   
have eternal life, I shall live eternally. Brethren, the Lord would have us   
know that we have eternal life.   
Learn, then, the doctrine of the eternality of life given in the new birth.   
It must be eternal life, because it is the life of God. We are born again of  
the Spirit of God by a living and incorruptible seed, which lives and abides   
forever. We are said to be made partakers of the Divine nature. Surely,   
this means, among other things, that we receive an undying life. For immortality is of the essence of the Life of God. His name is I AM that I AM.   
He has life in Himself and the Son has life in Himself and of this life we   
are the receivers. This was His purpose concerning His Son, that He might  
give eternal life to as many as the Father had given Him. If it is the life of  
God which is in a Believerand certainly it is, for He has begotten us   
againthen that life must be eternal. As children of God, we partake of  
His life and as heirs of God, we inherit His eternity. This is life eternal,   
that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom   
You have sent.   
Beloved, our Lord Jesus Christ calls the life of His people eternal life.   
How often do I quote this text! It seems to lie on the tip of my tongueI   
give unto My sheep eternal life. And they shall never perish, neither shall  
any man pluck them out of My hand. And again, He that believes in Him   
has everlasting life. It is not temporary life, not life which at a certain period must grow old and die but everlasting life. It shall be in him a well of   
water springing up into everlasting life. This is the life of Christ within   
the soul. For you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. I live.  
Yet not I, but Christ lives in me. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in glory. If our life is Christs   
life, we shall not die until Christ dies. If our life is hidden in Him, it will   
never be discovered and destroyed until Christ Himself is destroyed. Let  
us rest in this.   
Mark again how our Lord has put itBecause I live, you shall live   
also. As long, then, as Jesus lives, His people must live, for the argument  
will always be the same, Because I live, you shall live also. We are so one   
with Christ that while the Head lives the members cannot die. We are so   
one with Christ that the challenge is given, Who shall separate us from   
the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord? A list is added of  
things which may be supposed to separate but we are told that they cannot do so, for in all these things we are more than conquerors through  
Him that loved us. Is it not clear, then, that we are quickened with a life  
so heavenly and Divine that we can never die?   
John tells us in this very chapter, We know that whosoever is born of  
God sins not. He does not go back to his old sin, he does not again come   
under the dominion of sin. But, he that is begotten of God keeps himself   
and that Wicked One touches him not.   
Beloved, I entreat you to keep a hard and firm grip on this blessed doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints. How earnestly do I long, that you   
may know that you have eternal life! Away with your doctrine of being  
alive in Christ today and dead tomorrow! Poor, miserable doctrine, that is!   
Hold fast to eternal salvation through the Eternal Covenant carried out by  
eternal love unto eternal life. For the Spirit of God has written these   
things unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may  
know that you have eternal life.   
Once more, according to the Authorized text, though not according to   
the Revised Version, John desired the increase and confirmation of their   
faith. He says, That you might believe on the name of the Son of God.   
John wrote to those who believed that they might believe in a more emphatic sense. As our Savior has come not only that we may have life but  
that we may have it more abundantly, so does John write that having

faith we may have more of it. Come Beloved, listen for a moment to this!   
You have the milk of faith but God wills that you should have this cream   
of assurance! He would increase your faith. May you believe more extensively.   
Perhaps you do not believe all the Truth of God because you have not  
yet perceived it. There were members of the Corinthian Church who had   
not believed in the resurrection of the dead and there were Galatians who   
were very cloudy upon justification by faith. Many a Christian man is narrow in the range of his faith from ignorance of the Lords mind. Like certain tribes of Israel they have conquered a scanty territory as yet, though  
all the land is theirs from Dan to Beersheba. John would have us push  
out our fences and increase the enclosure of our faith. Let us believe all  
that God has revealed, for every Truth of God is precious and practically   
useful.   
Perhaps your doctrinal belief has been poor and thin. Oh that the Lord   
would turn the water into wine! Many of you live upon milk and yet your years qualify you to feed on meat. Why keep the babes diet? You that believe are exhorted to go in and out and find pasture. Range throughout the whole Revelation of God. It will be well for you if your faith also increases intensively. Oh that you may more fully believe what you do believe! We need deeper insight and firmer conviction. We do not half believe, as yet, any of us. Many of you only skim the pools of the Truth of God. Blessed is the wing which brushes the surface of the River of Life. But infinitely more blessed is it to plunge into the depths of it. This is Johns desire for youthat you would believe with all you heart and soul  
and strength.   
He would have you believe more constantly, so that you may say, My  
heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixedI will sing and give praise. It is  
not always so with us. We are at times chicken-hearted. We play the man  
today and the mouse tomorrow. Lord have mercy upon uswe are an inconsistent people, fickle as the wind. The Lord would have us abide always in Him with strong and mighty confidence, being rooted and built up   
in Him.   
He would have us trust courageously. Some can believe in a small way   
about small things. Oh for a boundless trust in the infinite God! We need   
more of a venturesome faiththe faith to do and dare. Often we see the   
way of power but have not the faith which would be equal to it. See Peter  
walking on the sea! I do not advise any of you to try it, neither did our   
Lord advise Peter to do sowe do well enough if we walk uprightly on   
land. But when Peter had once taken a few steps on the sea, he ought to  
have known that His Lord could help Him all the rest of the way. But alas, His faith failed and he began to sink. He could have walked   
all the way to Jesus if he had believed right on. So is it with usour faith   
is good enough for a spurt but it lacks staying power. Oh, may God give   
us to believe so that we may not only trip over a wave or two but walk on   
the water to the end! If the Lord bids you, you may go through fire and not   
be burned, through the floods and not be drowned. Such a fearless, careless, conquering faith may the Lord work in us!   
We need also to have our faith increased in the sense of its becoming  
more practical. Some people have a fine new faith, as pretty as the bright  
poker in the parlor and as useless. We want an everyday faith, not to look   
at, but to use. Brothers and Sisters, we need faith for the kitchen and the   
pantry, as well as for the drawing-room and the conservatory. We need  
workshop faith, as well as Prayer Meeting faith. We need faith as to the   
common things of life and the trying things of death. We could do with  
less paint if we had more power. We need less varnish and more verity.   
God give to you that you may believe on the name of the Son of God with  
a sound, commonsense faith which will be found wearable, and washable,  
and workable throughout life.   
We need to believe more joyfully. Oh what a blessed thing it is when  
you reach the rest and joy of faith! If we would truly believe the promise of  
God and rest in the Lords certain fulfillment of it, we might be as happy   
as the angels. I notice how very early in the morning the birds begin to   
singbefore the sun is up or even the first gray tints of morning light are visiblethe little songsters are awake and singing. Too often we refuse to sing until the sun is more than up and noon is near. Shame on us! Will we never trust our God? Will we never praise Him for favors to come? Oh for a faith that can sing through the night and through the winter! Faith that can live on a promise is the faith of Gods elect. You will never enjoy Heaven below until you believe without wavering. The Lord give you such  
faith.   
II. Thus I have gone through my first head and taken nearly all the   
time. I must now come to push of pike, as the old soldiers used to say. We   
must drive our teaching home. THE PURPOSE WHICH JOHN HAD IN HIS  
MIND WE OUGHT TO FOLLOW UP. If he wished us to know that we have  
eternal life, Brothers and Sisters, let us try to know it. The Word of God   
was written for this purpose. Let us use it for its proper end. The whole of  
these Scriptures were written that, we might believe that Jesus is the   
Christ and that believing we might have life through His name. This Book is written to you who believe, that you may know that you   
believe. Will you suffer your Bibles to be a failure to you? Will you live in   
perpetual questioning and doubt? If so, the Book has missed its mark for   
you. The Bible is sent that you may have full assurance of your possession of eternal lifedo not, therefore, dream that it will be presumptuous   
on your part to aspire to it. Our conscience tells us that we ought to seek   
full assurance of salvation. It cannot be right for us to be children of God   
and not to know our own Father.   
How can we kneel down and say, Our Father which are in Heaven,   
when we do not know whether He is our Father or not? Will not a life of   
doubt tend to be a life of falsehood? May we not be using language which  
is not true to our consciousness? Can you sing joyful hymns which you   
fear are not true of you? Will you join in worship when your heart does   
not know that God is your God? Until the spirit of adoption enables you to   
cry, Abba, Father, where is your love to God? Can you rest? Dare you   
rest, while it is a question whether you are saved or not?   
Can you go home to your dinner today and enjoy your meal, while there  
is a question about your souls eternal life? Oh, be not so foolhardy as to  
run risks on that matter! I pray you, make sure work for eternity. If you   
leave anything in uncertainty, let it concern your body or your estate but   
not your soul. Conscience bids you seek to know that you have eternal   
life, for without this knowledge many duties will be impossible of performance. Many Scriptures, which I cannot quote this morning, stir you up to  
this duty.   
Are you not bid to make your calling and election sure? Are you not a   
thousand times over exhorted to rejoice in the Lord and to give thanks   
continually? But how can you rejoice if the dark suspicion haunts you,   
that perhaps, after all, you have not the life of God? You must get this   
question settled or you cannot rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him.   
Come, Brothers and Sisters, I beseech you, as you would follow Scripture   
and obey the Lords preceptsget the assurance without which you cannot obey them.   
Listen, as I close, to the reasons why each Believer should seek to know that he has eternal life. Here they are. Assurance of your salvation will bring you the peace of God, which passes all understanding. If you know that you are saved, you can sit down in poverty, or in sickness, or under slander and feel perfectly content. Full assurance is the Kohinoor among the jewels the heavenly Bridegroom adorns His spouse. Assurance is a mountain of spices, a land that flows with milk and honey. To be the assured possessor of eternal life is to find a Paradise beneath the stars,  
where the mountains and the hills break forth before you into singing. Full assurance will sometimes overflow in waterfalls of delight. Peace   
flows like a river and here and there it leaps in cascades of ecstatic joy.   
There are seasons when the plant of peace is in flower and then it sheds a   
perfume as of myrrh and cassia. Oh, the blessedness of the man who  
knows that he has eternal life! Sometimes in our room alone, when we   
have been enjoying this assurance, we have laughed outright, for we could   
not help it. If anybody had wondered why a man was laughing by himself  
alone, we could have explained that it was nothing ridiculous which had   
touched us, but our mouth was filled with laughter because the Lord had   
done great things for us, whereof we were glad!   
That religion which sets no sweetmeats on the table is a stingy housekeeper. I do not wonder that some people give up their starveling religionit is hardly worth the keeping. The child of God who knows that he   
has eternal life goes to school, but he has many a holiday. And he anticipates that day of going Home when he shall see the face of his Beloved   
forever.   
Brethren, full assurance will give us the full result of the Gospel. The   
Gospel ought to make us holy. And so it will, when we are in full possession of it. The Gospel ought to make us separate from the world. The Gospel ought to make us lead a heavenly life here below. And so it will, if we   
drink deep draughts of it. But if we take only a sip of it now and again, we   
give it no chance of working out its design in us. Do not paddle about the   
margin of the Water of Life but first wade in up to your knees and then   
hasten to plunge into the waters to swim in. Beware of contentment with  
shallow Grace. Prove what the Grace of God can do for you by giving yourself up to its power.   
Full assurance gives a man a grateful zeal for the God he loves. These   
are the people that will go to the Congo for Jesus, for they know they are

His. These are the people that will lay down their all for Christ, for Christ   
is theirs. These are the people that will bear scorn and shame and misrepresentation for the Truths sakefor they know that they have eternal life.  
These are they that will keep on preaching and teaching, spending and   
workingfor theirs is the kingdom of Heaven and they know it. Men will   
do little for what they doubt and much for what they believe. If you have   
lost your title deeds and you do not know whether your house is your own  
or not, you are not going to spend much in repairs and enlargements.   
When you know that Heaven is yours, you are anxious to get ready for it.   
Full assurance finds fuel for zeal to feed upon.   
This also creates and sustains patience. When we know that we have   
eternal life, we do not fret about the trials of this passing life. I could point  
to the Brethren here this morning and I could mention Sisters at home,   
who amaze me by their endurance of pain and weakness. This I know  
concerning them, that they never have a doubt about their interest in   
Christ. And for this cause they are able to surrender themselves into  
those dear hands which were pierced for them. They know that they are   
the Lords and so they say, Let Him do what seems Him good. A blind child was in his fathers arms and a stranger came into the   
room and took him right away from his father. Yet he did not cry or complain. His father said to him, Johnny, are you afraid? You do not know   
the person who has got hold of you. No, father, he said, I do not know  
who he is but you do. When pain gives us an awkward nip and we do not  
know whether we shall live or diewhen we are called to undergo a dangerous operation and pass into unconsciousnessthen we can say, I do  
not know where I am but my Father knows and I leave all with Him. Assurance makes us strong to suffer.   
This, dear Friends, will give you constant firmness in your confession of   
Divine Truth. You who do not know whether you are saved or not, I hope   
the Lord will keep you from denying the faith. But those who have a firm   
grip of it, these are the men who will never forsake it. A caviler in an omnibus said to a Christian man one day, Why, you have nothing, after all,   
to rest upon. I can prove to you that your Scriptures are not authentic.   
The humble Christian man replied, Sir, I am not a learned man and I   
cannot answer your questions. But I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and   
I have experienced such a change in character, and I feel such a joy and   
peace through believing, that I wish you knew my Savior, too. The answer he received was a very unexpected onethe unbeliever  
said, You have got me there. I cannot answer that. Just sowe have got   
them there. If we know what has been worked in us by Divine Grace, they  
cannot overcome us. The full-assurance man baffles the very devil. Satan   
is cunning enough but those who know and are persuaded, are birds  
which he cannot take in the snares of Hell. When you know that your  
Lord is able to keep that which you have committed to Him until that day,   
then you are firm as a rock. God make you so.   
Dear Brethren, this is the kind of thing that will enable you to bear a   
telling testimony for your Lord. It is of no use to stand up and preach  
things that may or may not be true. I am charged with being a dreadful  
dogmatist and I am not anxious to excuse myself. When a man is not   
quite sure of a thing, he grows very liberalanybody can be a liberal with   
money which he cannot claim to be his own. The broad-school man says,  
I am not sure, and I do not suppose that you are sure, for indeed nothing   
is sure. Does this sandy foundation suit you? I prefer rock. The things which I have spoken to you from my youth up have been   
such as I have tried and proved and to me they wear an absolute certainty, confirmed by my personal experience. I have tried these things  
they have saved me and I cannot doubt them. I am a lost man if the Gospel I have preached to you is not true. And I am content to bide the issue of the day of Judgment. I do not preach doubtingly, for I do not live doubtingly. I know what I have told you to be truewhy should I speak as if I were not sure? If you want to make your own testimony credible in such a day as this, you must have something to say that you are sure about. And until you are sure about it I would advise you to hold your tongue. We do not require any more questionings. The market is over  
stocked. We need no more doubt, honest or dishonest.   
Brethren, if you know that you have eternal life, you are prepared to   
live and equally prepared to die. How frequently do I stand at the bedside   
of our dying members! I am every now and then saying to myself, I shall  
certainly meet with some faint-hearted one. Surely I shall come across   
some child of God who is dying in the dark. But I have not met with any  
such. Brethren, a child of God may die in the dark. One said to old Mr.   
Dodd, the quaint old PuritanHow sad that our brother should have   
passed away in the darkness! Do you doubt his safety? No, said old Mr.   
Dodd, no more than I doubt the safety of Him who said, when He was dying, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?  
Full assurance, as we have said before, is not of the essence of salvation. Still, I beg of you to note that all along through these many years, in  
each case, when I have gone to visit any of our Brothers and Sisters at  
death, I have always found them departing in sure and certain hope of   
seeing the face of their Lord in Glory. I have often marveled that this   
should be without exception and I glory in it. Often have they said to me,   
We have fed on such good food that we may well be strong in the Lord. God grant that you may have this assurance, all of you! May sinners   
begin to believe in Jesus and saints believe more firmly, for Christs sake!   
Amen.

**Portion Of Scripture Read Before Sermon1 John 5.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN-BOOK175, 738, 711.   
Adapted from The C.H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307 Sermon #596 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

PRAYING AND WAITING   
NO. 596

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 23, 1864 BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God. And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us: and if we know that He hears us,   
whatever we ask, we know that we have   
the petitions that we desired of Him.   
1 John 5:13-15.

THE beloved Apostle John here addresses himself to those who have believed on the Son of God. And having himself ascended the high hill of fellowship with Jesus, he labors to conduct his fellow Believers up three glorious ascents of the mount of God. I think I see before me now three shining ladders and with the Glory of God reflected from his brow, I see John, like an angel of God, conducting the Lords Jacobs up the glittering rounds. The first ascent he would have them take is from faith to the full assurance of faith.

He writes to them as Believers and he says, These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life. As Believers, they had eternal life, for, He that believes on the Son of God has everlasting life, and shall never come into condemnation. Yes, He that lives and believes in Christ, though he were dead, yet should he live. But it is one thing to have eternal life and another thing to know that we have eternal life.

In the third verse of the second chapter of this very Epistle, this Apostle draws a distinction between knowing Christ and knowing that we know Him, for he writes, Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His Commandments. A man may know Christ in his heart and yet at certain seasons, through weakness of judgment or stress of temptations, he may be cast into doubts as to whether he has any saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus at all. But he alone is happy, who, building upon the sure foundation of Gods promise, gives all diligence to make his calling and election sure and enjoys an assured confidence of his interest in Christ.

I know there are some who do not like us to draw any distinction between faith and assurance. But the more I think upon the subject the more I am compelled to do itnot for the encouragement of unbeliefbut for the consolation of those weaklings of the flock who, upon another ground must be rejected altogether since their trembling faith has never, as yet, ripened into assurance. Believers who have observed their own experience must have noticed that even when they can cast themselves in all simplicity upon Christ Jesus and consequently have a right to be confident of their own safetyyet even then they cannot at all times enjoy the comfortable persuasion of security because their minds are distracted

and Satan has gained an advantage over them.

They trust their God, but it is with something of the spirit of Job when he said, Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. The shadow of the dark thought that perhaps you may prove an apostate darkens your path and you cling to the Lord, not with a joyful assurance which can say, He is mine, but with that desperate faith which cries, I must believe, for otherwise there is nothing before me but destruction! To whom shall I go but unto You, for You have the words of eternal life!

Even the strongest of saints must be led, I think, in their experience to observe that while always believing they are not always assured. This must certainly be the case with the weaker ones and the beginners. I know faith is a sureness concerning the Truth of God. I cheerfully accept the definition. But I must bid you observe that there is a difference between being sure of the Truth of God and being sure that I am a partaker of Divine Life. I come to Christ not knowing whether He died especially for me, or not. But I trust in Him as the Savior of

sinnersthis is faith. And having trusted in Him I discover that I have a particular and special interest in the merit of His blood and in the love of His heartthis is rather assurance than faith.

Although assurance will grow out of faith and that is scarcely faith which does not lead to assurance, yet the two are not identical. You may believe in Christ and have eternal life and still be in doubt about it. You ought not to be, but still you may fall into such a state. The Apostle desires that if you believe, you may come to a still higher state and may infallibly and joyfully know that you have eternal life. O Brethren, do not fear to mount this ladder! The steps are very easyjust continue to believe as you have believed! Receive the Word of God as it standsyou need no other ground of assurance but that which is written thereand the Spirit shall enable you to see your own title, sealed and sure. Continue to rest in Jesus and you shall find that in Him, as you have attained faith, so in Him you shall also obtain an assurance of faith. Here is the first heavenly staircase.

The Apostle desires to lead the disciples up a second ascent. Observe it. And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. From the assurance of our interest in Christ the next step is to a firm belief in the power of prayer, in the fact that God does regard your prayer. And this you can hardly get unless you have attained to an assurance of your own interest in Him. Belief in the prevalence of my prayer, to a great extent, must depend upon my conviction of my interest in Christ. For instance, here is Pauls argumentHe that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

I must therefore be sure that God has given me Christ. And if He has given Christ to me, then I know that He will give me all things. But if I have any doubt about Christs being mine and about my being the receiver of Gods unspeakable gift in Christ, I cannot reason as the Apostle did and I cannot, therefore, have that confidence that my prayer is heard. Again, Gods fatherhood is another ground of our confidence in prayer. If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?

But if I am not clear that God is my Father. If I have not the spirit of Adoption, then I cannot come to God with this confidence that He will give me my desire. My sonship being assured, I am confident that my Father knows what I have need of and will hear me. But my sonship being in dispute, my power in prayer vanishesI cannot hope to prevail. Besides, the man who has faith in Christ and knows himself to be saved has already received answers to prayer! And answers to prayer are some of the best supports to our faith as to the future success of our petitions. Because He has inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live. But if I have no reason to conclude that God has heard my prayer for forgivenessif I am in doubt as to whether my first cries have ever reached His ear and obtained an answerhow can I come with confidence?

No, Brothers and Sisters, seek in the first place, since you have believed in Jesus, to get the witness within you that you are born of God. Then go from this gracious ascent to the nextknowing and being assured that He hears us always because we do the things which are pleasing in His sight and plead the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who is All in All to us. If you have climbed this second ascent, and I hope there are many here who have, the third is not difficult. It is to go from your belief that God hears prayer to a conviction that when you have prayed you have the petitions that you have desired of Him.

In other words, to ascend from a solemn conviction of the usefulness of prayer to a particular and special belief that in your own case, when you have desired anything of God in prayer through Jesus Christ, you have obtained the answer! Not that you have had the particular mercy at once given into your handsfor there is much that is really ours which, nevertheless, is not at present in our sensible possessionand yet is truly ours. We have Heaven, but we have it not in enjoyment as of yet. And so we may have answers to our prayers and yet, as far as our sense is concerned, we may not have received anything. We have it, but we see it not. It is ours, but our God sees fit to reserve it for a season for a further trial of our faith.

If a man had nothing more than he could seethere are many of you here who have possessions across the sea, or ships far off upon the waterand if you had only what you can see just now, your estates would be sorely diminished! So we may have the answers to many of our prayers really have the answersand yet for the present those answers, like a ship upon a long voyage, may not yet have returned. Yet we have the answer as the merchant has the ship which is as much his upon the Atlantic as when it shall lie alongside his wharf. May we, dear Friends, obtain the gracious position of knowing that having sought the Lord in prayer through Jesus Christ, we have the petitions which we desired of Him!

I want, this morning, as God may help me, to strengthen our dear Brethren to look for answers to prayer. Seeing that you have the promise of an answer to prayer and that the answer must come to you, look for it!

Unless you believe that you have the answer in reality, you are not likely to watch for its appearance. But if you have come so far as to believe that you have the answer, I do now earnestly urge you to look for it and rejoice.

First, let me explain explanation. Secondly, let us say something in the praise of this believing in our answer to prayer, commendation. Thirdly, let us rebuke some who do not like to have their prayers answeredhere we have rebuke. And then, fourthly, let us stir you up to exercise this gracious privilege which is your undoubted right as the children of Godthis is exhortation.

I. EXPLANATIONand let the explanation be taken from instances in Holy Writ. Elijah bowed his knee on the top of Carmel and prayed to God for rain. For three years there had not been a single drop descending upon Israel. He pleads, and having finished his intercession, he says to his servant, Go and look from the top of Carmel towards the sea. He did not think it sufficient to have prayedhe believed that he had the petition which he desired of God and therefore he sent his servant to see. The answer which was brought back was not encouraging. But he said to his servant, Go again seven times, and seven times that servant went.

Elijah does not appear to have staggered in his faithhe believed he had the petition and therefore expected soon to see itsince seeing is often a blessed reward of believing. He sent his servant till at last he brought back the news, There is a little cloud the size of a mans hand. Quite enough for Elijahs faith. He acts upon the belief that he has the petition, though not a drop of rain has fallen. He goes down to tell Ahab to make ready his chariot that the rain not stop himin the full and firm conviction that as certainly as he had askedso surely would the rain descend!

David is another case in point. Let me quote but this one expression, In the morning will I direct my prayer unto You and will look up. As men take an arrow from the quiver, so David takes his prayer. He fits it to the string and bends the bow by vehemence of desire and then he takes aim he directs his prayer to God. He is not shooting to the right hand or to the left, but upwards to his God he points his polished shaft. Not to those who will afterwards read the Psalm. Not to those who are listening to his voicehe directs it to Heaven. And having done so, draws the bow with all his strength and away flies the arrow.

Anxious to know how it speeds, he looks up to see whether the Lord accepts his desires and continues to look up to see whether a gracious answer is returned. This is what I mean by the Christians knowing he has an answer to his petition and waiting and watching till it comes. Take the case of Samson, poor, strong, yet weak Samsonas strong in faith as he was in body. After his hair had grown again he is brought forth to make sport for the Philistines and he prays to God to strengthen him but this once.

Mark how he believed he had the petitionfor he said to the man who conducted him blindfolded into the Philistines temple, Put me near the two pillars whereon the house does lean. And why does he seek to stand there? Because he believes he has his petition. Having taken up his position, he grasps the two pillars and bows himself with all his might. Why? Why does he strain himself so? Is it possible that he hopes to move those mighty columns from their bases? Yes, it is not only possible, but certain that he will work wonders, for he believes that he has his petition from his God!

See how in the strength of his belief he pulls down the temple of Dagon about the heads of the worshippers and proves the power of believing supplication! Something of that kind of spirit I want Believers to experienceto know that their prayer is heard and then to act upon the conviction that it is so. Take again, the case of Hannah, a woman of a sorrowful spirit. She prayed without an audible voice, only her lips moved. As soon as Eli told her that God had heard the prayer, observe the change which was worked in her, Then was her countenance no more sad.

Why, Hannah, why do you smile? You have not yet seen your husband. You have no signs that God has visited you and granted the desire of your heart! No, but the Man of God has said it and that is enough for her! The wrinkles disappear from her brow and the tears from her eyesyou ask her why and she says, I have the petition that I desired of God: I asked in faith and the Lord has been pleased to hear my prayer.

A yet more wonderful instance is that of Jacob, who not only believes in the utility of prayer but he will not let the Angel depart till he wins His blessing. This was going farthernot only believing that there was a blessing and that prayer could get it, but a determination not to cease prayer till he had some visible token that he had obtained it! Here was strong faith! The case may be exceptional and especially when we pray for temporal mercies I do not think we have any right to give the Lord such a time and to say we will not rise from our knees till the favor is bestowed. That might be presumption rather than faith.

But there are times when mercies are so necessary and when we are so clear that our prayer is according to Gods willwhen the prayer is so evidently indicted upon our heart by the Holy Spirit that we may even say unto the Covenant Angel, I will not leave this closet till You give me Your answer. I will never cease to pray till You deign to smileI will not let You go unless You bless me. I have to complain of myself and I suppose you have to complain in the same manner that so much of our prayer is lacking here. We do not send the servant to look to the sea. We do not let our countenance grow glad when we have poured out our hearts before God

*At His feet we groan, yet bring our wants away.*

This is base and wicked of us! O that we had true faiththe real faith which would honor God and comfort ourselves by believing that we have the petition which we have desired of Him. So much by way of explanation.

II. We come now to COMMENDATION. Let me commend the habit of expecting an answer to prayer and looking for it for many reasons. I will but give you an outline of them. By this means you put an honor upon Gods ordinance of prayer. He who prays without expecting to receive a return mocks at the Mercy Seat of God. That Mercy Seat was made of gold, of pure gold, as if to show its preciousness to all true Believers. And, by not expecting to receive anything of God, you in effect despise the Throne

of Grace.

Let me ask you, of what use can the Mercy Seat be if God has said, Seek you My face in vain? If no answers come to supplication, then supplication is a vain waste of time! You play with prayer when you do not expect an answer! You are not treating it in an earnest, solemn and devout manner. You are trifling with it. Little children get their bows and shoot their arrowsthey care not where, up into the air, to the east, or to the westit is nothing to them. But men in sober fight take their aim and watch their arrows. You are but playing with Gods ordinances of prayer, if, when you pray you are careless about results.

The truly prayerful man is resolved in his own soul that he must have the answer. He feels his need of it! He sees Gods promise. His heart is stirred to earnestness and he cannot be satisfied to go away without some token for good. You would not treat the Mercy Seat as though it were a place for boys to play at! You would honor it, would you not? You would not be among those of whom the Prophet said, You have snuffed at it, and said, What a weariness it is. No, but you would make the place where God meets with His people glorious. You would take your shoes off because it is holy ground. But you cannot do this except you believe that prayer has power in it and know that you have the petitions which you ask of Him.

Such a spirit, in the next place, having honored prayer, also honors Gods attributes. To believe that the Lord will hear my prayer is honor to His truthfulness. He has said that He will and I believe that He will keep His Word. It is honorable to His power. I believe that He can make the Word of His mouth stand fast and steadfast. It is honorable to His love. The larger things I ask, the more do I honor the liberality, Grace and love of God in asking such great things. It is honorable to His wisdom, for if I ask what He has told me to ask and expect Him to answer me, I believe that His Word is wise and may safely be kept. If you would dishonor every attribute of God, pray with unbelief. But if, on the contrary, you would put a crown on the head of Him who has saved you and who is the God of your salvation, believe that if you ask He will give and if you knock He will open unto you!

Again, to believe that God hears prayer and to look for an answer is truly to reverence God Himself. If I stand side by side with a friend and I ask him a favor and when he is about to reply to me I turn away and open the door and go to my business, why what an insult is this! It is not always considered courteous if you do not answer a person. But it is always discourteous if, after having asked a question, you do not wait for the answer. If I send a petition to a mans door and then having earnestly asked, or pretended to ask earnestly, I am utterly careless about the answer, I have not treated the man respectfully. If that person should send me a letter in return to my request and I should not even take the trouble to open it, how could I provoke him worse?

So you first ask God to grant you a favor and then you do not stop to get it. And when He sends it, you receive it as a matter of course and do not praise it as a gracious answer to your supplication. Christian Brother, let me commend to you the gracious art of believing in the success of your prayersbecause in this way you will help to insure your own success. A beggar knocks at your door. He wants charity. He has a firm belief that you will give it to him. The door does not open to him the first time he knows you have seen him and that you understand his wantshe therefore knocks again. He is so confident of your generosity that he continues waiting at your doorstep.

You, at first, take little notice of himyou are busy with other matters. You come again to the window and you say, What, is he still there? Perhaps even then you are called away by urgent business and you attend to it rather than to him. But coming once more to the door, there he stands! Why, then, you say to him, you shall have your desire. And your hand is in your pocket to give him the relief he wants. It is even so with our God. When He sees us wait upon Him He will not permit us to wait without receiving the reward.

He will strengthen your heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord. Merely to knock at Mercys door without waiting for a reply is but like the runaway knocks of idle boys in the streetyou cannot expect an answer to such prayers! Stand upon your watchtower and

*Hear what God the Lord will speak   
For He will speak peace unto His people,   
And to His saints   
But let them not turn again to folly.*

Furthermore, thus to believe in the result of prayer tries and manifests faith. Perhaps nine prayers out of ten which we offer might have been as well not offered for any good which they have done to us. Am I too severe? I mean our hurried morning prayers when business is calling us away. I mean our sleepy evening prayers when we are scarcely half awake. I mean those formal petitions, (I am not speaking of those who use a book, for you can be quite as formal without a book as with)those formal petitions in which you have only expressed godly opinions without feeling godly emotions, passed over holy words without their really coming from your hearts.

But, Brethren, when we pray and expect the answer, this is a sure token that our prayer has not been a mere formality. Then Faith lays hold upon God and she waits. Patience stands by her side, knowing that the windows of Heaven, however fast they may be closed, will open soon and Gods right hand will scatter His liberality upon waiting souls. So Faith waits and watches and waits and watches again. This is the reason why the glorious doctrine of the Second Advent has such a blessed effect on some of Gods people. It exercises their faith and brings hope into the field.

And so answers to faith exercises our watching faith and trains our hope to look up. The devil says, Surely God will never hear your prayer. You answer, I have the petition and am waiting till He puts it into my handit is up there, labeled for me and set aside in the treasury for me and I shall have it. I am waiting till the time comes when I may safely receive that which is mine even now. So the flesh whispers, It is in vain, but Faith says, No, prayer is blessed, prayer is Gods Spirit returning

where it came and it will never fail.   
But how can such a sinner as you are hope to succeed with God,   
whispers Unbelief? But Faith, like Abraham, considers not its own body,  
though dead, neither the deadness of Sarahs womb, but staggers not at  
the promise through unbeliefit keeps on waiting till it gets its reward!   
Such a habit, moreover, helps to bring out our gratitude to God. None  
sing so sweetly as those who get answers to prayer! Oh, some of you   
would give my Master sweet songs if you did but notice when He hears   
you!   
But perhaps the Lord may drop an answer to your prayer and you   
merely cry, It is a fortunate circumstance, and God gets no praise for it.   
But if, instead, you had been watching for it and seen it come, you would   
fall on your knees in holy gratitude and say *I love the LordHe heard my cries,   
And pitied every groan   
Long as I live, when troubles rise,   
Ill hasten to His Throne.*   
Let me add this would make your faith grow, would make your love burn,   
and every Grace would be put in active exercise if, believing in the power  
of prayer, you watched for the answer and when the answer came went  
with a song of praise to the Saviors feet!   
I will not say more, lest by multiplying commendations I rather weaken   
the force of what I say. I could not praise this habit too much. The man  
whom God has taught to pray believingly has all Gods treasures at his   
command. You have the privy key of Jehovahs secret cabinet. You are   
rich to all the extents of bliss. You have about you the Omnipotence of  
God for you have power to move the arm that moves the world! He who   
lacks this mercy is but weak and poverty-stricken, but he who has gained

it is one of the mightiest in Gods Israel and will do great exploits. III. Having thus spoken by way of commendation, we pause awhile and   
turn to speak by way of REBUKE. But it shall be such a gentle rebuke as   
shall not break the head. I am not just now speaking to those who never  
pray at alllet me, however, solemnly remind them that prayerless souls   
are Christ-less souls and will be lost souls before long. Nor am I speaking   
to those of you who merely prattle through a form of prayerI give you  
but this one word: remember that God will not forever be mocked by you  
and that your prayers are numbered with your sinsyou do but insult the   
Majesty of Heaven while you pretend to worship Him.   
I am communing this morning with those persons to whom John   
wroteyou who believe on the name of the Son of God. You who believe in  
the efficacy of prayer. How is it that you do not expect an answer? I think   
I hear you say, One reason is my own unworthiness. How can I think   
that God will hear such prayers as mine? I am fickle as the wind that  
blows and full of infirmities. I am one of the meanest of His sheep. If I   
were one of His ministers I would believe that my prayer was heard. But I   
am the least in Israel and my fathers house is all unknown. I do serve   
God sometimes a little, but oh, how little! And even that little is marred with selfishness! I am the very worst in the whole family. How can I think   
that my prayer will be heard?   
Brothers and Sisters, let me remind you that it is not the person who   
prays that commends the prayer to God, but the fervency of the prayer in  
the virtue of the Great Intercessor. Why do you think the Apostle wrote   
these wordsElijah was a man of like passions with us? Why was that  
statement made? Why, precisely to meet the case of those who say, My  
prayer is not heard because I have such-and-such faults. Here is a case   
in point with yoursElijah was a man of like passions with us, and yet  
he prays earnestly that it might not rain and it rained notso that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man is not prevented in its acceptance before high Heaven by the infirmity of the person who offers it. Yes, you say, but, Sir, you do not know the particular state of mind I   
have been in when I have prayed. I am so fluttered and worried and vexed   
and troubled that I cannot expect my prayer, offered in such a state of   
mind, to prevail with God. Did you ever read the thirty-fourth Psalm and   
carefully consider where David was when his prayer had such good speed   
with God? He says, O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt His   
name together. I sought the Lord and He heard me and delivered me from  
all my fears. This poor man cried and the Lord heard him and saved him   
out of all his troubles.   
Now where do you think David prayed that prayer which God thus   
heard? Read the heading of the PsalmA Psalm of David, when he  
changed his behavior before Abimelech, who drove him away and he departed. You remember what he did? He played the madman and let his   
spit run down his beard. He acted the fool and was never more a fool, except once, than he was then! And yet even then, in his fools play, God   
heard his prayer! There is something very teaching here. Child of God,  
though you may have gone ever so far astray and played the fool, let not  
this keep you back from the Mercy Seat! It was built on purpose for unworthy sinners to come to. You are such. If God only heard you in your  
good times, why then, you would perish!   
The gates of His Grace are open at night as well as at day and blackhanded saints may come and find mercy as well as those who have kept  
their garments white. Do not, I pray you, get into the ill habit of judging   
that your prayers are not heard because of your failings in spirit. But,   
says a third, it is not merely that I do not so much doubt the efficacy of   
prayer on account of myself, but my prayers themselves are such poor   
things! I cannot! I cannot get the groan out of my heart before God. I  
would not ask to pray a happy prayer. If I could but pray an utterly   
wretched prayer. If my heart would but ache I would be content, but I   
cannot get to God. I do not know how to lay hold upon Him and wrestle   
with Him, and therefore I cannot expect to prevail.   
Dear Brothers and Sisters, this is your sin as well as your infirmity! Be  
humbled and pray God to make you like the importunate widow, for only  
so will you prevail. But at the same time let me remind you that if your   
prayers are sincere it shall often happen that even their weakness shall  
not destroy them. When Christ was asleep in the ship His disciples came   
to Him and said, Master, care you not that we perish? And He rebuked themO you of little faith, why do you doubt? But He did not refuse to hear their cry for all that! For He rebuked the winds and the waves and there was a great calm. He may rebuke the unbelief of your prayer and yet  
in infinite mercy He may exceed His promise!   
There is no promise that He will hear unbelieving prayers. And he who   
wavers must not expect to receive anythingbut the Lord may go beyond   
His Word and give us mercies notwithstanding that fault. And all other   
failings He graciously overlooks and receives our prayers through Jesus   
Christ. Let your sense of the poverty of your prayers lead you to abhor  
your faultsbut not to abhor praying. Let it make you long to pray betterbut never cause you to doubt that if you can, with true fervency,  
come to God through Jesus Christ your Lord, your prevailing is not a matter of hope but a matter of certaintyyour success is as absolutely sure   
as the laws of Nature.   
Further, I have no doubt many of Gods people cannot think their  
prayers will be heard because they have had, as yet, such very few manifest replies. I saw the other day a greyhound chasing a hare. The moment  
the hare ran through the hedge out of the greyhounds sight, the race was   
over, for he could not follow where he could not see. The true hound   
hunts by scentbut the greyhound only by sight. Now there are some   
Christians too much like the greyhound. They only follow the Lord as far   
as they can see His manifest mercy. But the true child of God hunts by  
faith and when he cannot see the mercy, he scents it and still pursues it  
till at last he lays hold upon it!   
Why, Man, you say you have had no answers! How do you know that?   
God may have answered you though you have not seen the answer. I am   
heard, says good Ralph Erskine   
*Im heard when answered soon or late,   
Yes, heard when I no answer get!   
Yes, kindly answered when refused,   
And treated well when harshly used.*   
This is a riddle, but it is a fact. God has not promised to give you the particular mercy in kind, but He will give it to you somehow or other. If I pay   
my debts in gold no man can blame me because I do not pay them in silver. And if God gives you spiritual mercies in abundance, instead of temporal, He has heard your prayer. You may pray, like Paul, thrice, that the   
thorn in the flesh may be taken away from youGods answer is given,   
and it is, My Grace is sufficient for you. Christ prayed that God might   
hear Him, He was heard in that He feared, but He had not the cup taken   
from Him.   
No, but He had an angel to comfort and strengthen Him. And this was,   
in Truth, an answer though not such as the prayer seemed to require. You  
have had an answer and if God has heard you but once, pluck up courage   
and go again! Many do not pray expecting an answer because they pray in  
such a sluggish spirit. Begging is a hard tradea man that succeeds in it   
must throw his heart into itand so is praying. If you want to win, you   
must pray hard. They called some of the early Christians on the Continent, Beg-hards, because they did pray hard to God. And none can prevail but those who pray hard. Slothful souls may not expect an answer. Then there are so many, again, who pray in a legal spirit. Why do you   
pray? Because it is my duty? Children of God know it is their duty to pray,   
but they pray because they believe in the efficacy of prayer! I should not  
expect God to hear me because the clock struck such and I began to pray  
from a sense of duty. No, I must go, not because the clock strikes, but because my heart wants to pray. A child does not cry because the time to   
cry has come, nor does a sick man groan because it is the hour of groaningthey cry and groan because they cannot help it. When the new-born   
nature says, Let us draw near unto God, then is the time and the place. A legal spirit would prevent our expecting answers to prayer. Inconsistencies after prayer and a failure to press our suit will bring us to doubt   
the power of prayer. If we do not plead with God again and again, and   
again, we shall not keep up our faith that God hears us. Oh, says one,  
we have no time to pray at that rate. What do you do with your time? It  
caused Domitian to be greatly despised when it was reported that he  
spent hours in killing flies. It was told, to the discredit of Artaxerxes, that   
he spent whole days in making handles for knives!   
What shall be thought of us, when we confess that we have no time to  
praybut there is time for trifles! Princes of the blood royal and yet no   
time to be at court? Kings of a Divine race and yet no time to put on your  
crowns and wear your robes of State? Time to play with toys and roll in  
the dust with the beggars of earth, but no time to sit upon the Throne of   
Glory and to offer the sacrifice of praise unto the Most High? Shame on  
such Christians! May God give us true shame for this and from this day  
forward may we be much in prayer and expect gracious answers. IV. Alas, this morning time rebukes me, but eternity commends, and   
therefore I shall go on just a few minutes longer and that by way of EXHORTATION. Dear Friends, let us believe in Gods answering prayer! I   
mean those of us who have believed in Jesus. And because we have Gods   
promise for it. Hear what He says, You shall make your prayer unto Him   
and He shall hear you. Know that the Lord has set apart him that is

godly for Himselfthe Lord will hear when I call upon Him. He shall call   
upon Me, and I will answer him.   
Call upon Me in the day of trouble and I will deliver you and you shall   
glorify Me. It shall come to pass that before they call I will answer. And   
while they are yet speaking, I will hear. All things whatever you shall ask   
in prayer, believing, you shall receive. Everyone that asks receives. And   
he that seeks finds. And to him that knocks it shall be opened. Whatever  
you shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified   
in the Son. If you shall ask anything in My name, I will do it. And   
whatever we ask we receive of Him because we keep His Commandments   
and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.   
How is it possible after this that God should refuse to hear us? Is He a   
God and can He lie? Have we promise upon promise and will He break   
them all? God forbid, Brethren! If there is a God and if this Book is His   
Word, if God is true, prayer must be answered. And let us, on our knees,   
go to the sacred engagement as to a work of real efficacy. Again, prayer   
must be answered because of the Character of God our Father. Will He let   
His children cry and not hear them? He hears the young ravens and will He not hear His own people? He is a God of Love. Would you let your  
sick child lie and pine and not go in to answer its groanings? Will a God of Love close His ears against His peoples cries? Do you   
think He will let the tears stream down your cheeks when you are petitioning and not put them into His bottle? Oh, remember His loving kindness and you cannot, I think, doubt that He hears prayer! A God that   
hears prayerthis is His memorial throughout all generations. Do not rob   
Him of His Character by distrusting Him! Then think of the efficacy of the   
blood of Jesus. When you pray, it is the blood that speaks. Every drop of  
Jesus blood cries, Father, hear him! Father, hear him! Hear the sinners   
cry! That blood was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat that the Mercy Seat   
might be an efficacious Mercy Seat for you! Do not doubt the blood of  
Christ!   
What? Can He die and yet that blood have no more efficacy in it than   
the blood of bulls or of goats? You will not think this. Then do not doubt  
that prayer prevails! Think, again, that Jesus pleads. He points to the   
wound upon His breast and spreads His pierced hands. Shall the Father  
deny the Son? Shall prayers offered by Christ be cast out from Heavens   
register? Oh, these things must notcannot be! Besides, the Holy Spirit   
Himself is the Author of your prayers. Will God incite the desire and then   
not hear it? Shall there be a schism between the Father and the Holy  
Spirit? You will not dream of such a thing!   
Oh, believe me when I review my own personal experience during the   
fifteen years that I have known something of the Savior! It leads me to feel   
that it is as certain that God hears prayer as that twice two make four! As   
certain as that the rock, falling by the law of gravitation, seeks the earth.   
We have not the time to give instances in proof but I hope your own experience furnishes them. May I beseech you by the love you bear to Jesus,  
do Him the honor of believing in the prevalence of His plea! By the light  
and life you have received of the Holy Spirit, do not discredit Him by   
thinking He can teach you to pray a prayer that will not be accepted before God!   
Let us as a Church pray more. O that the Spirit of prayer would come  
down upon us! Let us expect greater blessings! I was led forth in prayer   
this morning beyond the usual limits. I do not know how the time fled,   
but I do know that we have the petitions. Let us stand on our watchtower  
and look. Let us meet again and again at special meetings and let us cry  
mightily unto the Most High, pouring out our hearts like water before Him   
and He will open the windows of Heaven and give us greater blessings   
than we have ever had beforegreat as those already received have been! This very afternoon let the season of prayer begin and let it be well sustained. It is to Believers that these words are spoken. May God lead you   
who are not Believers to trust in Jesus. Amen.

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POSITIVISM   
NO. 3161

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1909.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, IN THE YEAR 1875.

We know...And we know...And we know.   
1 John 5:18-20.

IT is remarkable how throughout the whole of Johns Epistle he continually uses the word, know. It has quite refreshed me to carefully read through the Epistle and to observe how, as the clock strikes the same note again and again, John seems to have kept to this monotoneWe know, we know, we know. In this age, when it is fashionable not to know anything, when the professedly learned would hold us in a state of perpetual doubt and our great poet tells us that there is more faith in honest doubt than in half the creedsand everybody seems to be bewitched with what is called modern thoughtit is quite cheering to ones ears and delicious to ones heart to hear the bell strike out again and again, We know, we know, we know! After all, there is something certain somewhere, some grip for our anchor, some foundation to build our eternal hopes uponsomething that can be trusted, something besides cloud and will-o-the wisps! We know, we know, we know. Take your pencils and read through this first Epistle of John and underline the word, know, and you will feel the force of our remark. Look at the second ChapterHereby we do know that we know Him. He that says I know Him. Hereby know we that we are in Him. In the 13th verse we read, Because you have known Him. I write unto you, little children, because you have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because you have known Him that is from the beginning. We have an unction from the Holy One and you know all things. I have not written unto you because you know not the Truth, but because you, know it, and that no lie is of the Truth. And so in the third Chapter, verse after verse. The world knows us not, because it knew Him not. We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is. The fifth verse You know that He was manifested to take away our sin. And so it ison, on, on, all through the Chapterwe know, you know, and they know.

And why is this? It seems to me, first, that John had the echo of his Masters words ringing in his ears. He laid his head upon his Masters bosom and caught his Masters spirit. Yes, morehis Masters thoughts! Yes, morehis Masters very words! Continually as you read Johns first Epistle you are reminded of passages in his Gospel. The Epistle seems to be the essential extract of this Gospel. John, the Beloved of Jesus, reproduces his Master more fully than any other Apostle. Listen to the Masters words in the 14th Chapter of John, fourth verseI go to prepare a place for you. And where I go you know, and the way you know. Thomas said unto Him, Lord, we know not where you go, and how can we know the way? (Seventh verse)If you had known Me, you should have known My Father also; and from henceforth you know Him and have seen Him. Hear how the know rings out! Again, attend to our Lords prayer in the 17th Chapter of JohnNow they have known that all things whatever You have given Me are of You. They have known surely that I came out from You. O righteous Father the world has not known You: but I have known You, and these have known that You have sent Me. The words of Jesus had so fastened upon Johns mind and had so deeply impressed his heart, that when his soul needed words, it caught at those which had rooted themselves so firmly among the most happy memories of his life! I attribute the preponderance of the word, know, which constitutes itself an idiom in the Epistle, to the fact that the expressions of the Master had been treasured up by the servant.

Furthermore, John is one in whom we see very little of mental conflict. Thomas had brain in excess of heart and hence he had his doubts, and exclaimed, Except I put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe. By-and-by he became a grand believer and, indeed, a very leader in true Doctrine, for he was the first that ever inferred the Deity of Christ from His wounds when, looking at the scars, he said, My Lord and my God. John was too intimate with Christ to doubt. And he had too much heart to be a questioner, too much of earnest, intense, loving life to be subject to those diseases which spring from preponderance of intellect over affection. His soul was, like his Lords, on fire with Divine Love, and it burnt up the chaff of doubt too rapidly for it even to have seemed to be there! It had only to be scattered over the flame to vanish at once. It is very beautiful to notice how positive John is in his writing. I like the commencement of his Epistleit is so different from the wavering talk which we hear now-a-days! He begins thus, That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon (that is, intensely gazed upon) and our hands have handled of the Word of Life; that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. Is not this true positivism? Where will you find it if you do not find it here? Speak of dogmatism! Here is dogmatic teaching, indeed! He does not hesitate, or fear, or doubt for one moment! His evidence is too sure and his conviction too firm! And hence it is that he rings out that bell so, clearly, We know, we know, we know.

The full assurance expressed by the word, know, arises from the fact that perfect love always casts out hesitancy and doubt which are a form of fear and, as John tells us, Perfect love casts out fear, because fear has torment. Love cannot endure a doubt. If love is crossed with doubt, it becomes jealousy, and that is cruel as the grave. A man had better meet a wolf in the depth of winter, or a bear robbed of her whelps, than a man in his jealousy, for his fury burns like coals of juniper which have a most vehement flame. Love must have certainty. Those whom we dearly love must be beyond suspicion as to their reciprocal affection. As to a doubt whether there is a Christ, or whether He is the Son of God, or whether He loved us and gave Himself for us, this may be indulged in by those who love notbut where love is supreme it sits in state like God upon the cherubimand the Dagon of doubt falls down and is broken in pieces! If the church of the present age loved Jesus better, she would speak much more confidently about Him and, in so doing she would speak more like the oracles of God. But where the dampness of lukewarm affection settles down, the cold chill of doubt is sure to followand it is in these wintry nights of declining love to Jesus that the frost of unbelief binds up the rivers of spiritual life. If the Lord quickens the love of His Church, as soon as it is done, her sons say, as John did, We know, and we know, and we knowand the grand old positive spirit of Luther and of Calvin, blazing with the enthusiasm which came with Whitefield and Wesley, will come back to the Churchand God will bless the world thereby!

I am about to speak upon the forms of Christian knowledge. We know...and we know...and we know. Here I note, first, that Christians have this knowledge in seven different forms, of which the one draws on the other like golden links of a precious chain.

I. And, first, we know, that is to say, we have INSTRUCTION. And herein we are saved from ignorance. The Christian is not ignorant of the Gospel and its great primary Truths of God, but he knows them by the teaching of the Holy Spirit and by searching the Word. That use of the term, we have frequently in this Epistle. I will give two examples. The 10th verse of the Fifth ChapterWe know that the Son of God is come, and that He has given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true. We know the fact of Incarnation and the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we have been so informed by the Scriptures. In the 16th verse of the Fourth Chapter we have another instanceWe have known and believed the love that God has to us. We know the love of God, for it is revealed and we accept the witness of the Spirit concerning it.

We know the great facts of the Gospel and this is no small blessing. Myriads of our fellow creatures are unaware of the first principles of the faith, scarcely knowing that there is a God, and altogether ignorant of the wondrous plan of Redemption by the blood of Jesus. Even in this (socalled) Christian country, there is much ignorance about these things. I wish that Christian people would more frequently question others about what they know of Christ. No book is less read, in proportion to its circulation, than the Bibleand certainly no book is less understood! With all the preaching we haveand some of it is very excellentthere is a great ignorance of the rudimentary truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ everywhere! One is surprised to find that the language which is used in the pulpit is not understood at all by the mass of the people. They do not know where the preacher ishe is somewhere up in the cloudsthey learn nothing from his big words! They suppose it is all right, and very good, and they listen to itbut as far as instruction is concerned, many a preacher might almost as well speak in Syrian! Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound. It is a happy thing to know that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has come in the flesh, that He took upon Himself the sins of His people, that He bore the wrath of God on their behalf, that by believing in Him, men are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses. It is a blessed thing to know that in Him we have redemption through His blood, and sanctification and eternal life! It is a blessed thing to know the Holy Spiritto know that He converts the soul and comforts, illuminates, guides and sanctifies. It is well to know something of the future life. To know the Doctrine of Election, the Doctrine of Effectual Calling and the Doctrine of the Eternal Security of the Saints. Many there are who have not found out these Truths of God, but if we have done so, it is not a thing to boast of, but a matter to be very thankful for! I am afraid the Bible is so common that we are not duly grateful for it. And the preaching of the Gospel has become so usual a thing to us that we are not sufficiently mindful of the high privilege conferred upon anyone who is permitted to hear it. Be glad, dear Friends, that so far as instruction in the Gospel is concerned, we are not left in the dark, but we can say, thanks be to God, we know, for we have been taughtsome of us from our youth up. We know, for we have searched the Scriptures. We know, for we have listened to a Gospel ministry. We know, for we have weighed, judged and studied these things for ourselves.

II. There is a far higher knowledge than this, which I shall speak of secondly. By knowing is frequently meant APPREHENDING and understanding. This kind of knowledge is opposed to a mere hearing of Doctrine and facts without understanding their inner meaning. To wit, a man may know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He died, but He may not understand the great Truth of Substitution and why Jesus died. Now, I do not say that any very deep understanding of the Truth is necessary to salvation, but I do say that it is an inestimable privilege to be able to go deep into these things and to know not merely the facts, but the reason of the factsand the teaching of the facts. A nut is very well, but I prefer to crack the shell and get the kernel. It is delightful to read the Word, but to meditate upon it and understand it is the great matter! In instruction we are like the cow when cropping the grasses. But apprehension is like the same creature ruminatingwhen she lies down and chews the cud! It is then that the real nourishment is gained. John uses the word, know, in that sense in the second clause of the 20th verse of our textAnd we know that the Son of God is come, and has given us an understanding that we may know. That is, He has taught us what is meant by His coming. From our very childhood we knew that Jesus came in the flesh, but perhaps it is only a little while ago that we understood how

*He bore, that we might never bear,*

*His Fathers righteous ire*   
and how He stands as our Representative before the Throne of God at this moment. We know the Doctrine of Imputed Righteousness as a matter of fact, but, perhaps, we have not even now entered into the full sense of our acceptance in the Beloved. I urge upon everyone who knows the Truth of God to pray daily for a deeper understanding of its innermost meaning, that he may know the marrow and fatness of the Covenant, may dig into the mines of Revelation and turn up those masses of gold which surface readers never discover! The Scriptures do not at once yield up the whole of their wealth even to a student. He must dig and dig, and dig and dig again. Jerome used to say, I adore the plenitude of Holy Scripture. And well he might, for there is a mighty fullness in it. I think it was Henry Martin who, when he had to translate the Bible into the Persian language, said that he never knew the Word so well as when he had to go over every syllable of it. You remember Uncle Tom spelling L-et let, n-o-t not, y-o-u-r your, h-e-a-r-t-s hearts be troubled, and so on, and how he said that every letter of it was sweet. After you have thought over a verse for hours, you feel persuaded that you have found out its full teaching. Perhaps you have looked to learned authors and noticed the correct text and many good thoughts thereon, and yet further on a new meaning pops upand perhaps weeks after, when that text has been abiding under your tongue like a sweet morsel, you all of a sudden say, I never saw this before! Here is something fresh and still more wonderful! Now I know the inmost sense of this delightful Scripture.

How I wish that all Christians in this sense knew, so that they could say We know, we know, we know. We ought not merely to assert our belief in an orthodox creed, but we should know the meaning of it. We should not merely confess that such-and-such are our doctrinal sentiments, but we should go into the Truths of God like bees into the cups of the flowers and find out where their honey lies! O that we could all feel that we have gone into the secret caves of Revelation, the Spirit of God holding a flaming torch and leading us into all Truth! O that we might all see the innumerable sparkles of those precious gems which glitter in the deep places where the lions whelp has not trodden, far down where only the Spirit of God can leadand where only an eye that has been touched with heavenly eye-salve can see! Oh, for a Church made up of people who understand and, therefore, know!

III. We know by instruction and we know by apprehension, but there is a sweeter sense than this. We know, in a third sense, by personal acquaintance. You will find that meaning in such passages as the Second Chapter, at the 13th and 14th versesI write unto you, fathers, because you have known Him that is from the beginning. Our text is another specimen. We know that the Son of God is come, and has given us an understanding that we may know Him. I will not quote all the texts there are many of that kind. Thus we know the Lord Himself! A friend comes to you and he says, Do you know such a person? You say first, I know there is such a personthat is instruction. Being further asked, But, do you know him? You answer, Well, I know that he was a fine tall man, a soldier in the infantry, and that he went to the Crimea. That is a sort of knowing him by apprehension, but does not fully answer the question, Do you know him? You say, Well, I cannot say that I know him, for if I were to see him, I could not recognize him, I have never even spoken to him. To be acquainted with a man is a higher order of knowledge than the former, and in that sense Believers know God, know Jesus Christ and know the Holy Spirit. They are acquainted with God! No, man has seen God at any time, but we have spoken to Him and He has spoken to us. We have not heard His voice with these ears, but we are sure that we have heard Him in our hearts. Our spirits know His voice. We have sometimes been bowed down with terror as He has spoken and brought us under the spirit of bondage. But now we know the sound of His voice as a Spirit of Love and we respond to it, crying, Abba, Father.

We know the voice of Jesus. We are like the sheep who will not follow a stranger, for they know not the voice of strangers. But we know Jesus, and when He speaks to our souls we answer to His call. We not only know His voice, but we know Him. We have come into personal contact with the Christ of God, not in mere imagination, but in fact. As surely as we live, the eternal God in Jesus Christ has looked upon us and has touched usno, more, has worked a miracle on us and has made us new creatures, begotten us again unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. I speak not of you all. I speak only of those of whom it is true that they do know the Lord. The Lord Jesus has become our familiar Acquaintance. We tell Him all our griefs. There is not a trouble but we carry to Him, not a sorrow but we pour it into His bosom! And He, on the other hand, reveals His heart to us, for the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.

True Believers, especially full-grown Believers, when they are advanced in the Divine Life, know the Lord Jesus Christ as they know their friendsyes, as they know their very selves! They speak with Him as a man speaks with his friend. They even know Him as they cannot know their friends, for they have received Him into themselves and they have become one with Him. They have eaten His flesh and drunk His blood and He is in them and they in Him with an intimate knowledge excelling all other knowledge beneath the sun! Though they do not profess to know all that is to be known of Christ, for there is a love of Christ that passes knowledge, and heights and depths that are beyond all mortal ken, yet they do know Him and their daily aspiration is to know Him more and more fully!

See, then, that as apprehension surpasses instruction, so acquaintance rises far beyond apprehension. May you and I know with this third knowledge and live in the sweet enjoyment of it all our days!

IV. Out of this rises a fourth degree of knowledge, namely, that of CERTAINTY as opposed to skepticism. When we are under instruction, doubts may arise. When we apprehend and understand, doubts may still trouble us. But when we come to be acquainted with Jesus, they are less likely to haunt us. Out of fellowship with Jesus springs the higher state of absolute certainty as to Divine things! John himself was very certain. I read to you the commencement of his Epistle just now, and you saw how confident he was. And we find him writing all through his Epistle with equal strength and force of assurance. He says in the Third Chapter, the fifth verse, You know that He was manifested to take away our sin, and in Him is no sin. And in the 24th verse, And hereby we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He has given us. In the Fifth Chapter read verse nineteenWe know that we are of God. And few as he felt that his brethren were and the whole world engaged on the other side! In the spirit of Athanasius, he cries, The whole world lies in the Wicked One. He allows no force to the evidence even of a contradicting world, because one man abiding in the Truth has more weight in his witness than millions under the power of the Father of Lies!

Now Brothers and Sisters, this is a blessed state to get intothat of certainty! I am utterly amazed at hearing it continually asserted that the thoughtful public teacher must make great allowances for the spirit of the age, which is one of earnest skepticism. I do not believe it! The spirit of the age is that of thoughtlessness and trifling! But what have I or any other Christian to do with the spirit of the age? The spirit which is in us by which we ought to speak is the Spirit of Godnot the spirit of the age! In what spirit are Christian ministers to speak? The spirit of the first century, while the first century lasts, I suppose? The spirit of the second century when the second century comes in and so, from age to age the spirit of the Christian is to alter? Can it be so? You remember when they condemned Leighton because he did not speak according to the times? He replied, If all of you are speaking for the times, let one poor Brother speak for eternity. Was he not correct? Surely the Spirit of the Truth of God never changes, for the Truth of God is Immutable! Surely the Spirit of God never alters, for He is Divine! Have we one medicine for one age and another medicine for another? Does it run thusGo you into all the world and adapt the Gospel to every century? I find it not so written! Our standing orders are, Preach the Gospel, the Gospel, the same Gospel to every creature, thoughtful or thoughtless, philosophical or ignorant, civilized or uncivilized. Semper idem is the motto which the Gospel may write above her temples! There let it stand. She cannot alter. For her to alter were death to the Truth of God and treason to Christ! Though we believe not and though the age grows doubting, He abides faithfulHe cannot deny Himself!

Ah, Brothers and Sisters, if you are not certain about these things, may God grant that you may be certain! Oh, to be uncertain whether the Savior loved me and gave Himself for meit would be as death to my soul! Some find delight in pulling down, as far as they can, the eternal pillars of the Temple, but to see a sacrilegious hand laid on the least of them is painful in the extreme! There hangs my hope on yonder bloody tree where the Incarnate God offered up expiation for my sin! If you can disprove the Doctrine of Atonement, my comfort is gone! I care no more to live, there remains nothing for me. Therefore is my soul driven back by sheer necessity to fundamental Truths of God and cannot be content till she casts away the rubbish of human opinion and gets down to the rock against the sheer granite of eternal Truths which God has spoken, which are, yes, and, amen, in Christ Jesus! Labor after this Brothers and Sisters! Let it not be to you a question whether there is such a thing as regenerationit cannot be a question if you, yourself, are regenerate! It will not be a question whether there is such a thing as justification if you are justified! You cannot doubt as to sanctification if you are consciously sanctified, any more than angels in Heaven will doubt whether there is a Heaven while living there and enjoying the glory of it! May we get up to this fourth point, which is that of absolute certainty as opposed to skepticism.

V. But now, fifthly, there is a knowledge of another kind, very useful in these days, namely, that of DISCERNMENT as opposed to a readiness to receive erroneous teaching. That meaning was intended by John. Read in the Second Chapter, beginning at the 18th verseLittle children, it is the last time: and as you have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. But you have an unction from the Holy One, and you know all things. He does not mean that the saints know everything, but they judge, they discern, they know the Truth of God from error. When Doctrine presents itself to you, you know whether it is of Christ or of antichrist, and act accordingly. You are able to judge, to discern, and to distinguish. In the Fourth Chapter you have it again, at the second verseHereby know we the Spirit of God (or discern the Spirit of God). Every spirit that confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. Hereby, says he in the sixth verse, know we the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error. We know which is which, even as our Lord saysA stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers. And again, I know My sheep, and am known of Mine. There is a spirit of discernment and it is needed much now-adays. It comes to us in the following wayinstruction, apprehension, acquaintance, certaintythese bring discernment to detect the false from the true.

Very delightful, too, is it to my mind to see how the least instructed Christian who does not know his Lord and love Him, is not to be led astray. Mere professors like to hear a man who can speak fluently. And if he will use very pretty phrases and talk about waterfalls, and the rippling rills, and the skies, and the clouds and Heaven knows what besides of mimic poetry, they mightily cry up the orator! The child of God thinks not so, for he has another way of judging. He says when he hears such rhetoric, There was nothing for me. What do you mean? There were plenty of flowers. I cannot eat flowers, he says. He judges whether he was fed or not, and he knows what he can eat. Nobody teaches sheep what is good for food and what is notthey know by instinct. I do not suppose they could preach a sermon upon healthy herbs and unhealthy plants, but they know by some meansand so do Believers. They could not write it down. They could not compose an essay upon discernment, but they know what they can feed upon and they know what they cannot feed uponand they have very sure tests within them. Ah, says the Believer, that will not do for me. There is no Christ in it. Away with it. They listen to some humble preacher who loves Jesus Christ and lifts Him high, and they say, Ah, well. He puts his hs in the wrong places and his grammar is deficient, but we were blessed, for when he exalted our Master and preached of Him, our very hearts danced within us for joy! I have felt just that myselfI have sat and cried as if my heart would break to hear Jesus Christ spoken of by a plain working manbut have felt indignant when I have listened to a learned thinker confusing the minds of the simple by words worth nothing at all!

Yesterday I was in a certain place, needing refreshment. It was pressed upon me to purchase something which was said to be very good to eat. And as far as I could make out, when I partook of it, it was nothing beaten up and blown out to a great size and a little sugar powdered over it! And it reminded me of the sermons that I have read in which there was nothing whateveronly blown out extensively, developed into a great size and a little sugar of rhetoric put to it! Hungry souls cannot feed on wind! They will not have it. They very soon go away. Of course the fine fashionable peoplethe empty professors who look for words, only, say, Oh, you must not be uncharitable. We cannot expect doctrine in every sermon, and so on. Thus like the wild asses they sniff up the wind and are satisfied! But not so the people of Godthey feel that time is too short and eternity too longand Hell too terrible, and Heaven too preciousto have their Sundays frittered away by pretty little essays which have as much connection with Mohammedanism as with the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ! There are plenty of such preachers aroundand an abundance of gentlemen who will pat them on the back and say, These are highly intellectual brothers and are fit to occupy large spheres.

Our business is to preach Jesus Christand if we cannot preach Him, let us take to tailoring, or plowing, or cobbling, or some other honest way of earning ones livelihood! To preach anything else but Christ crucified is to betray our Lord and Master! And most assuredly to bring upon ourselves confusion and condemnation in the Last Great Day of account! Dear Brothers, may we have given to us the spirit of discrimination that we may know the precious from the vile, for if we do so as preachers we shall be as Gods mouth! And may we as hearers have the same discrimination, that we may always be able to receive that which is of God, and to reject at once with solemn determination that which is according to the spirit of the world and not after Jesus Christ!

VI. I pass on from that form of knowledge to another, which is this knowledge in this Epistle is frequently meant ASSURANCE in opposition to anxiety. That is the frequent use of the term, here, as in the Second Chapter, the third to the eighth versesHereby we do know that we know Him if we keep His commandments. He that says, I know Him, and keeps not His commandments is a liar, and the Truth is not in him. But whoso keeps His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him. Then in the 14th verse of the Third ChapterWe know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. In the 24th verseHereby we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He has given us. Far too seldom do Christians reach this point. They should do so and they should come up the ladder by the steps I have described, but many seem to think that it is almost necessary for them to always say most timorously, I hope I am in Christ. I trust I am saved. They dare not say, I know that I am in Him, and that His Spirit is in me.

Now, if they have never reached this rung of the ladder, God forbid we should condemn them, for some of Gods children remain trembling and doubting for many a day, yet they should not be content to be there. It ought to be the desire and aim of every one of us to know whether we are saved or not, because it is not a question that we can afford to leave in doubt. Any person here who has invested his money in any commercial enterprise, who should have it hinted to him this evening when he reaches home, that it is an unsound concern, would not be at all likely to be quiet until he had discovered whether it was so or not. And, therefore, our souls eternal interests, which are far more important, cannot be allowed to remain in suspense. As soon as ever the question is raised, a sensible man will be unsatisfied till it is settled! Can it be settled? someone asks. Can it be? Oh, Brothers and Sisters, believe memany of us do know our calling and election! Why? Because God has given us Infallible tokens. He says, Whoever believes on the Lord Jesus Christ has everlasting life. We do believe in Him! We trust Him with all our hearts and God has said that we are saved and have everlasting life! Shall we doubt God? Then we know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. If we feel a hearty love to Gods people, Inspiration tells us that we have passed from death unto life! Shall we doubt it? No, we will believe it!

Well, says one, that seems to me to be presumption. Do you think so? Suppose you promise your children tonight that you will take them out tomorrow morning and one of them says to you, Well, Father, I hope you will. There is no joy in his countenancewhy? Because he says he does not think you will. He is afraid it would be presumption to believe you! Do you not think it is presumption in him to doubt you? Look at that other little one. You say, Jane, I shall take you out tomorrow. She claps her hands with delight! The thoughts of doubting you never enters her little head. Is she presumptuous? What? Presumptuous to believe her father? Surely it never can be presumption to believe God! To disbelieve God and to think highly of yourselfthat is presumption! But to trust God and to believe His Wordis there any presumption in that? Ah, says one, but if I knew for certain that I was saved, I am afraid that I would grow careless. Why? Full assurance is the very thing that makes men watchful! They feel it such a great joy to be loved of God that they are afraid of doing anything to grieve Him! The man who does not know whether he has any money or not is not likely to be very watchful over the box which may, perhaps, contain something, or may not. But if he knows that he has a treasure there, he will take good care that nobody shall rob him of it! Brothers and Sisters, if we were slaves under the spirit of bondage and had to be whipped to do what was right by the fear of being sent to Hell, that would be one thingbut the children of God are not slavesthey are sons and daughters and because Gods everlasting love to His own dear children can never turn into hate, do they, therefore, disobey their heavenly Father? God forbid! Assurance is the mainspring of holiness in a Christian!

VII. The last work is this. There is another knowledge, namely, the knowledge of UNSTAGGERING FAITH which knows a thing which is not AS YET. You have an instance in the second verse of the Third Chapter. Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is. Why, O great Apostle, did you not say, We hope that when He shall appear? No, no! He did not hope it at allhe knew it! He was sure of it. But do we not generally say, We trust that when Christ shall appear it will be so? So far true, but oh, it is better when faith reckons the things that are not as though they were. A man will take a thousand pound check from his neighbor and say, I have the money. My dear Sir, you have not! You have only a piece of paper. Ah, he says, but it has a good name to it. It is as good as gold. Surely the promise of a God that cannot lie is as good as the check!

I bless God that for some little time instead of worrying myself about a thousand things which concern this Church, and the College, and the Orphanage, and the Colportagewhenever I have any sort of trouble, it has been my sweet privilege to breathe a prayer to God and leave all my anxieties at His feet. I do the best I can to keep things right and then I leave them with the Lord. If the works are not His work, then let them go to pieces! If they are, then He will attend to them. I am an instrument in His hands and as such I do the little I can, and leave the rest to Him. It is wonderful how smoothly things go when we trust them with the Lord! Your fidgeting and worrying do all the mischief! Something gets between the wheels and they will not workand I will tell you what that something isit is your own fingerand when you feel such a squeeze that you cannot bear it, it is a lesson to you. Take your finger out and let it alone. The best way to do with a great trouble is to pray to God about it and then put it on the shelf and never take it down again.   
You have come here on a week-night, some of you, with a heavy burden. All the time the preaching is going on, and the praying, and singing you have lost your load, or have not felt it. But just as you get outside, you say, I have left my burden inside! Let me go and take it up again! And you feel it on your mind as heavily as ever! Beloved, this is not the way to trust God. The way to trust Him is to cast your care on Him altogether. All things work together for good to them that love God. Be sure that when you pass through the rivers they shall not overflow you, and through the fires, they shall not burn you. Be sure that as your days so shall your strength be. Be sure that God will bring you through, for He will deliver His people out of all troubles and give them a sure admittance into His eternal Kingdom and Glory. We should speak with certainty of troubles and trialsand deliverance from themand of all the future we should say, as our text has it, We know, and we know, and we know. That is how Paul spoke. We know that all things work together for good. He did not say he thought it and he hoped it, but, we know. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, and by its assuring power we know, and we know, and we know.

Now, dear Hearer, if you are unconverted, what do you know? If you know not the Lord, what do you know? Nothing that is of any use to you spiritually, by any true knowledge. Oh that God might make you know thisthat you are lost by nature and, unless forgiven, you will be lost forever and ever! And when you know that, I pray the Lord, by His Spirit, to make you know that there is a Saviorand that He is able to save unto the uttermost! And then may He make you know in the fullest sense that He loved you and gave Himself for you! So may you know Him and be found in Him when He comes in the clouds of Heaven. Amen.

Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307  
PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE PARENTS AND PASTORS JOY

NO. 1148

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 21 1873, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. 3 John, 4.

JOHN speaks of himself as though he were a father and, therefore, we concede to parents the right to use the language of the text. Sure am I that many of you here present, both mothers and fathers, can truly say, We have no greater joy than to hear that our children walk in truth [the Truth of God.] But John was not after the flesh, the father of those of whom he was writinghe was their spiritual father. It was through his ministry that they had been brought into the new life. His relationship to them was that he had been the instrument of their conversion and had afterwards displayed a fathers care in supplying them with heavenly food and gracious teaching.

Therefore, this morning, after we have used the words as the expression of parents, we must take them back again and use them as the truthful utterance of all real pastors, We have no greater joy than to hear that our children walk in the Truth of God.

I. First, then, one of THE PARENTS highest joys is his childrens walking in the Truth of God. He has no greater joy. And here we must begin with the remark that it is a joy peculiar to Christian fathers and mothers. No parents can say from their hearts, We have no greater joy than to hear that our children walk in the Truth of God, or even truth unless they are, themselves, walking in truth. No wolf prays for its offspring to become a sheep. The ungodly man sets small store by the godliness of his children since he thinks nothing of it for himself.

He who does not value his own soul is not likely to value the souls of his descendants. He who rejects Christ on his own account is not likely to be enamored of Him on his childrens behalf. Abraham prayed for Ishmael, but I never read that Ishmael prayed for his son Nebajoth. I fear that many, even among professors of religion, could not truthfully repeat my textthey look for other joy in their children and care little whether they are walking in the Truth of God or not. They joy in them if they are healthy in body, but they are not saddened if the leprosy of sin remains upon them. They joy in their comely looks but do not inquire whether they have found favor in the sight of the Lord.

Put the girls feet in silver slippers and many heads of families would never raise the question as to whether she walked the broad or the narrow road. It is very grievous to see how some professedly Christian parents are satisfied so long as their children display cleverness in learning, or sharpness in business, although they show no signs of a renewed Nature. If they pass their examinations with credit and promise to be well-fitted for the worlds battle, their parents forget that there is a superior calling, involving a higher crown, for which the child will need to be fitted by Divine Grace and armed with the whole armor of God.

Alas, if our children lose the crown of life, it will be but a small consolation that they have won the laurels of literature or art! Many who ought to know better think themselves superlatively blessed in their children if they become rich, if they marry wealth, if they strike out into profitable enterprises in trade, or if they attain eminence in the profession which they have espoused. Their parents will go to their beds rejoicing and awake perfectly satisfied, though their boys are hastening down to Hell, if they are also making money by the bushel. They have no greater joy than that their children are having their portion in this life and laying up treasure where rust corrupts it. Though neither their sons nor daughters show any signs of the new birth, give no evidence of being rich towards God, manifest no traces of electing love or redeeming Grace or the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, yet there are parents who are content with their condition.

Now I can only say of such professing parents that they have need to question whether they are Christians, and if they will not question it themselves, they must give some of us leave to hold it in serious debate. When a mans heart is really right with God and he, himself, has been saved from the wrath to come and is living in the light of his heavenly Fathers countenance, it is certain that he is anxious about his childrens souls, prizes their immortal natures and feels that nothing could give him greater joy than to hear that his children walk in the Truth of God. Judge yourselves, then, Beloved, this morning, by the gentle but searching test of the text.

If you are professing Christians, but cannot say that you have no greater joy than the conversion of your children, you have reason to question whether you ought to have made such a profession at all! Let us then remark, in the next place, that the joy which is mentioned in the text is special in its object. The expression is a thoughtful one. John did not write those words in a hurry, but he compressed a great deal into them. He says, I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. Now, beloved parents, it is a very great joy to us if our children learn the Truth of God. I hope you will not suffer one of them to grow up and leave your roof without knowing the doctrines of the Gospelwithout knowing the life of Christ and the great precepts of Scripturewithout having as clear an understanding as it is possible for you to give them of the great principles and plan of salvation.

When we perceive that our children, when we question them, thoroughly understand the Gospel and are well rooted and grounded in its doctrines, it is a great joy to us, and well it may be! It is, however, far more a joy when those same children feel the Truth of God for, alas, we may know it and perish unless we have felt its power within! Parent, was not your heart glad when you first saw the tears of repentance in your daughters eyes? Did you not rejoice when your son could say, Father, I trust I have believed and am saved by the Grace of God?

Yes, it is a greater joy that they should feel the power of the Truth of God than that they should know the letter of it. Such a joy, I hope, none of you are content to forego. It should be the holy ambition of every parent that all his house should be renewed by the Holy Spirit. It is a great joy when our children avow their sense of the Truth of God, when, knowing it and feeling it, they at last have the courage to say, We would join with the people of God, for we trust we belong to them. Oh, happy as a marriage day is that day in which the parent sees his child surrendered to the people of God, having first given his heart to the Christ of God!

The Baptism of our believing children is always a joyous occasion to us and so it ought to be. Our parents before us magnified the Lord when they heard us say, We are on the Lords side, and we cannot but give thanks abundantly when the same privilege falls to us in the persons of our children. But, Beloved, there is anxiety about all this. When you teach your children, there is the fear that perhaps they will not learn to profit. When they feel, there is still the fear lest it should be mere feeling and should be the work of Nature and not the work of the Spirit of God. And even when they profess to be the Lords, there yet remains the grave question, Will this profession last? Will they be able to stand to it and be true to the faith until lifes last hour?

But the joy of the text is higher than these three, though these have to come before it, and it grows out of them. I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my children walk in truth. That is the pointtheir practical religiontheir actual exemplification of the power of the Gospel upon their lives. This proves that the teaching was well received, that the feeling was not mere excitement, that the profession was not a falsehood or a mistake, but was done in the Truth of God. What bliss it would be to us to see our sons grow up, and with integrity, prudence, uprightness and Grace, walk in the Truth of God! What a joy to behold our daughters springing up in all their beauty, lovely with the adornment of a meek and quiet spirit, becoming in their homes while with us, or in the new homes which speedily grow up around them, patterns of everything that is tender, gracious, kind and true!

I have no greater joy than this, says John. And all of you to whom such joy as this has been allotted can say, Amen. Amen. It is even so. The joy before us has, therefore, a special possessor and a special object. It is a healthful joy, Beloved, in which we may indulge to the fullest without the slightest fear, for it is superior in its character to all earthly joys. Not too much, is a good rule for everything which has to do with time. But this joy in our childrens walking in the Truth of God we may indulge in as much as we will, for, first, it is a spiritual joy and therefore of a superior order. We do not joy to the fullest in the things which are seen of the eyes and heard of the ears, for these are things of the flesh which will decaysuch as the garment which is eaten by the moth and the metal which is devoured by rust.

We rejoice in the work of the Spirit of Goda work which will abide when this world shall have passed away. Hannah had some joy in the new coat which she made for young Samuel, but a far higher delight in the new heart which early showed itself in his actions. Our son promoted to

be a king might cause us some delight, but to see our children made princes in all the earth, according to that ancient promise, would be a greater delight by far. Rejoice in it, then, without trembling, for spiritual joy will never intoxicate. Such joy arises from love to God, and is therefore commendable.

We love to see our children converted because we love God. Out of love to Him, by His Grace, we gave ourselves to Him and now, in later years, the same love prompts us to present our children. As Barzillai in his old age prayed David to accept the personal service of his son, Chimham, so would we, when our own strength declines, present our offspring to the Lord that they may supply our lack of service. We have said

*Had I ten thousand thousand tongues,   
Not one should silent be.   
Had I ten thousand thousand hearts,   
Id give them all to Thee.*

Now as we have only one tongue of our own, we are intensely earnest that our childrens tongues should sound forth the praises of the Savior. We have not another life on earth to call our own, but here are lives which the Lord has given usand we are delighted that He should have them for Himself.

We cry, Lord, take this childs life and let it all be spent to Your service, from his earliest days till gray hairs shall adorn his brow. It is like the old soldier coming up to his king and saying, I am worn out in your service, but you are so good a monarch that I have brought my son that he may serve you from his youth up. Let him take his fathers place, and may he excel him in valor and in capacity to serve his king and country.

Now, when our children walk in Truth and love to God, it makes us rejoice that another heart is consecrated to His service. We may well rejoice in the salvation and in the sanctification of our sons and daughters because this is the way in which the kingdom of Christ is to be extended in the world. The hand which has held the standard aloft in the midst of the fury of war is at last palsied in deathhappy is that standard-bearer who, with expiring eyes, can see his own son springing forward to grasp that staff and keep the banner still floating above the host. Happy Abraham to be followed by an Isaac! Happy David to be succeeded by a Solomon! Happy Lois, to have Eunice for a daughter, and happy Eunice to have Timothy for a son!

This is the Apostolic succession in which we believe and for which we pray. How, in years to come, are we to see a seed of piety flourishing in the land and the world conquered to Christ? How, indeed, but by means of the young men of Israel? We shall be sleeping beneath the green ward of the cemetery in peaceother voices will be heard in the midst of the assemblies of the saintsand other shoulders will bear the ark of the Lord through the wilderness. Where are our successors? From where shall come these succeeding voices, and from where those nestled shoulders of strength? We believe they will come from among our children! And if God grants it shall be so, we shall need no greater joy.   
I will tell you why this is peculiarly the great joy of some Christian parentsit is because they have made it a subject of importunate prayer. That which comes to us by the gate of prayer comes into the house with music and rallying. If you have asked for it with tears, you will receive it with smiles! The joy of an answer to prayer is very much in proportion to the wrestling which went with the prayer. If you have felt, sometimes, as though your heart could break for your offspring unless they were soon converted to God, then, I will tell you, when they are converted you will feel as though your heart would break the other way out of joy to think that they have been saved! Your eyes, which have been red with weeping over their youthful follies, will one day become bright with rejoicing over holy actions which will mark the work of the Grace of God in their hearts!

No wonder that Hannah sang so sweetly, for she had prayed so earnestly! The Lord had heard her and the joy of the answer was increased by the former anguish of her prayer. We have no greater joy then thisthat our children walk in the Truth of Godand it is a right and allowable joy. It springs from good sources and we need not be afraid to indulge it. This joy is quickening in its effect. All who have ever felt it know what an energy it puts into them. Those of you who have never yet received it, but are desiring it, will, I trust, be quickened by the desire.

This is what it means. Is one son in the family converted to God? In that fact we rejoice. But we cannot linger over joy for onewe are compelled to think of the others. If God has been pleased to call half a household to salvation, there is a hunger and thirst in the parents heart after this luscious delight, and that parent cries, Lord, let them ALL be brought in, let not one be left behind!

Are some of you, this morning, so happy as to see all your children converted? I know some of you are. Oh how holy and how heavenly ought your families to be when God has so favored you above many of His own people! Be very grateful and while you are joyous, lay the crown of your joy at your Saviors feet. And if you have now a church in your house, maintain the ordinance of family worship with the greater zeal and holinessand pray for others that the Lord, in like manner, may also visit them.

Beloved, have you some of your children converted while others remain unsaved? Then I charge you, let what the Lord has done for some encourage you concerning the rest. When you are on your knees in prayer, say to your heavenly Father, Lord, You have heard me for a part of my house, I beseech You, therefore, to look in favor upon it all, for I cannot bear that any of my dear children should choose to remain Your enemies and pursue the road which leads to Hell. You have made me very glad with the full belief that a portion of my dear ones walk in Your Truth, but I am sad because I can see from the conduct of others that they have not yet been changed in heart, and therefore do not keep Your statutes. Lord, let my whole household eat of the Paschal Lamb, and with me come out of Egypt, through Your Grace.

I am sure, Beloved, this is how you feel, for every true Christian longs to see all his children the called of the Lord. Suppose it could be put to us that one child of our family must be lost and that we should be bound to

make the dreadful choice of the one to be cast away? We should never bring ourselves to it, it would be too terrible a task! God will never appoint us such a misery. We have heard of a poor Irish family on shipboard, very numerous and very needy. A kind friend proposed to the father to give up entirely one of the little ones to be adopted and provided for. It was to be entirely given up, never to be seen again, or in any way claimed as their ownand the parents were to make the selection.

It is a long story, but you know how the discussion between the parents would proceed. Of course they could not give up the eldest, for the simple reason that he was the first-born. The second was so like the mother. The third was too weak and sickly to be without a mothers care. So the excuses went on throughout the whole family, till they came to the lastbut no one dared even to hint that the mother should be deprived of her darling. No child could be parted withthey would sooner starve together than renounce one.

Now, I am sure if the bare giving up a child to be adopted by a kind friend would be a painful thing, and we could not come to a decision as to which to hand over, we could far less be able to surrender one beloved child to eternal destruction! God forbid we should dream of such a thing! We would cry day and night, No, Lord, we cannot see them die. Spare them, we pray You! We could almost rival the spirit of MosesBlot my name out of the Book of Life sooner than my children should be castaways. Save them, Lord! Save every one of them without exception, for Your mercys sake! We should make no differences in our prayers between one child and another.

Now, I am sure that we should be quite right in such desires and emotions, and very wrong if we were able to sit down and contemplate the eternal ruin of our own offspring with calm indifference. God has made you parents and He does not expect you to act otherwise than as a parents relations require you to act. That which would be unnatural cannot be right. As a Father, Himself, the Lord yearns over His erring children and He can never be grieved with us if we do the same. Nowhere do you meet with rebukes of natural parental love unless it unwisely winks at sin.

Even Davids bitter lamentation, O Absalom, my son, my son, would God I had died for you! O Absalom, my son, my son! is not censured by the Lord. Neither do we find Him rebuking Abraham for saying, O that Ishmael might live before You! These desires are so consistent with the natural instincts which He has, Himself, implanted, that, even if they are not always granted, they are never reprehended. Even if our child should turn out to be an Esau, or an Ishmael, or an Absalom, yet the prayers of the father for him are not forbidden. How could they be?

Do not be afraid at any time when pleading for the souls of your children! Be importunate, be eager, be earnest not for the childs lifethat you must leave with God. Not for the childs healththat, also, you may make a secondary matterbut for the childs soul. Stint not yourself in this, but wrestle as hard as you will, and say, I will not let go except You bless my children, every one of them! Their unregenerate state is my deepest sorrow! O Lord, be pleased to recover them from it. Once more, this high joy of which we have spoken is very solemn in its surroundings, for it involves this alternativeWhat if my children should not walk in the Truth of God?

Well, that means for us, during this life, many sorrows, nights of sleeplessness and days of anxiety. I have seen good men and great men crushed beneath the daily trouble caused by their children. Children, said one, are doubtful blessings, and he was near the truth. Blessings they are, and they can be made by God the choicest of blessingsbut if they shall grow up to be dissolute, impure, ungodlythey will make our hearts ache

*How sharper than a serpents tooth it is*

*To have a thankless child.*   
No cross is so heavy to carry as a living cross. Next to a woman who is bound to an ungodly husband, or a man who is unequally yoked with a graceless wife, I pity the father whose children are not walking in the Truth of God, who is yet, himself, an earnest Christian. Must it always be so, that the father shall go to the House of God and his son to the alehouse? Shall the father sing the songs of Zion, and the son and daughter pour forth the ballads of Belial?

Must we come to the Communion Table alone, and our children be separated from us? Must we go on the road to holiness and the way of peace, and behold our dearest ones traveling with the multitude the broad way, despising what we prize, rebelling against Him whom we adore? God grant it may not be so, but it is a very solemn reflection. More solemn, still, is the vision before us if we cast our eyes across the river of death into the eternity beyond! What if our children should not walk in the Truth of God and should die unsaved? There cannot be tears in Heaven, but if there might, the celestials would look over the bulwarks of the new Jerusalem and weep their fill at the sight of their children in the flames of Hell, forever condemned, forever shut out from hope!

What if those to whom we gave being should be weeping and gnashing their teeth in torment while we are beholding the face of our Father in Heaven? Remember the separation time must come. O you thoughtless youths! Between you and your parents there must come an eternal parting! Can you endure the thought of it? Perhaps your parents will first leave this worldoh, that their departure might touch your consciences and lead you to follow them to Heaven! But if you go first, unforgiven, impenitent sinnersyour parents will have a double woe in their hour!

How sadly have I marked the difference when I have gone to the funeral of different young people. I have been met by the mother who told me some sweet story about the girl and what she did in life and what she said in death, and we have talked together before we have gone to the grave with a subdued sorrow which was near akin to joy! I have not known whether to console or to congratulate! But in other cases, when I have entered the house, my mouth has been closed. I have asked few questions and very little has been communicated to me.

I have scarcely dared to touch upon the matter. By-and-by the father has whispered to me, The worst of all is, Sir, we had no evidence of conversion. We would have gladly parted with the dear one might we have had some token for good. It breaks my wifes heart, Sir. Comfort her if you can. I have felt that I was a poor comforterfor to sorrow without hope is to sorrow, indeed. I pray it may never be the lot of any one of us to weep over our grown-up sons and daughters dead and twice dead. Better were it that they had never been born! Better that they had perished like untimely fruit, than that they should live to dishonor their fathers God and their mothers Saviorand then should die to receive, Depart, you cursed, from those very lips which to their parents will sayCome, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.

Proportionate to the greatness of the joy before us is the terror of the contrast. I pray devoutly that such an overwhelming calamity may never happen to anyone connected with any of our families. So far I have conceded the text to parents. Now I am going to take it for myself and my Brothers.

II. You may view, dear Friends, the text as specifying the PASTORS greatest reward. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the Truth of God. The minister who is sent of God has spiritual children. They are as much his children as if they had literally been born in his house, for to their immortal Nature he stands under God in the relationship of father. It would seem we shall have but faint memories in Heaven of earthly relationships, seeing they are there neither married nor given in marriage, but are as the angels of God.

Therefore, the relationship of son and father will not exist in Heaven, though I cannot but think that spirits which were grouped on earth will be associated in Glory. But the duties and bonds of relationship will be ended. Relationships which relate to soul and spirit will last on. I may not look upon my sons in Heaven as my children, but I shall recognize many of you as such, for it is through your soul, or rather your new-born spirit, I am related to you. No minister ought to be at rest unless he sees that his ministry brings forth fruit, and men and women are born unto God by the preaching of the Word.

To this end we are sent to you, not to help you to spend your Sundays respectably, nor to quiet your conscience by conducting worship on your behalf. No, Sirs, ministers are sent into the world for a higher purpose! And if your souls are not saved, we have labored in vain as far as you are concerned. If in the hands of God we are not made the means of your new birth, our sermons and instructions have been a mere waste of effort and your hearing has been a mere waste of time to you, if not something worse. To see children born unto Godthat is the grand thing! Therefore every preacher longs to be able to talk about his spiritual sons and daughters.

John did so. Those who are the preachers children are often known to him. They were to John, else he could not have spoken of them as, my children, and could not have had joy in them as his children. From this I draw the inference that it is the duty of everyone who receives spiritual benefit, and especially conversion, from any of Gods servants, to let them know of it. John speaks about his children, but supposing there had been persons converted and John had never heard of it? Suppose they had never made any profession, never joined the Church? John might have lived and died without the comfort of knowing themand without the joy of hearing that they walked in the Truth of God.

Therefore, permit me to remind some of you who, I trust, know the Lord, but have never confessed His name, that you do us grievous wrong! We have sought your good and God has blessed us to you. But you deny us the fruit of our labor, which is that we should hear that God has owned our ministry in your consciences! Do not continue to defraud the laborer of his hire! You know how refreshing to the preacher is information that he has won a soul for Jesus. As cold water to a thirsty soul in a parching desert is such good news to us! I have had many such cups of water, but I am growing thirsty for more. I am grateful when the Lord works as He did only the other day, and I hear of it.

I preached to you, one morning, a sermon to despairing souls [#1146 Consolation for the Despairing.] I said there might be few, then, present to whom it would apply. It was very grateful to me to find, a day or so after, that a friend from a considerable distance had been moved to come here that morning, and, after many years of despair, was brought into light and liberty through the sermon. Oh, how glad I felt! You cannot help preaching when you know that saving results follow! If Gods Holy Spirit has blessed our word to you, do not refrain from acknowledging the blessing! Put on Christ publicly in Baptism, according to His commandunite yourself with His Church and commune with the people among whom you have been born unto God.

It seems from our text that John was in the habit of hearing about his spiritual childrenI have no greater joy than to hearmark thatthan to hear that my children walk in the truth. That implies that if you make a profession of your faith, people will talk about you. John could not have heard if others had not spoken. The man who makes a profession of religion, especially in a Church like this, will be watched by all the worlds eyes, and not by very friendly critics, either. There are those at home, who know not the Savior, who, if they can find any fault in your character, will throw it at you, and say, That is your religion, is it?

You will be men much spoken of, and reports of you will come to us bad or good, we shall be sure to hear of them. We practice no spy system among the members of our Church and yet somehow or other in this large Church of 4,500 members, it very rarely happens that a gross act of inconsistency is long concealed. Birds of the air tell the matter. The eagleeyed world acts as policeman for the Church, and with no good intent becomes a watchdog over the sheep, barking furiously as soon as one goes astray. I assure you, I have no greater joy than when I hear that the members of the Church are walking in the Truth of God.

When, for instance, a young Christian man dies, and his master writes to me, saying, Have you got another member in your Church like So-andSo? I never had such a servant before. I deplore his loss, and only wish I might find another of equally excellent character. Very different is our

feeling when we hear it said, as we do sometimes, I would sooner live with an ungodly man than with a professor of religion, for these professing Christians are a great deal worse tempered and more cantankerous than mere worldly people. Shame, shame on anybody who makes the world justly bring up so evil a report! Our joy is that there are others against whom no accusation can justly be brought.

You notice that he speaks of their walk. The world could not report their private prayers and inward emotions. The world can only speak of what it sees and understands. So John heard of their walk, their public character and deportment. Be careful, be careful of your private lives, my Brothers and Sisters, and I believe your public lives will be sure to be right. Remember that it is upon your public life that the verdict of the world will very much dependtherefore watch every step, action, and word lest you err in any measure from the Truth of God.

What is it to walk in the Truth of God? It is not merely resting in the Truth of God, or else some would suppose it meant that John was overjoyed because they were sound in doctrine and cared little for anything else. His joyous survey did include their orthodoxy in creedit reached far beyond. We will begin at that point and grant that it is a great joy to see our converts standing fast in the Truth of God, and, Brothers and Sisters, I am glad, indeed, when I hear that you hold fast the essential, fundamental, cardinal Truths of our holy faith.

I rejoice that the nonsense of the so-called modern thought has no charms for you! You have not turned aside to doubt the Deity of Christ, or the fall of man, or the substitutionary Sacrifice, or the authenticity and Inspiration of Scripture, or the prevalence of prayer. I am thankful that you hold fast the grand old Doctrines of Grace and refuse to exchange them for the intellectual moonshine so much in vogue just now. It is a great thing to hear of our people that they are abiding in the Truth as they have been taught. But to

walk in the Truth of God means something moreit signifies action in consistency with Truth.

If you believe that you are fallen, walk in consistency with that Truth of God by watching your fallen nature and walking humbly with God. Do you believe that there is one God? Walk in the Truth of God and reverence Him and none beside. Do you believe in Election? Prove that you are electwalk in the Truth of God as the chosen, peculiar people of God, zealous for good works. Do you believe in Redemption? Is that a fundamental Truth of God with you? Walk in it, for you are not your own, you are bought with a price. Do you believe in Effectual Calling and Regeneration as the work of the Spirit of God? Then walk in the power of God and let your holy lives prove that you have, indeed, been renewed by the supernatural work of Gods Grace. Walk in consistency with what you believe!

But walking in Truth means yet more, it signifies be real. Much of the walking to be seen in the world is a vain show, the masquerade of religion, the mimicry of godliness. In too many instances the man wears two faces under one hat and possesses a duplicate manhood. He is not real in anything goodhe is a clever actor and no more. Alas, that one should have to say it, very much of the religiousness of this present age is nothing more than playing at religion! Why, look at the Christian year of the Ritualistic party in our national Church, look at it, and tell me, what is it? It is a kind of practical charade, of which a sort of Passion Play is one act!

The life of Christ is supposed to be acted over again, and we are asked to sing carols as if Jesus were just born, eat salt fish because He is fasting, carry palms because He is riding through Jerusalem, and actually to hear a bell toll His funeral knell as if He were dying! One day He is born and another day He is circumcised, so that the year is spent in a solemn make-believe, for none of these things are happening! The Lord Jesus sits in Heaven, indignant to be made a play of! Have nothing do with such things! Leave the shadows and pursue the Substance. Worship Christ as He is and then you will regard Him as the same yesterday, today, and forever.

When men see you, let them see that what you believe you believe in downright earnest, and that there is no sham about you. Then they might call you a bigotfor which be thankful! Take the word home, keep it as an honorable title, far too good to be flung back upon your foe. They may call you a wild enthusiastin return pray God to make them enthusiastic, toofor in such a cause one cannot be too much in earnest. Do not go through the world like respectable shades, haunting the tomb of a dead Christ, but be alive with the life of Godalive from head to foot to Divine realities! So will you walk in the Truth of God!

See how truly the Apostles bore themselves. They were ready to die for the Truth of God they held, and all their lives they were making sacrifices for it. Let your truthfulness be so powerful a force that others can see that you are carried away by its force and governed by its impulses. I have no greater joy than this. Why, when a preacher sees men thus walk in the Truth of God, does he make it his great joy? Because this is the purpose of our ministry! It is this we aim at. We do not live to convert people to this sect or that, but to holy living before God and honest dealing with men. This is the grand thing and when we see this achieved, we have no greater joy. This is the designs of the Gospel, itself! Christ loved His Church and gave Himself for it, that He may present it to Himself, a perfect Church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

A holy people are the reward of the Redeemers passion! Well may they be the joy of those friends of the Bridegroom who stand and rejoice greatly because the Bridegrooms joy is fulfilled. The holiness of Christians is the great means of spreading the Gospel. Beyond all other missions I commend the mission of holiness. They preach best for Christ who preach at the fireside, who preach in the shop, whose lives are sermons, who are themselves priests unto God, whose garments are vestments and whose ordinary meals are sacraments. Give us a holy, consecrated people, and we will win, for these are the Omnipotent legions with which the world shall be conquered to Christ!

We joy in a holy people because they bring glory to God. Mere professors do not do so. Inconsistent professors dishonor God, of whom I tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ! A

people walking in the Truth of God crown the head of Jesus. They compel even blasphemers to hold their tongues, for when they see these holy men and women they cannot say anything against the Gospel which has produced such characters. Beloved, if you love your pastor, if you love the Bible, if you love the Gospel, if you love Christ, if you love Godbe a holy people!

You who profess to be saved, be true, be watchful. If you would not grieve us, if you would not dishonor the Gospel, if you would not crucify Christ afresh and put Him to an open shame, walk as Christ would have you walkabhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. Be in your speech and in your temper, in your business transactions with your fellow men and in your communications in the family circlemen approved of Godsuch as you will wish to have been when your Lord shall come, for He is at the door and blessed are those servants who are ready for His coming. If you are not what you ought to be, I beseech you do not make a profession! And if you have made a profession, and have dishonored it, humble yourselves in the sight of God and go once more to the fountain filled with blood, for there is still forgiveness and mercy for you.

Jesus will willingly receive you, even though you have done Him such despite. Return as a prodigal son to the Fathers house and you shall find the fatlings killed for you, and the best robe put upon you. As we are getting near the close of the year, earnestly pray that if anything in the time past has been evil, it may suffice us to have worked the will of the flesh. And now, from now on, in the new year may we live in newness of life and enjoy together the sweet privilege of hearing that our children walk in the Truth of God, while we ourselves, through Grace, are walking in it, too, and the Church is built up and multiplied by the Spirit of Truth. May the Lord bless you all, for Jesus Christs sake. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON Johns Second and Third Epistles.  
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A SPECIAL BENEDICTION   
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 12, 1887.

Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.   
Jude 1, 2.

THOSE were troublous times in which Jude wrote this very forcible Epistle. The first early days of Christianity, with all the springtime of the singing of birds and the blossoming of flowers had passed away. There had come times of trial for everyone, but worst of all were the troubles within the Church. Unawares, evil men had been admitted into membership. The human mind, always acting like leaven, had begun to corrupt, even, the Truth of the Gospel, so that where there had once been an unadulterated, unmingled preaching of the Cross of Christ, there had come in a savor of Gnosticism and other philosophies of the day. And with all the error there had also come a tendency to tone down the high spirituality, the deep sanctity of Christian life. So the children of God who truly cared for Him and walked with Him, were very sad at heart. I suppose that Paul had gone home to His reward. John still lingered and, perhaps, James and Peter, also, but when the time came for Peter to write his second Epistle, the day was darkening downand when Jude took up his pen and wrote this short Epistle, the times were getting darker and darker and great foreboding of evil were in the hearts of Gods servants foreboding which were only removed by their joyous faith in Him who had gone from them and who would, by-and-by, come again without a sin-offering unto salvation!

This Epistle, therefore, seems to me to fit our times, which are not altogether unlike those of which I have been speaking, and the Apostle might have been writing yesterday, so appropriate are his words to the evils of the present age! If Jude were living, now, he might have to deal with a different form of evil, but, at the bottom, it would really be the same evil as that of which he wrote, the same mischievous root of bitterness which, springing up in our days, troubles us and, thereby, many are defiled.

I thought, as I read this Epistle through, that Jude seems to take the right view of things, namely, that the proper way of meeting evils in the Church is by dealing with the Church, itselfdealing with the truly faithful members of the Church and speaking to those who really are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called stirring them up to seek the highest degree of spiritual strength and pleading for them that mercy and peace and love may be multiplied to them. If you have to visit infected places, it may help you to ward off disease if you, yourself, are vigorous and full of health. The best protection against surrounding evil will be the cultivation of a right state of heart and life, a continual growth in Grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. That wind which may upset yonder boat with its butterfly sails, may do no mischief, whatever, to the boat which is well ballasted and fitted to weather the gale. Be yourself rightlisten to the Word of Wisdom which says, Take heed unto yourself, and unto the doctrineand when these two matters are as they should be, then every wind of error which blows here and there will but little affect you.

Such I take it is the run of this Epistle and the opening verses are a fit preface thereto. I am going to speak of these two verses under three heads. First, here is a special manJude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James. Next, the Epistle is written to special personsto them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called. Then, thirdly, it contains a special benediction Mercy unto you, and peace, and love be multiplied.

I. First of all, it seems to me that the Apostle who wrote this Epistle was A SPECIAL MAN. Jude evidently wished to set himself apart from the general mass of those who were apostatizing and to make it known that he, himself, was strong in the faith and remaining faithful to his Lord.

To me, it seems as if every word of his own title has a specialty about it. There is something special in his name. He begins his Epistle with his own nameJude. Among the members of a certain denomination that I need not name, there is a practice of using initials when they write a book. I never find any instance of that custom in Scripture. G.B. did not write an Epistle! And neither A.B. nor X.Y.Z. has favored us with any book of Holy Scripture! Names, however, are not always used. We have no name at the commencement of the Epistle to the Hebrews, for no writer in the Old or the New Testament gloried in his own name. Still, they were not ashamed of their names and since they were bound to make an open confession of their faith, it is as well that they used their names at the beginning of their writings.

This Epistle was written by Jude, that is to say, by Judas, but not Iscariot, and herein lies the specialty of his name. This Judas was not the son of perdition, but a true son of God, a sincere and earnest-hearted Believer. Yet, when he wrote his own name down, Judas, which we pronounce short as, Jude, I think that the tears must have come to his eyes as he remembered that other Judaswith the same name, yes, and by birth with the same nature. If left to himself, he might have proved a traitor to his Master, like the other Judasbut Grace had made him to differ from the man who betrayed his Lord. If it had been your case, or mine, I am sure that we could not have written down that name without reflecting upon our obligations to the Sovereign Grace of God which kept us from being sons of perdition!

There goes John Bradford but for the Grace of God, is a saying often quotedand there would have gone this other Judas but for the Grace of God that restrained him! You remember how particular the Holy Spirit is that we should not mistake this Judas for Judas Iscariot, for when he asked of Jesus, Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself unto us, and not unto the world? the Holy Spirit records the name of the questioner as, Judas, not Iscariot. No, not Iscariot. What a mercy for you that though some other of your name may have fallen into gross sin, you have been preserved! But as you remember your own name and remember how often that name has been defiled by others who at first were your companions in your childhood, thank God that He has kept you from falling. Do not think of your name without thinking of that name which is above all names, by which your name has been rescued from the Stygian bog and placed in the Book of the children of God among those whose names are written in Heaven! So, you see, there was something special, even, about the name of Jude.

There was something equally or still more special in his office. Jude Judasthe servant of Jesus Christ. Our Revised Version very properly puts in the margin bondservant of Jesus Christ, and it is very beautiful to see how, in the original, these servants of Jesus Christ delighted to set forth the completeness of their service and to declare how perfectly they belonged to Christ. They were not servants that could come and go at their own pleasure, but they were bondservants of Jesus Christ. Though there were no free men on earth more truly free than they, yet these servants of Jesus Christ delighted in wearing chains of love which were soft as silk yet stronger than steel! They rejoiced to feel that they had no liberty to run away from Christtheir desire was to have their ear bored to the doorpost of His house, to be His servants through their whole lifetime and throughout eternity. This is what the Apostle meant when he wrote, Jude, the bondservant of Jesus Christ.

You know how persons came to be bondservants in the olden time, according to Jewish practice. They were bondservants by purchase. When anyone had bought a slave with his money, the poor man was reckoned as belonging to him. So, we are not our own, we were bought with a pricewe were not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christas of a lamb without blemish and without spot. The fine gentry in the ministry of the present day turn up their noses at this Truth of God and say that it is a mercantile idea. So it is, and we are not ashamed to have it so! You are bought with a

price, wrote the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, as if to make it clear beyond all question that it was really so! And you and I feel that we, too, have been bought and paid for, and that is one reason why we belong to Christ. We henceforth feel that we have no ownership rights over ourselves, yet we rejoice that we have that which is much more valuable, for we can, each one, say, with Thomas, My Lord and my God. Henceforth we have no claim over ourselves, but give ourselves over to Him who has bought us with His blood, for we are His bondservants by purchase.

Then there was another method by which a man became possessed of bondservants, that was by birth. Under the Law of God, the man born in the priests house or bought with the priests money, might eat of the holy things. There were some who were born under gracious influences. David makes mention of this when he says, in the 116th Psalm, O Lord, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, and the son of Your handmaid. Having a godly mother, he reckoned that he was born into the service of God. Even so, you and I, the twice-born, the really regenerate, have been born into the household of God and our regeneration binds us to the noble service of Him whom we call Master and Lord henceforth and forever! As naturally as the old nature rebels, the new nature obeys! And as naturally as the old Adam within us will have its own way, so naturally the new Adam bends to the will of Christ, for we possess another life than that we used to havewe have been born into a new world wherein dwells righteousness! Old things have passed away and all things have become newand now we surrender our members, which once were instruments of unrighteousnessto become instruments of righteousness and we rejoice in being permitted to enter the service of our God.

Look again at this man, Jude. He does not even call himself an Apostle. Paul did, because with some it was a matter of dispute as to whether he was an Apostle or not, and it was necessary for him to assert his right to the title. But Jude, having no question upon that matter, takes the lower-higher titlefor lower and higher are one in the Kingdom of Christand calls himself, the bondservant of Jesus Christ. My dear Hearer, can you, also, take that titlea bondservant of Jesus Christ? Let the freethinker be free to go his own way if he willyou are a Christthinker and you wish to go Christs way! Let the man who loves himself and seeks to please himself, do what he will! Henceforth you will love your Lord and seek to please Him, for you are, by purchase and by birth, the bondservant of Jesus Christ! Sometimes, also, men became bondservants by indenture. They entered into bonds of servitude for a set time and you and I have freely surrendered ourselves to Christ. We have entered into a covenant that we will be His forever. Paul wrote as if he had been branded with Christs mark and I doubt not that Jude might have done the same. From henceforth, says Paul, let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. He belonged undoubtedly, irrevocably, eternally, to the Lord Jesus Christ and he gloried in that fact! Dear Friends, will you not, also, glory in this if it is true of you?

Then Jude added another part of his title showing that he was special in his relation and brother of James. This expression seems to me to place Jude in a very pleasant light. He felt as if he was an especially favored person because he had for a brother that famous servant of our Lord Jesus Christ, James the Less, known among the Jews of old as James the Just, who had a reputation, even among the outside world for the great holiness of his life. This man was Judes brother. Christianity teaches us to value brotherhood and we highly esteem those with whom we are joined in relationship, especially in the relationships which are of Grace. I like that any man should feel glad of his brother, thankful for his brother, and I am glad that Jude, when under Divine Inspiration, does not forget to say that he was, the brother of James.

Some of us owe a great deal to our brothers and all of you have reason to thank God that you are the son of such an one, or that you are the father of such an one, or the sister of such an one, or the brother of such an one. There is a special mercy, probably, in your domestic position, and if there is, do not cease to praise God that He has given you to be associated in life with those who are associated with Him! May our children be His children! May our friends be His friends! May our brothers be our Brothers in Christ!

II. Now, secondly, let us think of THE SPECIAL PEOPLE to whom Jude wrote this Epistle.   
In this instance, the marginal reading of the Revised Version is, I doubt not, the more correct translationTo them that are beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ, being called. I shall take that as the best version, believing it to be strictly accurate.   
The special persons to whom Jude wrote were, first, beloved and sanctifiedTo them that are beloved in God the Father. O child of God, in times of darkness and of doubt, above all others, cling to the faith once delivered to the saints, because, according to it, you are beloved in God the Father, or, as our Authorized Version puts it, Sanctified by God the Father, which means that, by reason of His eternal love to you, He set you apart unto Himself. To His spiritual Israel the Lord still says, You only have I known of all the families of the earth. They shall be Mine, says the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels. Before the earth was, or sun or moon or stars began to shine, the prescient eye of God was fixed on His beloved and He sanctified them unto Himself, for the Lords portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.   
And because He had thus set them apart unto Himself, in fullness of time He redeemed them unto Himself, redeemed them from among men. Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, and in consequence of that love of His, He determined that those whom He had redeemed should be the instruments of His gracious working among the sons of men. They were to be vessels meet for the Masters use! They were to be the lamps in which His Light should be carried, the salt by which His preserving power should be made manifest amidst the putrefaction of the world! He set them apart for Himself and His service according to those ancient words, This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise.   
Out of this love and this separation there came a sanctification of another kind, namely, that of cleansing, for we were heirs of wrath even as others, polluted like others, but the Spirit of God fulfils the Divine purpose of separationbrings us out from the world, even as He brought Abraham from Ur of the Chaldeesand puts us in a separate path that we may be sojourners with God as all our fathers were. Then He washes us in the precious blood and in that water which flowed with the blood from the side of Jesus, that mystic Fountain opened on Calvary for the sin and uncleanness of the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.   
This is what is meant by being, sanctified by God the Father. If you take the other translation, beloved in God the Father, it comes to the same point, for love has a separating influence upon its object. If the love of a man is fixed upon one woman, he calls her his bride and he looks upon her as different from all other women on the face of the earth. She is always in his thoughts and in his heart, and her praise is often on his lips. He lives for her. Even so has God taken unto Himself a people who are His, alone.   
In addition to being beloved and sanctified, they are also preserved in Christ Jesus. This is a very sweet expression and conveys a very true meaning, but the exact translation is, kept for Jesus Christ. To my mind, this is a most delightful Truth of Godit makes my eyes sparkle to think of our being kept for Jesus Christ as jewels that He, alone, must wear. A garden enclosed is My sister, My spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. Kept for Jesus Christ. I wish that we all carried out this Divine purpose. What have I to do with idols? I am kept for Jesus Christ! What have I to do with seeking the things of this world? I am kept for Jesus Christ! What have I to do with living to myself, or to win the applause of men? What have I to do with the judgments of those who would be thought wise? What have we to do with anything but this Kept for Jesus Christ? Our heart should be a cup from which no lip but His shall drink, a chalice consecrated to Him who has given Himself for us. Therefore let us have no eyes but for Jesus, no ears but for Jesus, no tongue but for Jesuslet us be always, only, all for Him!   
Kept for Jesus Christ. You must not touch that treasureit is set apart for the King! You must not meddle with that man, you must not seek to engross the love of that womanthey are kept for Jesus Christ. It is to such people that Jude writes his Epistle. Others may be filthy dreamers, but these people are kept for Jesus Christ! Some may be wandering stars or trees plucked up by the roots, but these people are kept for Jesus Christkept by Him, kept in Himbut especially kept for Him. May the meaning of this precious Word of God be written upon all your hearts, beloved in Christ!   
Then Jude adds, and called. Do you not see the specialty running through all this description? Those who were beloved, sanctified and preserved, were also called! There is a call in the Gospel which comes to all men to whom it is proclaimed, yet all men are not called in the sense meant here. Brother, do you remember that day when you were called? The Gospel had called you many times and, up to that time, it had fallen upon deaf ears. But that day you were called! Just as Lazarus came forth out of the grave because he was called by Christ, so was it with you. You had been lying asleep, wrapped in the arms of sinno, like Lazarus, you were actually deadbut that day there came a voice to you out of the excellent Glory! It was not a voice that you heard with the ears but, better than that, you heard it in your very soul and it was as clear a call from Christ to you as when He called out of Heaven to Saul of Tarsus, and said, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?   
I remember distinctly when the Lord first called me and I recollect it all the better because He has called me many times, since, for that blessed call continues and is often repeated! He called us, first, from death to life, then from darkness to light, then from a lesser light to a brighter oneand He has called us to go up, step by step! Not even the angels go up Jacobs ladder with a flightthey ascend it step by step and every day and all the day there is a call that comes to some of us, Friend, come up higher. When we are half inclined to sit down on the step of life and admire the golden way up which we have, up to now, ascended, we hear a voice that says to us, Higherand there is our gracious God at the top of the ladder, still beckoning us to ascend, and saying to us, again and again, Seek you My face, and making us respond, Your face, Lord, will we seek.   
Those who are the beloved of the Lord are called. They have heard a voice which worldlings have not heard. They have seen a face which the blind men of this world have never seen. They have touched a hand and a mystic hand has touched them, which those dead ones who still lie in the Wicked One have never felt. They are the calledthey are called by Christ to come out from among the ungodly, to be separate from them, to follow Him and to keep following Him till, at last, He bids them enter into His Glory to be with Him forever!   
O Beloved, the blessings of the Gospel belong to men and women such as these, who have been set apart by Divine Love, who have been held apart and consecrated to Christ and who have been taken apart by effectual calling and so made to dwell apart to the glory of Christ, alone, and for His use only! Shall any Belshazzar drink out of these golden cups? God forbid! Shall Satan come and take away these crown jewels of the Prince and bedeck himself with them? God forbid! When I see professedly Christian men seeking worldly amusements and worldly honors, and thus giving themselves over to Belial, what can I think or say of them? God grant that it may not be so with any of us, but may we be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time!

III. Now I must close by noticing, with brevity, A SPECIAL BENEDICTION which Jude wished to these people, and this is to be the very pith and point of my sermon. It is, dear Friends, my special desire and prayer to God for all who are separated unto Him, that mercy, peace and love may be multiplied unto them.   
Beloved, may you have mercy! You will always need it, for even a saint is still a sinner. May you have the mercy that will continue to forgive your sin, the mercy that will continue to wash your feet from the defilement of the way! May you have the mercies of Providence that will supply your need, the mercies that will sustain you under trial, the mercies that will lead you on from strength to strength! May you have much mercy, for you will need it and, blessed be God, He delights in mercy.   
Then, says the Apostle, he wishes that we may have peace. Oh, may you have it! The man who is at perfect peace with God, who is at perfect peace with his own conscience, who is at peace with all his fellow men, who especially cultivates peace by behaving himself aright in the household of Godthis is the man who is strong in the midst of unrest and turmoil! This is the man who will stand firm when others flinch, for he can say, My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise. May you have this peace, Beloved!  
Jude next wishes that we may have love. That is to say, first, a sense of the love of God shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Spirit, a ravishing realization that God loves us with that everlasting love which knows no measure, nor change, nor end. May your heart dance at the very thought of the infinite love of God which He displays towards you! And then may you have love towards men, loving your neighbor as yourself with that compassionate love which is pictured in the parable of the Samaritan, that love which does not say, Be you warmed and be you filled, but which proves itself to be real by deeds of charity and acts of kindness! May you abound in love to Gods people. May your love be exceedingly abundant to those who are your Brothers and Sisters in Christ, whose names are written in the Lambs Book of Life! I wish, dear Friends, that you and I could be suffused with love. One said of Basil that he was a pillar of lightI do not so much care for that comparison as to be a pillar of love. Look at holy John next to his Master, surely, and chiefly so because he abounded in love.   
The benediction of the Apostle is thisthat this mercy, peace, and love may be multiplied to you. Is not that a beautiful word, multiplied?not merely increased, but multiplied! You know what it is to increaseyou add one to two, that is threebut when you multiply, you say, Three times three, that is nine. Multiplying is a quick way of growing! Oh, that you had all these blessings multipliedthat, if you have had mercy, you might have ten times as much mercythat, if you have had peace, you might have a deeper, fuller, richer, more abiding peace, multiplied peace, peace upon peace, the peace of God, which passes all understanding and that, if you have had love, your love might be multiplied, squared, cubed! May the biggest figures that can be found multiply your love, for never did any man, yet, have too much love to God, or too much of the right kind of love to his fellow men! May the Lord make us to grow in Grace, to be filled with Grace, to have these three Graces multiplied unto us!   
Now I come back to where I began. It was a dark time when Jude wrote this Epistle, but instead of saying to the Christian people, You see that all these people have gone astray, the cause is in dangergo forth and fight with themhe says, mercy, and peace, and love, be multiplied unto you. The Graces of Christians will be the defeat of the enemy! If you need to improve a dark night, give us brighter stars, and if we need to enlighten a Dark Age, let us have brighter Christians! If there is mischief abroad in the world, the fault, dear Brothers and Sisters, is, to a great extent, in ourselves. If we lived wholly to God, people would better know what Christians are! I believe that the short way to the conversion of sinners is the sanctification of saints. If we had more faith, we would preach better. If we had more believing prayer, we would see more souls converted. If we lived nearer to God, it would be better for the far-off ones. Is it not written that when a man receives this Water of Life into himself it, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life and, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water? God make you to be such reservoirs of Grace!   
I have not spoken hardly a word to the unconverted, you see, because I want you professors so to live that your lives shall preach sermons. It is all very well to preach with the mouth, but the best sermons in the world are preached with the legs, with the life, by the walk and conversation of Gods people! If there is piety at home, if there is uprightness in business, if there is a burning zeal for God in your common conversation, then the ungodly will say, What does this mean? And they will want to know more about it. How earnestly I wish that every person here who cannot be described as, Kept for Jesus Christ, might long that it were so with him, and before he goes to bed, tonight, might pray that he may belong to Christ! Then, giving himself up to Christ by faith, he may, this very night, know that sweet peace of which I spoke just now. So may it be with you all, for the Lord Jesus Christs sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.**

Verses 1, 2. Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. Our holy faith breeds in us the best wishes for others. As we desire to find mercy, ourselves, so do we long that others, also, should find mercy and, as we rejoice in the peace and love which the Holy Spirit works in us, we desire that others may partake of the same spiritual benefits. Hence the Apostles usually begin their Epistles with these good wishes which are not mere wishes, but earnest prayers and Inspired benedictions. May we breathe such petitions wherever we go! Let us wish no man any ill, even in the most exciting and trying times, and under the greatest provocation, but let us still breathe out this prayer, Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.

3. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was necessary for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith, which was once delivered unto the saints. These godly men, though they wrote under Divine Inspiration, yet stirred themselves up that they might be in a right condition of mind and heart. Even though the pen does not, by itself, write, yet it is well that it is not corroded, lest it answer not to the hand that uses it. So Jude says, I gave all diligence to write unto you. All the diligence of Jude, by itself, could not have written this Epistle! Still, while depending upon Divine guidance, he was no mere passive agenthe gave all diligence to the accomplishment of his task. Jude wrote of the common salvation, for there is but one. He was writing a general Epistle, a catholic Epistle, to all sorts of persons all over the world and he, therefore, wrote of the common salvation. There is but one salvationthere cannot be another. There are some who trouble us, as some troubled the Christians in the Apostles day, by preaching another Gospel, which is not another, but there is only one salvation. It was necessary, says the Apostle, for me to write unto you. And oh, how necessary it still is to preach the Gospel and to warn men against defections from it! Jude continues, It was necessary for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all (that is the correct rendering) delivered to the saints. The faith is not a growth. It is not an evolution. It was once for all delivered to the saints and the great business of the saints, the holy, the saintly among men, is to defend, if necessary with their lives, the faith once delivered unto them! We are put in trust with the Gospel, we are trustees of a Divine deposit of invaluable Truth. And we must be true to our trust at all costs. It was necessary for Jude to write as he did, for he had further to say

4. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the Grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. These are two vital points in which many have erredeither separating holiness of life from orthodoxy of beliefor denying the Divinity and the supremacy of our Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing could more discredit the Gospel than the first error, that of turning the Grace of God into lasciviousness. And nothing could more injure the Gospel than the second error, that of denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

5. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though you once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. So you may get in among the spiritual children of Israel, you may share their privileges, you may sing the Red Sea song of triumph and yet, after all, if there is not real living faith within your soul, God will as surely destroy you as He destroyed the unbelieving Israelites! Those myriads of graves in the wilderness are as sure a token of Gods hatred of sin as the drowning of Pharaohs chariots and horsemen in the Red Sea! Beware, then, of having a form of faith which does not purify your lives, a profession of belief in Christ which allows you to live in sin with impunity, for if you have this, however near you may seem to be to the people of God, even if you are counted in with them, yet God will not reckon you as His, for He is the same Lord who afterward destroyed them that believed not.

6. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. The angelsthink of how high they stood in their first estate! If sin could drag an angel from the skies, it may well pluck a minister from the pulpit, a deacon from the Communion Table, a Church member out of the midst of his Brothers and Sisters! It is only perseverance in holiness which is the token of eternal salvation! If we forsake the Lord and turn back to our former evil ways, it will be the evidence that we never really believed in Christ and that there was no true work of Grace in our hearts.

7. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Whatever the new gods, newly come up, that some preach, nowadays, may be or may not be, our God is a consuming fire, our God is one who takes vengeance upon iniquity and who will by no means spare the guilty! He is as terribly just as He is Divinely graciouslet us bow before Him.

8. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. What a strange thing it is that such evils should spring up in the nominal Church of God! I suppose that out of the professing Church, there have come more monstrous evils than have been nursed in the world, itself! Why, even in these days, we have had those who have professed perfection, who have given themselves over to abominable evils and who have even taught them as a part of their perfection! Ah, me! To what depths of infamy will not men go! Under the very guise of holiness, the most loathsome iniquity has been practiced. Unless the Grace of God prevents, that which is best rots into that which is worst. You could not make a devil except with an angel for the raw materiala Judas Iscariot could only be produced out of an Apostle of Jesus Christand it was into the nominal Church of God that these filthy dreamers of whom Jude wrote had come. They were also, according to the Apostle, those who despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities, those who quibble at everything that is right and good, and seek to pull down everything that comes to them with authority, especially everything that is of Divine authority.

9. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke you. I do not know when that happened, yet I believe it, because it is here. When we are called to dispute whether it is about the Law of God, which might be regarded as the body of Moses, or about the Gospel, which is the body of Christlet us use no railing accusations, for the wrath of man works not the righteousness of God. Let us be satisfied with hard arguments and soft wordsand when we feel that our own rebuke will be useless, let us simply say, The Lord rebuke you.

10. But these speak evil of those things which they know not. Very generally it is sothose who revile Holy Scripture are usually persons who have not read the Bible. They speak evil of those things which they know not.

10-12. But what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah. These are spots in your feasts of charity. You seem to be sailing smoothly along over the placid waters, but these men are like hidden rocksthat is the expression used by the Apostle rather than, spots.

12. When they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear. At the love feasts in the Apostles day, these ungodly men feasted without fear, just as some do at the Communion Table now. The absence of holy fear is a damning mark in the souls of unholy professors! That religion which has no awe in itwhich never makes us tremble before the Most High is not the religion of genuine faith, for there is a fear which even perfect love casts not out, but it rather increases and deepens that holy fear which is the very essence of true piety.

12, 13. Clouds they are without water, carried about by winds; trees whose fruit withers, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. Such were in the professing Church in Judes time, so we must not be surprised if we meet with men like them in the nominal Church today!

14, 15. And Enoch, also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. When Enoch thus prophesied, we do not know. That he did so was revealed to Jude and he, here, tells us of it. It was profitable for us that so pointed and plain a testimony of Enoch should not be lost.

16-18. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaks great swelling words, having mens persons in admiration because of advantage. But, Beloved, remember the words which were spoken before of the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. Jude gives a summary of warnings uttered by Paul, Peter and James.

19. These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. They know nothing of the Divine Life and of that Divine Spirit who dwells in the bodies of the saints as in a holy temple.

20. But you, Beloved, buildingIs this the way, then, to prevent our falling into sin? Yes. To prevent doing wrong, do rightYou, Beloved, buildingdoing good, substantial, solid work, building

20. Up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit! He has told us about the one Foundation, now he bids us build thereon Building up yourselves on your most holy faith. Praying. That is the next thing. There is no preservation like that which is given by God in response to believing prayer. Praying in the Holy Spirit. There is a kind of praying which is without the Holy Spiritand it speeds not. There is a praying which is the breath of God in man, returning from where it camethis will keep us from falling and bring us untold blessings

21. Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. While you thus carefully watch over yourselves, have great love, also, to others, and seek to bless them, especially your fellow Church members.

22. And of some have compassion, making a difference. They may all, apparently, sin in much the same way, but there may be circumstances that make a difference between them. There may not be the same willfulness, or the same continuance in the sin in some as there is in others there may be, in some cases, greater temptation and, therefore, more excuse for them. Of some have compassion, making a difference.

23. And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Loving the sinners, but hating their sin.   
24, 25. Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the Presence of His Glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.   
The Lord bless the reading of His Word to our profit! Amen.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. Sermon #1592 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

THE COMMON SALVATION   
NO. 1592

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, APRIL 10, 1881, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

The common salvation.   
Jude 1:3.

JUDE says, Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was necessary for me to write unto you. The Apostle did not write for writings sake and in this he sets us an examplewe are not to speak for speakings sake, nor even to preach for preachings sake. When we take upon ourselves to write concerning Divine things, it ought to be because it is necessary for us to write. And when we speak in the name of God, it should be because we have something to say which is necessary to be said. Unless a man feels an imperative necessity to speak, he will not speak as an ambassador of God.

I think that Jude would not have given all diligence to write if he had not, first, felt that necessity was laid upon him to do so. Before you instruct others, endeavor to feel the obligation which rests upon you to impart the Light of God which you have received, for if you have been called of God unto this ministry, woe is unto you if you preach not the Gospel! The souls of others require the Truth of God which you have been commissioned to teachbut you, also, require to teach it to them, for, if you do not warn them, their blood may stain your skirts. That the soul is without knowledge is not good. Neither is it good to any that he should withhold what he knows. That men should live and die in ignorance of Christ is terrible to conceive of, therefore when you speak or write, do it because it is necessary to be done and necessary that you should do it.

You know how it behooved Christ to suffer and, even so, it behooves us to hold forth the Word of Life. The necessity in the present case was that he should write of the common salvation. If it was commoncommonly understood and commonly receivedwhy should he need to write about it? Surely a common subject has enough written upon it, already, and it affords no room for freshness and novelty which are so much desired by readers. Yet experience and observation prove that it is more necessary to preach the

common Doctrines of the Gospel than any other Truths of God and that just those things which appear to be the most elementary and the most generally received are those upon which it is most important to lay stress again and again.

If there are certain high doctrines, speculative theories and dogmas which are rather outgrowths of the Gospel than the Gospel, itself, let them be preached in due proportion. But if they are not preached, the risk and danger will not be extreme. As for the root facts, the fundamental Doctrines, the primary Truths of Scripture, we must, from day to day, insist upon them. We must never say of them, Everybody knows them, for, alas, everybody forgets them! We must not cease from proclaiming them from fear of being charged with uttering mere platitudesthat which is revealed of the Holy Spirit must not be spoken of so reproachfully. Let men call the Doctrines of the Gospel platitudes if they willwe will only answer that on such platitudes our salvation rests!

After all, on certain grand, wide, well-known Truths of universal acceptance, the Church of God is builther basis is not a difficult philosophy, but a plain Revelation of God. Let us not strain after matters of ultra refinement, theories of cultured intellects, but let as obey the necessity which calls upon as to write and to speak of the common salvation. The Gospel message is full of world-wide truisms and well-known facts. What did Paul say?This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. If worthy of all acceptation, it is surely worthy of all proclamation! It is worthwhile for the whole Church to continually rehearse that Jesus came to save sinners, for common Truth as it is, there is a necessity that we should perpetually and diligently make it known.

The common salvation should be commonly spoken of, but I fear it is uncommonly neglected in these days. The immediate necessity to write of the common salvation arose out of certain men who had crept into the Church unawares. Some of these attacked the Gospel on its practical side with Antinomian subtlety. They cried up the Grace of God, but said little of the holy living which it produces. They made light of sin under pretense of magnifying the Grace of God! They called careful watchfulness a legal spirit They derided humble self-examination and claimed, as children of God, they were, in no sense, bound by the precepts of the Moral Law. The Apostle calls it, turning the Grace of our God into lasciviousness.

Side by side with these, there crept in another gang of evil ones, who denied the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. They robbed Christ of His Divine Glory and so denied His Atonement and Sovereignty as to dethrone Him from being either the Savior or the King of His Church. This was the essence of Arianism. They said that Jesus Christ was an admirable example, that He was one of a number of persons who have discovered important truths and that He is, therefore, to be greatly admired, but they asserted that still higher truth would yet be discovered as the race proceeded in its progress and so forth. These men of thought crept into the Church and stabbed at the heart of the common salvation.

We used to have in our Churches a sad amount of the Antinomian leavenwe had among us men who preached the Doctrines of Grace without the Grace of the Doctrines and professors who forevermore spoke about the truth, but seemed little careful about following the Way or exhibiting the Life. I hope that this evil principle has pretty well departed from us, though I fear that in its removal it has dragged away precious Truths of God with it and now we are assailed by quite another school of thought.

I see no choice in the two kinds of foes, they are equally badthese last are denying this Truth and paring down the other, moving landmarks and overthrowing monuments, shaking every wall and kicking at every foundation. Having crept in among us unawares, defiant of common honesty, they preach against the Gospel from our own pulpits and wage war against our Zion from within her own gates! It is essential at this day that such as fear God and are His servants should again and again both write and preach concerning the common salvationand over and over again rehearse the first lessons of Christthe very alphabet of Grace.

We must make the joyful sound of the common salvation to be more common than ever! I wish to ring it out this morning with all the power that I have and with all that God will grant me by His Holy Spirit! If these men assailed certain speculations of theology it would little matter. What is the chaff to the wheat, says the Lord? Let the chaff be removed, by all means. If they assailed certain peculiarities of method, either in work, or life, or teaching, it might be well for us to be taught something by their censures. If they attacked the specialties of a single person or sect and the particular view of the Truth of God held by a mere party it would not matter, for what are the fashions of mens minds? Who is Paul and who is Apollos?

But it is at the very root of the tree that they lay their axe and, therefore, we must end all hesitation! We must take up our weapons and, for the sake of the common salvation earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints! Our subject, then, is the common salvation. Oh to speak in the power of the Spirit!

I. Our first observation at this time shall be that PRESENT SALVATION IS ENJOYED BY THE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST, otherwise there could be among them no common salvation. Those who are sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ and called, are saved. In the Church of God, salvation is the privilege of all Believers. It is not a matter of the future, alone, a blessing to be sought for on a dying bed and reached in Heaven. But it is a blessing for this world and this present time. Those greatly mistake the meaning of salvation who suppose it signifies nothing more than escaping from Hell when you die and entering into Heaven when the time has come.

Salvation means being at once delivered from the power of sin and being, once and for all, washed from the guilt of sin. The very word used herethe common salvationshows that Jude did not regard it as a hidden treasure put away from human reach throughout this mortal life. How could it have been common in such a case? He did not regard it as a distant attainment to be reached after 20, 30, or 40 years of holy living, but as a thing to be tasted, handled and received as soon as faith enters the soulfor how else could it be common? Unto us who are saved, says the Apostle, who has saved us, and called us with an holy calling, says the Scripture in another place. Salvation has come to our housewe have itit is a common blessing in the household of faith. As salvation is not a future benefit only, so it is not a benefit reserved for a few of the more saintly people among Believers.

It is supposed by some that you cannot know whether you are saved till you are in the grip of death, or that, if any do know it, it is only a few eminent teachers or especially holy persons who have lived a very religious life and, consequently, know that they are saved. It is to be confessed that the more holy and godly our life, the brighter our evidence of salvation becomes. But still, the blessing, itself, is common to all the children of Godand those whose faith is feeble and whose spiritual life is weak are still saved in the Lord. Beloved Hearer, you ought not to rest without knowing that you are saved! You may know it and if it is true, you ought to know it! I do not think that you have any right to sit quietly on that seat for 10 minutes without knowing that you are saved, for it is an awful thing to be in doubt as to whether you are under the bondage of sinin doubt as to your being at peace with God.

This is not a subject upon which uncertainty can be endured. You say, Tis a point I long to know. It is well that you long to know itI beg you to long to know it so intensely that you must either know it or become unutterably wretched! Let every doubt on that point be like a sword in your bones. May God cause your heart either to rejoice with full assurance or else to be in agony as with death pangs till you are confident that you are built on the sure Foundation. The salvation which is in Christ Jesus is the common salvation of all who know the Gospel and live upon it. Among simple-minded Believers, salvation is the inheritance of every one of them and the knowledge that they are saved is an everyday possession. We who have joined in Church fellowship in this place can truly say, We rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We count it no presumption to say that we are saved, for the Word of God has told us so in those places where salvation is promised by faith in Christ Jesus!

The presumption would lie in doubting the Word of Godbut in simply believing what He says, there is far greater humility than in questioning it! Being, then, partakers of like precious faith, we share in salvation bought with precious blood, which, though it is costly beyond all price is, nevertheless, to all Believers the common salvation. This common salvation consists in many works of Grace for us and in us. In part it consists of deliverance from spiritual death. We were dead in trespasses and sins, but the Spirit of God has quickened us into a new and heavenly life and thus we have salvation from spiritual death. This belongs, today, to all Believers, for how can a man be a Believer and not have the inner life? Having that life, he is conscious that it is there. True, he may fall into a fainting fit and lie swooning, scarcely conscious of being alivebut such is not his usual condition. Healthy life is conscious life and rejoices in being, acting and growing. You who are strangers to the people of God may think I am fanatical, but, indeed, I am only speaking words of truth and soberness when I say that the conscious possession of a heavenly life is common among Believers and is, in fact, a large part of the common salvation.

This common salvation consists in deliverance from that awful distance at which we once stood from God. We were far off from Him by wicked works and when the quickening began in us, we felt that distance and we mourned it, fearing, also, that it could never be removed. But now in Christ Jesus we are brought near and have become dwellers in the House of the Lord. Abba, Father, is the cry which the blessed God hears and accepts as it rises from our hearts. Once God was not in all our thoughts, but now our thoughts are sanctified and sweetened by a sense of His Presenceand we find our greatest joy in feeling that He is all around us and within usthat in Him we live and move and have our being! Blessed is the common salvation which has brought us near to God by the blood of Jesus and made us children and heirs of the Most High!

We have also been saved from the gloom of heart which once hung over us because we were conscious of being under Gods displeasure. We thought that we could never be forgiven, but we are forgiven. We concluded that our heavenly Father would never accept us, but we are accepted in the Beloved. We wrote ourselves down among the condemned, but now we are justified by faith which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. The darkness has passed and the true light shines into the spirits of the faithful. Peace with God is a sweet part of the common salvation. Now we are delivered, also, from the love of sin. We cannot find pleasure in it as once we did. We sin, but it costs us dearly. When we do so, we lament it with our whole soul. It was our natural way to run the downward road, but now, when our feet tread that path, it is as wanderers who are out of their way.

Once sin was our element, as the water is the living element of fish, but it is far otherwise, now, for sin is death to us. Transgression now breeds sorrow in our conscience and creates misery in the heart, for it is alien to the life of God which is in us. If we could have our desire, we would never offend againwe would have our souls clear as the firmament above us and never would an evil thought or a loose desire flit over the pure heavens of our sanctified minds. We would do Gods will on earth as it is done in Heaven. I say, we, for I speak for all Believers in the Lord Jesus. We are all rescued from the iron yoke of the love of evil and this is a most precious part of the common salvation!

The Lord has also delivered us from that cowardly fear of man which brings a snare and holds men as slaves to evil customs. He has also brought us out of the dark dungeon of spiritual ignorance and renewed us in knowledgethus has He broken the dominion of the former lusts of our ignorance and given us liberty to serve Him with godly fear. Pride, too, is laid in the dust and we are saved from that dreadful tyrant. The dominant power of selfishness is destroyed and we have learned to love. The woes of others afflict us; the joys of others rejoice us; our soul flows out beyond the narrow confines of our own ribs. Our heart is enlarged with love towards God and to all His creatures. Blessed salvation this! And it is common to all Believers.

We have again and again heard it said that evangelical ministers preach salvation to sinful men and talk to them of a future life, whereas if we were practical, we should denounce the sinner and speak only of present reformation in this life. The charge is, I fear, more often made in malice than in ignorance. But if in ignorance I would replyO fools and slow of heart, neither to listen nor to understand! Our constant theme is immediate salvation from sin and we are perpetually insisting upon it that this salvation is a present business, to be attended to at once for the purposes of today. It is false, utterly false, that we have so preached about the world to come as to have pushed out of sight the duties and temptations of this present life! No, we have regarded the life to come as commenced here below and have viewed Heaven, itself, as to a great extent, the fruit of a heavenly disposition which must be implanted in us while yet on earth.

Ah, if men did not hate the Gospel, they would not so often repeat stale objections and groundless accusations. It is surely time that infidelity should invent something fresh in the way of objection, for this has long passed the stage of toleration and has become a worn-out impertinence. Salvation from sin, leading upward to perfection and Heaven, is called in the text, the common salvation. It is, then, the salvation of all Gods peoplethe salvation about which all true Christians are agreed, for, notwithstanding all you hear about our divisions into sects, the Church is really one! The denominations of the Christian Church are very much like the divisions of a plowed field by means of furrows which mark the surface, but the land remains, to all intents and purposes, one field.

I speak not of mere professors, but truly spiritual people. Such are all one in Christ Jesus and their salvation is in all respects the same. If they have not all things common, at least they have one and the same salvation! All converted men and women believe in the same essential Truths of God, feel the working of the same Spirit within them and press forward to the same end, namely, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. You shall take a high churchman who is a truly spiritual manand there are such peopleand you shall set him down side by side with the most rigid member of the Society of Friends and when they begin to talk of Jesus, of the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul and the desire of their hearts after God, you will hardly know which is which! The nearer we come to Him, who is the Salvation of God, the more plainly we see that among the children of God the basis of agreement is far wider than the ground of division.

Andrew Fuller well and pithily said, There are, I conceive, four things which essentially belong to the common salvationits necessity, its vicarious medium, its freeness to the chief of sinners and its holy efficacy. We may differ on the five points, but we are agreed upon these four points! Ask any true Christian if it is not so. You shall get together, if you like, a collection of the odds and ends of Christianity and certainly there are some odd Christian people about whose light comes from above, so they sayI think through a crack in the roofbut if they are really genuine and their hearts are right, you shall find that even in these wrongheaded folk there is an agreement upon their need of a Savior, their faith in His death, the freeness of His Grace and the change of heart which it produces.

All Believers in Christ have a common delight in a common salvation. II. We go a step further and note, secondly, that THIS SALVATION IS, IN SOME RESPECTS, COMMON IN THE WIDEST POSSIBLE SENSE. It is common because it is to be preached to all nations, to all classes, to all characters, to all ages and to all conditions of menin fact, it is to be preached to every creature under Heaven. It is the common salvation so far as thisthat a proclamation of mercy through Jesus Christ is to be made to all mankindfor it is declared that if they believe in Christ Jesus they shall be saved. You need not be afraid of being too free and unreserved in your delivering of the Gospel.   
Let the great trumpet be blown and let every mortal ear attend! I am as firm an adherent to the Doctrines of Sovereign Grace as any man living, but never shall this tongue hesitate to declare the common salvation! Whenever I am called upon to address a congregation, I will always cry, Ho, everyone that thirsts, come you to the waters! Whoever will, let him take of the Water of Life freely. The invitation of the Gospel is so farreaching that it may well be called the common salvation. It is common in the widest sense because every man that believes in Christ Jesus will be savednot the Jew only, but the Gentile, alsonot the only poor man, but the rich man, also! Not only the black man, or the white man, but men of every colornot the ignorant or the learned, the rude or the refined, exclusivelybut every soul of Adam born that believes in Christ Jesus shall be saved.   
For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And so to you, dear Hearer, whoever you may be, comes this common salvation. It is a command addressed to you and a promise made sure to you, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. It is common in this wide sense, that if any man is saved he will be saved by this common salvation! Men talk as if there were half-a-dozen different roads to Heaven and yet there is but onethey prattle as if there were seven or eight saviors at the least, or as if every man must be his own savior as we heard the other day of every man being his own lawyer!   
And yet there is but one name given among men whereby we must be saved! He who tries to be his own savior has a fool for his client. He will utterly fail to his eternal confusionwhy did Jesus die to save us if we can save ourselves? All born of Adam who enter Eternal Life come in by the one door! Infants are saved through Christ and if any attain to Heaven from among the heathen, it must be by virtue of the salvation of Christ. He is the common Life for all that live, the common Bread for all who are fed by God, the common joy of all who have been blessed of the Lord. Thus in its publication, in its promise and in its efficacy, the salvation of Christ is the one and only Gospel of Life to men. As there is but one common air, one common sea, one common earth, so there is but one common salvation! O that we may be among those who prove its power in their own person by being saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation!  
III. But I am persuaded that this is not what Jude meant, so I come, in the third place, to say that IT IS COMMON TO ALL BELIEVERS. Do you remember what this same Jude once said to the Savior? He asked Him, Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself unto us and not unto the world? He understands that matter, now, but he is not looking so much at the not unto the world as at the first fact in his question, You will manifest Yourself unto us. He is evidently full of joy that the manifestation of the salvation of Jesus is common to all Believers. Upon that blessed fact let us dwell.

Certain offices, gifts, attainments and enjoyments are given to some and not to others. Are all Apostles? Are all Prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? It is not every Believer that possesses full assurance, or enjoys ecstasy, or is made largely useful to others. But all Believers have the common salvation! There they share and share alike and every one of them is saved in Christ Jesus and called. An Apostle may say to the newest of his converts, I long to see you, that I may impart unto you spiritual gifts, to the end you may be established. That is, that I may be comforted together, with you, by the mutual faith of both you and me.   
For, first, it is a common salvation which all Believers possess, since it springs from the same Divine Grace. There are not some saved by Grace and others by works, many by pure Grace and more partly by worksbut salvation is altogether of Grace in every case and that Grace is the same in all who possess it. All Believers are chosen by the same electing love, for the same reason, namely, to the Glory of the Fathers Grace and, being so chosen, they are all ordained unto the same life, secured by the same Covenant and given into the hands of the same Surety. Eternal Love encompasses, enriches, comforts and preserves each individual Believer and guarantees to each the same inheritance in Christ Jesus.   
Brother, are you saved by Grace? So am I. Am I saved by Grace? Then my Sister, if you believe in Christ, you are saved as I am! It is a common salvationcommon because we are all saved by the same Savior. We are not, some of us, looking to Jesus and others to Moses, or to ourselves! Neither are we, some of us, looking to the atoning death and others to the perfect life of Christbut we are all saved by the same one work, life, death, Resurrection and intercession of Christ Jesus! When He made Atonement by blood,, it was for all His redeemed. When He rose, it was to justify all who are in Him! When He stands at the right hand of God to plead, He intercedes for all the saints! And when He comes, it will be that all His saints may be with Him where He is and may behold His Glory.   
Do not fall into the modern notion which divides up Christ and allots something to one class of Believers and another portion to others of the chosen. They tell us there are such-and-such promises for Israel and other promises for the Church. I have not so read the Word of God, for I am persuaded that all Believers are the Israel of God! God loves all His saints and the same blessedness shall be to them all! You may rejoice and be glad that God will not give special raptures and soaring up into the skies to a portion of His family and leave the rest in the cold! In all that is salvation we have a common heritage, for Christ belongs to us all and we are all members of His body, partakers of His life and sharers of His Glory.   
It is a common salvation because we are all saved through the same faith. We believe the same precious Truths of God and receive Christ in the same way. All the saved possess faith, though not all to the same degree. Would God we were all strong in faith! Still, faith is a childlike confidence in God in the greatest as much as in the least of Gods peopleand this is the essential requisite to salvation in every case. He that believes in Christ is not condemned, but He that believes not is condemned already! To all participation in Christian privilege we have only one rightIf you believe with all your heart you may. Faith makes a man a fellow commoner with the saints of God. It is a common salvation because faith and spiritual life are worked in us by the same Spirit. Faith does not come to one by the operation of free will and to another by Free Grace, but to every one by the same Spirit.   
You, then, my Brothers and Sisters, are plucked like a brand from the burning by the power of the Spirit of God and so, also, is your friend who rejoices with you. All are quickened by the same Spirit and kept alive by the same Quickener. The love of the Spirit should be joyfully acknowledged by us all without exception, for the Spirit has worked all our works in us. It is a common salvation as to its results, for all Believers are equally born again and they are all renewed by Him who says, Behold I make all things new. Brought into the one family of God, they are all made children of God and joint heirs with Christ Jesus. They are all justified, accepted, preserved, guided, upheld and comforted. Their feet are set upon the same Rock, they are led in the same Kings highway and a new song is prepared for every one of their mouths.   
The common salvation, like the common table of a household, satisfies all their mouths with good things and renews their youth like the eagles. By-and-by they shall meet in the same Heaven. There will be no division before the Throne of God between the different tribes and denominations of Believers. One family, we dwell in Him even now, with all our petty strifesbut the great family relationship shall be more fully developed, byand-by, when imperfections and errors shall be cast aside. The saints before the Throne will sing a common hymn to the common Savior as they gather in the common home, saved with a common salvation!   
Brethren, I am right glad of all this. I feel inclined to stop the sermon and ask you to join in singing Charles Wesleys verse   
*Partners of a glorious hope,  
Lift your hearts and voices up   
Jointly let us rise and sing   
Christ our Prophet, Priest, and King.*   
To me it is a joyous thing that Gods best gifts should be the most common. It is so in naturethe sunshine, the dew, the air, the heavens these cannot become the particular estate of a few. They are common blessings. When Richard the Second banished Bolingbroke, that nobleman is represented as saying   
*This must my comfort be,   
That sun that warms you here, shall shine on me! And those His golden beams, to you here lent, Shall point on me and gild my banishment.* There is no monopolizing the best gifts, for Heaven ordains them to be the right of all mankind and so the chief things of the Covenant of Grace are common to all Believers!   
One may have greater powers of speech than another, but God has spoken to the silent Brother the same promises. Gifts are to this man and to thatbut the gift of salvation is to all who believe! The choicest saint may have far less of this worlds riches than his brother, but the riches of Gods Grace are all his own by equal title. We live on common ground, here, fed by our Father with the same Bread from Heaven. Thank God that in so many points the saints have fellowship, for all these should make them of one mind and of one heart towards each other. Some of Gods children are not learned, but they shall all be taught of the Lord! All are not experienced in the deep things of God, but they are all entitled to the best things of God!   
There are some few points in which we are unlike, even as children of the same family differ in age and height, or in the color of their eyes or hair. But we are one in so many vital and conspicuous features that we should, with one voice and heart, praise our common Father. We may not all wear the same form of garment, but we all breathe the same Life. We may not eat from the same plate, but we all eat the same Bread. We may not all drink from a silver chalice, but the wine is from the one cluster. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which works all in all.   
It is a great comfort to my heart that, among you who are bound to me by such loving ties, I can speak without hesitation of the common salvation, for you know it, feel it, love it, rejoice in it, even as I do this day!   
IV. That brings me to close by noticing that this fact of the common salvation was mentioned by Jude that he might use it as an argument. So then THIS FACT HAS MANY LESSONS IN IT. First, this common salvation forbids a monopolizing spirit. The old divines used to say that enclosures were contrary to Law. I am afraid that I may not say so, now, for almost everywhere the commons have been taken from the poor man and his goose. May there yet be an end to such enclosing. But enclosures in spiritual things are contrary to the Law of Christ. Who are we that we should cut off from fellowship with us those whose fellowship is with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ?   
Yet we have those around us who make it a point of Christianity to be exclusive. Their exclusions are perpetual. Shut that door! Shut that door! Shut that door! That seems to be the one great command of their house and the second is like itmake more doors, one within the other and take care to bolt them all! Their sheep must keep within their fold without fail, for if they once get a bite of pasture outside the enclosure, their doom is sealed! In many forms this spirit has been among our denominations, but I do not believe in it. If the spirit of Christianity begets in us love to all mankind, much more, my Brothers and Sisters, are we to love those in whom there is the Life of God!   
Is it really so, that this man is to be un-Christianized because of a mistake and the other because of a misapprehension? Does God make your Brother a Christian and do you try to unmake him? Does God think so much of him as to forgive him, to give him power in prayer and enjoyment of His Presence and do you think so little of him that you will hardly acknowledge him to be a partaker in Christ at all? Does the Father smile on all His children and do we frown on half of them? If I could do it, the last thing I should attempt would be to wall in my own special company and say, The temple of the Lord are we.   
I would not wish to set a fence round about the baptized and say, These are the Church of Christ, even as many as have been immersed in water that they may be buried into His death. Beloved Brothers and Sisters, our Lord has a people that are on other points as right as right can be who on the point of Baptism are as wrong as wrong can be! But, for all that, they are His people and in other respects are sound in the faith and valiant for the Lord our God. Unto such our love goes forth and must go forth, in spite of their grievous error. Upon other matters there are distinctions among Believers, but yet there is a common salvation enjoyed by the Arminian as well as by the Calvinist, possessed by the Presbyterian as well as by the Episcopalian, prized by the Quaker as well as by the Baptist. Those who are in Christ are more near of kin than they know and their intense unity in deep essential Truths of God is a greater force than most of them imagineonly give it scope and it will work wonders. As for us, let us not be among the men of whom Jude says, These are they that separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

Next, this doctrine fosters the spirit of benediction. Jude begins his Epistle with, Mercy unto you, and peace, and love be multiplied. Brothers and Sisters, fill your lungs with this healthy air! You are saved with a common salvation! Desire the profit, the growth, the happiness of all who partake of this one salvation! You are in one shipseek the good of all who sail with you. You are enlisted in one armypray the Captain of salvation to make every soldier strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. The common salvation should excite us to seek the prosperity of every part of Zionwe would seek the good, not of our Tabernacle, alone, but of every tabernacle or temple where Christians meet to worship the Most High.

Next, this fact awakens in us a common spirit of contention for the one faith. For what says the Apostle? It is necessary that I write unto you of the common salvation, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. When the Gospel is assailed, we must all rise in its defense, for it is the common salvation which is involved in it. When they frightened this nation years ago with the rumor of an invasion by the French, the Russians, or somebody or other, what was the result? Everybody became warlike! Our young men joined rifle clubs and our elderly men polished up their old blunderbusses. Everybody hastened to arm himself to protect the common country from the coming foeand had the enemy really arrivedeven the women would have shouldered their brooms to sweep the intruder over our white cliffs! Every man, woman, and child would have found some fork, or scythe, or spade, or axe to protect the common fatherland!

Community of interest begets community of feeling. We are all Englishmen and we all sing, Britons never will be slaves, so, in this case, when the Gospel of Jesus Christ is assailed, it does not matter by whom, I feel I may call upon all Christians to take action for the common salvation. Brothers, awaken to the fight, for more than our hearths and homes are now attacked. Do they deny the Deity of Christ? It is not only my religion that is assailed, it is yours as well! Do they turn the Grace of God into lasciviousness? It is not this branch of the Church that is now endangered. The entire Church is placed in jeopardy! This Gospel is not my heritage or yours, it is the common domain of all the faithful and I beseech you feel it to be so. In your own spheres and in your own ways hold the Truth of God, and hold it firmly.

You who can neither preach nor write in defense of sound doctrine can at least give negative help by refusing to countenance error. Do not go to hear those who preach false doctrine. Do not encourage them in any way. Do not bid them God speed. Love all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, but if a word is spoken against the Lord or against the Gospel which He has revealed, turn your back upon the speaker! Be like the loving John, who, when he went to take a bath, found Cerinthus, the heretic, there, and departed at once with all speed. I want to see more backbone in all professors, more determination never to compromise their faith by pretending to believe that black is white and that white is a shade of black.

Lovedo I not preach it with all my heart and do I not bid you manifest it in your deeds? But with that love mingle a firm adherence to the Truth of God as it is in Jesus and a zealous resolve that it shall not lose its honor while you are capable of upholding it! Let the common salvation be protected by the earnest zeal of the entire body of the Church and by us, also. This fact, I think, puts everyone of us to the questionIt is a common salvation, but have I a part in it? It belongs to all the people of God, but am I one of them? I should like you, this morning, when you get home, to write on a piece of paper, if you will, whether you are saved or not. It would be a timely searching. Here you are, on this 10th day of Aprilwrite down, Saved, bless the Lord for it! And if you are obliged to feel you could not write that down, go up into your chamber and cry mightily unto God till you can!

Well, if you are able to write, saved, then inasmuch as it is a common salvation, go and try to spread that salvation among others. Others save, says Jude. I know, he says, others save with fear, but still he says others save. Try, as far as you can, to bring others to the Savior! A mans salvation that he never wishes to spread among others is a salvation that is not worth having. You are not saved from selfishness if you do not wish to see your children, relatives and neighbors, yes, and all the world brought to Jesus feet. If it is a common salvation, go and make it common. And, lastly, this text calls for a common song of praise from all those who have the common salvation and I cannot suggest to you a better doxology than that with which Jude closes his EpistleNow unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.

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SPOTS IN OUR FEASTS OF CHARITY   
NO. 797

DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 23, 1868, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN. TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear.   
Jude 1:12.

WHEN the Church of God is extending her bounds rapidly, it is of the utmost importance that the growth should be real and permanent. If the walls of Zion are being built quickly, the master builders should keep an anxious eye upon the workmanship lest the stones should be put together with untempered mortar and the whole erection should, by-and-by, come to the ground. We desire not to grow up in a night, as the gourd, lest we also perish in a night. Our Lord Jesus, who is the great Shepherd of the sheep, sends to His Churches, at times when they are most prospering, sad reminders of human frailty by which He warns them to, take heed that they be not deceived; but see to it that they make sure work, and build substantially, with gold, silver, and precious stones, and not with wood, and hay, and stubble.

It is a very doleful season for the Church of God when everything is asleep, but there are dangers connected even with activity. When a man is under the intense excitement of earnest endeavor for Christ, it is possible that much within him may be spuriousa mere fungus growth forced out by heatand hence it is deeply necessary, as Jude says, to write unto the saints and to speak unto Believers concerning this thing, that they be sound, true, real, sincere and approved in the sight of God. Jude tells us in the text, and indeed in his whole Epistle, that many who make a high profession are not what they profess to be, and that in the Church of God, in her best estate, many are clouds without rain, trees without fruit and wandering stars reserved for eternal darkness.

I. To come to the text at once, we have to remark from it that WE MUST EXPECT TO FIND UNGODLY MEN IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. They ought not to be therethe Church is bound to use her most earnest endeavors to keep them outand, being in and being discovered, she should not be slow to cast them forth. She should put away wicked members and endeavor to preserve her purity! But for all that there will never be a perfect Church this side of the grave. They are without fault in the Canaan above, but a mixed multitude always will be mingled with the tribes of Israel while we are in this wilderness.

We may look for this, in the first place, because it has always been so. If even in the Paradise of God among perfect beings, sin intruded, how much more in our imperfect assemblies Where every mans heart is naturally deceitful? The very first human family had a Cain in it who, on the day of solemn sacrifice, came to Gods altar although he was of that Wicked One, and slew his brother. When, after a solemn judgment, the earth had been purged, and a little Church of only eight members was gathered in the ark, there was among them one of whom the Patriarch said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be. Ham was in the ark an ungodly reprobate, though surrounded by saints!

When the Lord had been pleased, according to the election of Divine Grace, to take Abraham from among mankind and set apart both him and his household, we read of Ishmael who mocked Isaac. In Isaacs family we hear of profane Esau. However few may be the chosen, there is sure to be some connected with them who are with them, but not of them. The people who were eminently typical of the Church of Christ, I mean Israel in the wilderness, were polluted in the same mannerno matter how strict might be its regulations, and how earnest might be its leaderyet the rebellious murmured, the mixed multitude fell a lusting, and Korah, Dathan and Abiram were a root of bitterness. I need not take you through all the history of the Lords people down to the coming of Christ, but wherever you may put your finger you will be certain to discover the tares mingling with the wheat, and the serpents seed nestling in the bosom of the elect household.

As for the days since the coming of our Master, this fact is painfully conspicuous! Our Lord had but 12 disciples who were near to Him, and yet He said, I have chosen you 12 and one of you is a devil. The name of Judas will go down to eternity stamped with the curse, It were better for that man that he had never been born. Afterwards, when Jesus had ascended and the Spirit of God had been givenwhen the Church had all things in common and was in her first loveyet we read of Ananias and Sapphira who hypocritically pretended to have given their substance when they had kept back much of itand upon them the stern voice of Peter pronounced sentence of immediate death. So early were the liar and the hypocrite found within the gates of Zion that pristine purity could not utterly exclude the unworthy.

Look again at the Church in Samaria. The preaching of Philip had stirred the city, and a pretender to magic who had deluded the people professed to become, himself, a Believer. He believed, it is said, and was baptizedbut his heart was not right in the sight of Godhis faith was not the faith of Gods elect. How solemn were the words of Peter to him, You have neither part nor lot in this matter...For I perceive that you are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity! The execrable name of Simon Magus is another proof that the Church of Christ, in her most zealous state, cannot expect to be clear of the basest of men.

Our own observation and the history of any branch of the Lords Church will go to show the same thing. It is said that the emperor Frederick III once heard a courtier declare that he desired to go to a place where he should find no hypocrites. Then, said his majesty, You had need to go beyond the frozen ocean where there are no men. And if you should reach the place, there might be one hypocrite there, then. It would be difficult to find any association of persons in which there are no unworthy individuals. And among those companies which are most select, you may frequently discover the worst of men.

Further, this might be expected to be so because of the many inducements which exist to tempt unscrupulous men to assume the Christian name. Few inducements, I grant you, existed when the stake, the axe, or death in the amphitheater were the only reward for following the Lord Jesus! But many inducements are there nowadayswhen to be a Christian is to be respectedwhen the Christian profession introduces you into good society, secures you trust and credit in your business, and procures customers for your shop. When religion is altogether a most comfortable and respectable thing it is no wonder that knaves adopt it. Persecution has not ceasedthere are Christians who have to endure much of itbut, on the other hand, many make a good thing of their profession, and some cunning rogues have proved that they could not have adopted a better trick for succeeding in life than taking up the garb of piety.

Do you wonder, therefore, if persons should be found who thrust themselves upon sacred ground and brave all consequences of future punishment? See yonder eagle how it mounts. Does it care for the ethereal blue, or aspire to commune with the stars of Heaven? Not a whitsuch airy considerations have no weight with the ravenous bird! And yet you will not wonder that it soars aloft when you remember that it thus obtains a broader range of vision, and so becomes the more able to provide for its nest. It mounts towards Heaven but it keeps its eye evermore upon the outlook for its prey. No celestial impulse is needed, its love of blood suffices to bear it aloft. It soars only that it may flash downwards with fell swoop upon the object of its desires.

Wonder not that men with the hearts of devils yet mount like angels there is a reason which explains it all! That wild ass would not bray if there were no fodder. Men would be less in a hurry to avow their pretended faith if there were no advantages to be gained! The rower in the boat sits with his back to the shore but is all the while pulling towards it. Many tug the oar towards the world which they pretend to have renounced. How many are like that famous painting of the olden time in which the artist depicted what seemed at a distance a holy friar with his hands crossed in devotion, and a book before him, looking like a saint, indeedbut when you came close to the venerable impostor, you found that his hands, though clasped, enclosed a lemonand instead of a book, there was a punch bowl into which he was squeezing the juice! Many an inn has an angel on the sign and a devil for the landlord! Fair without is often foul within. To seem to be answers mens purposes so well that it is little marvel if pretenders swarm like the flies in Egypts plague!

Moreover, Brethren, we might have reckoned that there would be ungracious men mingled with the people of God, since it is clear to every thoughtful man that this must be one of the craftiest designs of Satan. In what way can Satan so seriously damage the Church of God as by thrusting unworthy persons into it? While men slept the enemy came and sowed tares among the wheatbecause the tares would take away the nourishment from the wheat and help to choke itand prevent it from yielding so rich a harvest. The Greeks, outside the walls of Troy, were unable to storm the city but after a long war they succeeded by using the stratagem of the wooden horse.

Putting some few Greeks within the hollow monster, they pretended to flee and left the horse to be dragged within the gates of Troy by the infatuated Trojans. In the dead of night out came these traitor Greeks and opened the gates to their friends outside. Satan knows right well that one devil in the Church can do far more than a thousand devils outside her bounds. He understands that all the blasphemers, and atheists, and freethinkers, and so on that ever assailed the bastions of the Church of God could not do one tithe as much mischief to her as those who pretend to be followers of the bleeding Lamb, but in secret are crucifying the Lord afresh and putting Him to an open shame. If there are any here of this sort, and I fear there are, I do beseech you look to yourselvesyou are cats paws for the Evil One, mean tools of the fallen spiritblush to be so degraded!

How sad to be a miserable skulker in the service of the Prince of Darkness! Better, surely, if honor is what you seek, to fight for Satan openly and avowedlywearing the black plume and the diabolical uniformthan to be a base, cowardly assassin, sneaking into the ranks of the godly to stab them in the dark. None but pirates sail under false colors and the yard-arm is the best place for them. O you snakes in the grass! You serpents who insinuate yourselves so craftily! How shall you escape the damnation of Hell? That foul fiend who now employs you upon his secret service laughs in his sleeve as he foresees the triple bands of flame with which you will be bound forever! O that you could repent and turn from your base and crooked ways, for otherwise your end will be terrible and your doom eternal.

Further, my dear Brothers and Sisters, it is a very sad reflection that we may always expect to find ungodly men in the Church of God, for numbers come there, at first, through inadvertence. I will excuse many, in some respects, for being found numbered with Gods people though unconvertedI excuse them to some degreefor I believe that they were honest when at first they were added to the Church. They were never saved, of coursebut they thought they were. Never having had a true sense of sin, they nevertheless experienced some alarms and they set down those alarms for repentance. Although they have never truly believed in the Lord Jesus, they have felt a degree of peace and have come to look upon this treacherous calm as the result of true faith.

They have never really received a new heart, still, there is a measure of reformationand they mistake the outward for the inward. They were excited by the earnestness of Gods people, and under a thrilling sermon they were made to feel as they had not felt before! And straightaway, the wish being father to the thoughtthey concluded they had passed from death unto life while they still remained dead in trespasses and sin. At first a few fears may have passed their minds, but by degrees, finding these fears uncomfortable, and Satan determining to blind their eyes and sear their consciences as with a hot iron, they at last made no further enquiries, but went straightaway onward to ruin with their eyes closed believing that they were on the road to Glory.

It is said that a certain player had acted the part of Richard III so admirably, and had thrown his whole soul into it so thoroughly that he imbibed the idea that he was actually a king. He became so extravagant in his living, and withal so haughty in his behavior that he brought himself first to contempt, and next to beggary. Doubtless there are many who at first were mere actors who at last have grown into the conceit that the part which they have merely acted is a reality, and so they have continued to strut with all the pride of Pharisees till God has plucked the mask from off their wicked faces, and set them up to be butts for the arrows of eternal contempt. Oh, beware lest that should be our lot, lest, inadvertently to ourselves at the first, being mistaken, we should at last become miserable dupes and deceivers of others!

We might naturally expect to find hypocrites, formalists, and unconverted persons in the Church of God because human nature is bad enough for anything and everything. If there is an evil which is detestable beyond all othersfor that very reason will men run to it. Nothing can be more mean than hypocrisy, nothing more base than to assume a character which is not properly your own, nothing more horrible than apostasy from plighted vows and promises! But for that very reason, he who knows the heart of man to be deceitful above all things and desperately wicked might expect to find men rioting in such evil. There is no water so deep but fish will swim in it! There is no pond so foul but frogs will live in it! There is no mire so filthy but swine will wallow in it and no sin so damnable but man will commit it! Men will even seek out ways and means of making themselves more and more proficient in the most evil of vices, each one being with his fellow.

The world is getting mightily accomplished in falsehood and has learned to deceive in the most dexterous manner and while professors of the art of hypocrisy are so numerousthere is no hope of the trade dying out. I expect to see great offenders, for I am told by Inspired penmen that evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse. I expect as the ages roll on to see good men grow better, and bad men grow vilerfor each age is in advance of its predecessor. If in these last ages there should arise monsters of iniquity exceeding Nero and Caligula in infamy, we must not be astonished, for long practice of sin makes men proficient therein. The earth is ripening, and mens characters are rotting to the uttermost degree of corruption. This is the age of villainy, the chosen era of shams, lies, and hypocrisiesand we must expect to see more and more of the boiling over of the sink of iniquity which lies in human nature.

Be not startled, if in these last days there should be seen whole herds of wolves in sheeps clothingdeceivers and defamers of the Churchfor even so have we been warned by the voice of God.

II. In the second place, UNGODLY MEN DO SERIOUS MISCHIEF IN THE CHURCH OF GOD. We are told in the text that they are spots in our agape, or feasts of love. It is a solemn reflection that they defile the Church before Godthey are spots upon her facethey mar her beauty in the eyes of her heavenly Friend. When the Lord looks upon His Church in Christ, of course she is always fair, but when He looks upon her in herself, the defilements which came upon her through the ungodly provoke Him and He is led to send chastisements upon her and, for awhile, to withdraw the converting power of His Spirit and the comforting power of His promises.

Dear Friends, we can little tell how much of evil may be brought upon any community by wicked persons in the midst of it. And we little know how much good may be kept back from the general body of the Church of God by those ungodly professors who are living in uncleanness and yet pretend to have fellowship with God. They are spots upon the Churchs sacrifice. According to the Jewish law, no beast could be offered to God which was blemished. What an awful thing it is when a wicked man becomes a Church member, and in public, as he prays in the name of the Church, offers to God an unclean hypocritical prayer! What a filthy prayer that must be which comes from the lips of the man who is the slave of vice and yet dares stand up in the public sanctuary to lead the devotions of others!

Can God bear such infamy? Must not the whole service be polluted thereby? Such a man at the Lords Table? How he profanes the sacred feast! Such a man preaching, for there have been many such! How he dishonors the name of minister! Such a man passing round the sacramental cup! What despite to the precious blood! Why, I wonder, when I think of it, that such solemn feastssince they have been so far as such persons were concerned, deliberate mockerieshave not brought down the thunderbolts of God upon those who were engaged in them! It is an awful thing to have such loathsome sacrifices laid upon our altar in our nametruly, we knew not of the offenders guiltour sin was therefore a sin of ignorance. May the Lord have mercy upon us.

When Joshua led his troops to Ai they were defeatednot for lack of courage, nor for want of wit, nor for lack of armed men for the fightthey were put to the rout before their adversaries for no other reason than because Achan was in the camp and had hidden in his tent the goodly Babylonian garment and the wedge of gold. Think me not severe if I speak with indignation of any who have turned aside unto crooked paths after standing high among the Lords peoplefrom my soul I pity such, I bewail them in my inmost heartbut yet for Christs sake, and His peoples sake, I feel towards them concerning their iniquity as Joshua did when he spared not the sentence, but adjudged the offender to his doom. Even though confession was made, yet every true-hearted Israelite cast a stone at the man who had made Israel naked before her enemies, saying, Why have you troubled us? The Lord shall trouble you this day.

The Church must be purified and cleansed, for our Lords fan is in His hands and He will thoroughly purge His floor. He who winks at sin becomes a partaker in it. God would have us put away the unclean thing from the midst of us, lest we be utterly polluted and become an abomination in His sight. O you professors who are not living as you should live, you who are practicing secret sin, you members of the Church who, unknown to us, are wallowing in evil, I do beseech you go forth from among us of your own accord before the Lord launches out His plagues upon you! Get away from us lest double judgment fall upon you!

As for us, when your case is clear, we dare not excuse you! We hate even the garment spotted with the flesh, and much more those filthy dreamers who wrap their lusts about them as a robe. If you have any reason left, you will surely prefer, if lost at all, to perish without incurring the double vengeance which awaits deceivers. Repent and forsake your iniquities that your sins may be blotted out! But if you will not do this, at least cease to dishonor the Church of God by your false professions.

Furthermore, the ungodly in the Christian Church do her mischief in the next respect because they defile her in the eyes of the world, These are spots in your feasts of charity. They defile the Christian Church in the judgment of onlookers. The world is always glad to find a stick to beat the Church with. It so thoroughly hates professors of godliness that it only wants a chance to spring upon them as a lion upon his prey. So soon as one professor goes aside, men say, Ah, just so! That is one herring out of the barrelthey are all alike. And yet if a man gets a bad shilling he does not conclude that all shillings are bad! Men know that the existence of hypocrites does not prove that all Christians are such. They frequently say so, but they know better! You need not be in any hurry to answer them they know that they lie in their throats when they declare all Christians to be deceiversfor they must know that there are hundreds who are not suchwhose lives are pure and holyand in every way according to their professions.

They know that if they were to treat any body of men in the same way as they treat the Church, they could not stand the test. Have there been no thieves in the House of Commons? Are the members of our legislature, therefore, all rogues? Doubtless some of them have no honesty to spare but are there no honorable men? Was there ever a club in all the world without disreputable persons in it? Was there ever any association of men that might not be condemned, if the fools rule was followed, of condemning the wheat because of the chaff? When with all our might and power we purge ourselves of deceivers as soon as we detect them, what more can we do? If our rule and practice is to separate the unholy so soon as we unmask them, what more can virtue itself desire?

I ask any man, however much he may hate Christianity, what more can the Church do than watch her members with all diligence and excommunicate the wicked when discovered? It is a foul piece of meanness on the part of the world that they should allege the faults of a few false professors against the whole Churchit is a piece of miserable meanness of which the world ought to be ashamed! Nevertheless, so it is, Ha! Ha! they say, So would we have it! So would we have it! The daughter of Philistia rejoices and the uncircumcised triumphs when Jesus is betrayed by His friend and sold by His traitorous disciple. O deceitful professor, will not the Lord be avenged upon you for this? Is it nothing to make Jesus name the drunkards song? Nothing to make the enemy blaspheme? O hardened man, tremble, for this shall not go unpunished!   
I must add here that this defilement falls upon ourselves, too. We cannot mix with deceitful and wicked men without feeling conscious that we have been in contact with pitch and have been defiled thereby. Who sits with a leper without danger of contagion? To talk over the sin of a false professor is injurious to the mind. We cannot deal with the sin of a Brother, even in the way of discipline, without a degree of evil to our own hearts. I believe the reading of newspaper reports of criminal trials is as instructive a school for iniquity as any the devil himself could have inventedand to go into details with the person before your eyes is even more so. When we read or hear of sin, whether we are conscious or not of the effect, there is always a defilement left upon the mind. The Church of God, being conscious of the contagion which a sinner leaves in the camp, should daily sanctify herself.

Let us proclaim a daily repentance for the unknown sin among us. We are all as one body as soon as we join the Christian Church, and in some sense the sin of one is the common fault of the whole. Leaven in one chamber is leaven in the house. The plague in one house is the plague in the city. We must not say, Oh, I cannot help the fault of such a one. He is one with us! We must all be humbled before God when there is anything wrong in the case of anyone, for he is one of the family. Was he not a member of the same body? Is not the whole body concerned in the sickness or sin of the meanest member? There should be a daily walking near to God, a daily seeking of mercy, a daily humbling, a daily coming to the precious blood of Jesus for restoring Grace so the defilement may be removed and the spots in our feasts of charity may be purged.

III. I come, thirdly, to a very important point. THE UNGODLY IN THE CHURCH OF GOD ARE GENERALLY VERY MUCH AT THEIR EASE THERE. This head, I trust, may greatly comfort some who are afraid of sin by showing them that they are not hypocrites, Feeding themselves without fear. These men have no right to come to the love feasts, have no business whatever in the communion of Gods peoplebut there they arewithout the slightest fear. They have no fear as to whether they are saved or not. They do not trouble their heads to examinethey take it for granted. They say, Oh well, we are as good as other people! and so they carelessly dismiss all self-examination. They have no fear about the presentthey take all for granted and let well enough alone. If accused of sin, they stand up and deny it, lying in the face of Gods people without the slightest blush.

They have no fear concerning the future, although running themselves into present difficulty and insuring to themselves eternal damnation. They have no bands, either, in life or death. They are unconscious of fear. They look the happiest of people, wearing a perennial smile and looking the image of peace. I have seen the genuine child of God afraid lest he should not be truly regenerate, trembling and alarmed, conscious of his present imperfections, bemoaning them, often trembling because of temptations in the future and afraid lest he might fall. He may be fearful of death and alarmed lest, after all, he should be a castaway. Yet this trembler has been the genuine coin of Gods realm about whom none were anxious but himselfwhile the base counterfeit has said, Oh yes! I believe, I know I do. I am sure I am saved, while in his private life he is going from bad to worse, plunging himself into the sloughs of sin.

My dear Friends, seek after full assurance of faith, but do, do, do abhor anything like presumption. If your lives are not what they ought to be, I beseech you do not be too confident! By their fruits you shall know them. If there are any of you living in sin, I do not care what doctrines you have received, or what experience you may boastI am afraid for you if you are not afraid for yourselves! I entreat you, do not lull your souls into peace while your lives are ungodly, for it will be, Peace, peace, where there is no peace. You cannot be perfect, I grant, and salvation is not by works, but by Divine Gracebut at the same time, Be not deceived, God is not mocked, whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap.

Do I cut any of you sharply? I mean to! I only wish I could cut deeper, but my fear is that those who are the best will feel it the most. I know they will, and those who need it most will say, I am glad the preacher is faithful, but his censures do not apply to me. Remember Cowpers words

*He that never doubted of his state,   
He may, perhaps he may, too late.*   
Needless and Too-Bold fell into the ditch. He who is too sure with a carnal security that is not based upon the promise nor rested upon Christ will,

sooner or later, find himself compelled to make his bed in Hell. I do wonder, when I look at the text, that these people should feed themselves without fear at the feasts of charity. I suppose this may allude to the love feasts, but also to the Lords Supper. How an ungodly man can drink the wine which typifies the blood of Christ when he is all the while crucifying Christ, I cannot understand. I cannot comprehend how he can break bread at the Lords Table when he is spending his life with harlots, or gaining money by dishonesty.

But sin is an incomprehensible thing. Oh, the depths of human sin! My dear Friends, if any of you are exhibiting this hardness of heart, pray God that you may be forgiven! But I almost fear you never will, for if there is a sin unto death, surely it must be such a sin as thiswhen a man can come to the solemn feasts of Gods House without fearwhile he knows that his heart is rotten, and, as Bunyan says, only fit to be tinder for the devils tinderbox.

I shall leave that point when I have read to you from Pilgrims Progress a passage which struck me yesterday as portraying the deceivers doom. Now, when they had passed by a little way, they entered into a very dark lane where they met a man whom seven devils had bound with seven strong cords, and were carrying him back to the door that they saw in the side of the hill. Now good Christian began to tremble, and so did Hopeful, his companion, yet, as the devils led away the man, Christian looked to see if he knew him, and he thought it might be one Turn-Away that dwelt in the town of Apostasy. But he did not perfectly see his face, for he did hang his head like a thief that is found. But being gone past, Hopeful looked after him, and espied on his back a paper with this inscription, WANTON PROFESSOR AND DAMNABLE APOSTATE. God grant that paper may never be put upon our backs, but by preserving Grace may we be preserved to the last.

IV. I shall now conclude with the fourth point by asking this question since it is clear that ungodly men are suffered to tarry for awhile in the Church of God, WHAT IS GODS INTENTION THEREIN? What is the lesson which He hereby delivers to you and to me this morning? That is our principal businesswe have little to do with othersour business is with ourselves.

The first lesson is thisGod reminds every one of us of what we might have been but for His distinguishing Grace. Judas sells Christ, and his only reward is a halter to hang himself with. Why might not I have been Judas? Ananias dies with a lie in his throatwhy might not I have been that unhappy man? Ask that question, Christian! Is there any bitterness in your heart beyond the heart of Judas? Are you better than Ananias by nature? Is there any goodness in your constitution which would have kept you from their sin had you been left as they were? Judas was an Apostle, mark youa preacher, a miracle-workerhe dipped his hand with Jesus in the dish, and yet he sold Himand why not you? Let not SelfRighteousness whisper, Ah I never could have done so. How do you know that? Simon Peter said he never would forsake his Master, but before long, with cursing and oaths, he had denied Him. Let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall. What another man has done I may do! There are no depths of wickedness into which I might not have plunged had not preventing Grace stayed my course.

In the second place, the Lord bids us make sure work for eternity. If we know that fair houses have fallen down, let us build upon a good foundation. If the wind has swept away rotten boughs, let us see to it that we are quickened with the vital sap. If the knife has already removed sundry dead branches, be it our prayer that we may be found fruit-bearing boughs, vitally united to Christ. When I think of those whom I have known who have turned aside in years past in my ministry, I feel concerned to say to myself, have I really repented, or was it all a sham? Am I now resting upon the Rock of Ages, or have I a fictitious confidence, a delusive trust? Am I really right with God? Do I love Him? Am I serving Him, or am I, after all, fascinated by some gigantic imposture which is leading me astray to serve myself?

My Brethren, I beseech youdig deep for eternity! Either make it sure, or have nothing to do with it. The paint and the tinsel are worth nothing! The masquerading and the pageantry of a mere profession will all be scattered to the winds in the great Day of Wrath. Get gold, not gilt! Get the real metal, not the imitation, lest at the last, when you shall most need comfort, you shall find yourselves drowned in despair! Surely that is Gods voice to us. Hear it! Learn its teaching! Practice it thoroughly!

In the next place, should not the departures from the faith of some professors put us on our guard against our own special temptations? I do not know how you are, each one of you, employed in life. But I know this that there is a precipice near every mans foot, and a snare in every mans path. You may not fall into the temptation which besets me, and I may never fall into that which besets youbut there is a lure for every bird, a bait for every fish. I would have you specially take heed of those things in regard to which you have ventured to the very edge. There are some things which are allowable up to a pointbeware of going beyond the point. Yes, and beware of often going close to it, for the temptation is to go a little farther. Edged tools, long handled, wound at last. Beware of extraordinary temptations! Watch against them!

A child would generally stand on his feet in a gust of wind if he knew it was comingbut when the wind happens to come round a corner furiously, he may be taken off his feet. Mind you are well ballasted by prayer every morning before your vessel puts out to seaor carrying the quantity of sail you doyou may be blown over upon the waves to your perpetual shipwreck. Watch constantly against those things which are thought not to be temptations. The most poisonous serpents are found where the sweetest flowers grow, and when Cleopatra would have an asp to poison herself, it was brought in a basket of fair flowers. Beware of arrows shot from a golden bow, or by a womans hand. Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation. I feel as if I could go round among you, and take everyone by the hand, and say, My Brother and my Sister, will you also go away? Oh, if you would answer, No, we will follow the Lamb Wherever He goes, then I would reply in my Masters words, What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

Furtherthe lessons are many, but I will be brief upon each one should not this make us pray more for one another? When a member of the Church under my care has sinned, I have asked myself, Did I always pray for that man? That is a question for you, also. Do you know of some Sister in Christ who has dishonored the faith? You have known perhaps the temptationdid you ever pray for herpointedly for her? Did you warn her affectionately of her danger? I am afraid the answer would have to be, I am afraid I have not. But are we clear of sin in such a case? Are our consciences quite void of offense? Should not all the mischief in the Christian Church say to us, Pray for one another, and by all means hold each other up?

Aid the tempted, remembering yourself also, lest you also be tempted. Whenever the enemy smites down one of the troops the other soldiers should fill up the gap and stand together determined that the foe shall not kill another. Let every difficulty that comes to us only fuse us more completely into onebring us into more compact squares and firmer battalionsdetermined that the enemy shall not get the advantage over us, after all. Brethren, pray for one another! Your heavenly Father bids you do so. Whenever any of the ungodly are found in the Church, she should labor with all her might to be avenged on the powers of darkness by filling up the place of the ungodly with those who are really converted.

I have often had my blood boil with sacred indignation within me when I have seen the finger of Satan hindering any of the works I have undertaken for God. Sometimes I have thought a Church would be established in such a locality, and something has turned up of an evil kind which has put it out of the question. I have vowed in my soul, Ah, Satan, I will get even with you for thatthere shall be two churches somewhere elseyou shall not gain an inch by driving me back in my Masters cause. I will take care that you shall gain nothing of me by all your opposition. Let the ungodly world laugh, and for its sneers we will smite it under the fifth rib with the sword of the Truth of God. Let the enemy sneer, and for that we will discharge more arrows of Gods Word! We will pray more vehemently and labor more diligently for the extension of the Lords kingdom. The tactics of war should dictate this. The children of this generation do soand let them not be wiser than the children of light.

Lastly, dear Friends, should not this make us long for Heaven? Whenever you at any time are vexed by hypocrites and apostates, should you not at once sigh for the perfect Church and the sweet fellowship of Heaven where none can fall, and none deceive?

*O heavenly Jerusalem,   
Of everlasting hills,   
Thrice blessed are the people   
You store in your walls.   
You are the golden mansion,   
Where saints forever sing,   
The seat of Gods own chosen,   
The palace of the King.   
There God forever sits,   
Himself of all the crown;   
The Lamb the light that shines,   
And never goes down.   
Nothing to this seat approaches   
Their sweet peace to molest;   
They sing their God forever,   
Nor day nor night they rest.*

They are without fault before the Throne! There shall be no more curses in the heavenly Jerusalem, and the Throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it. We shall not suspect a Brother there! We shall not bemoan a failure there! We shall not fear backsliding there, for the saints are all complete in Jesusall conformed to the image of their Masterand they shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

I have not spoken to you one-half as solemnly as my own heart has felt, but I do commend to you the serious considerations I have brought under your notice, and ask you in the name of the Lord Jesus who has suffered enough without being made to suffer in the house of His friends, by His wounds, by His blood, by all His grief and death throesdo not crucify Him afresh and put Him to an open shamebut glorify Him in your lives, your words and acts, and so may the Lord do unto you of His great mercy. Amen.

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ENOCH   
NO. 1307

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, JULY 30, 1876, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

**And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: and Enoch walked with God, after he begat Methuselah, three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: and all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: and Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.   
Genesis 5:21-24.**

**By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and was not found because God had translated him: for before his translation he   
had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Hebrews 11:5, 6.**

**And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. Jude 1:14, 15.**

THE three passages of Scripture which I have read are all the authentic information we have concerning Enoch. It would be idle to supplement it with the fictions of ancient commentators. Enoch is called the seventh from Adam, to distinguish him from the other Enoch of the line of Cain, who was the third from Adam. In the first Patriarchs God was pleased to manifest to men portions of His Truth in reference to true religion. These men of the olden times were not only, themselves, taught of God, but they were also teachers of their age and types in whom great Truths of God were exhibited. Abel taught the need of approaching the Lord with sacrifice, the need of the Atonement by bloodhe laid the lamb upon the altar and sealed his testimony with his own blood. Atonement is so precious a Truth of God that to die for its defense is a worthy deed and from the very first it is a doctrine which has secured its martyrs, who being dead yet speak.

Then Seth and Enos taught men the necessity of a distinct avowal of their faith in the Lord and the need of assembling for His worship, for we read concerning the days of Enos and Seth, Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord. Those who worshipped through the atoning Sacrifice separated themselves from the rest of men, assembled a Church in the name of the Lord and worshipped, calling upon the name of Jehovah. The heart must first believe in the great sacrifice with Abel and then the mouth must confess the same with Seth. Then came Enoch whose life went beyond the reception and confession of the Atonement, for he set before men the great Truth of communion with God. He displayed in his life the relation of the Believer to the Most High and showed how near the living God condescends to be to His own children. May our progress in knowledge be similar to the growth of the Patriarchal teaching!

Brothers and Sisters, you know as Abel did, the sacrificial Lamb. Your confidence is in the precious blood and so by faith you bring to God the most acceptable of all offerings. Having advanced so far, the most of us have proceeded a step further, and we have called upon the name and are the avowed followers of Jesus. We have given ourselves up to the Lord in the solemn burial of Baptism, when we were baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, because we reckoned ourselves dead in Christ to all the world and risen with Him into newness of life. Henceforth the Divine name is named on us and we are no more our own.

And now we gather together in our Church capacity. We assemble around the table of fellowship, we unite in our meetings for prayer and worship and the center for us all is the name of the Lord. We are separated from the world and set apart to be a people who declare His name. Thus far so goodwe have seen the Sacrifice of Jesus as the way with Abel. We have avowed the Truth with Seth. Now let us take the next step and know the life with Enoch. Let us endeavor to walk with God as Enoch did! Perhaps a meditation upon the holy Patriarchs life may help us to imitate it. While considering what he was and under what circumstances he came to be so, we may, by the Holy Spirit, be helped to reach the point to which he attained.

This is the desire of every godly man! All the saints desire communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. The constant cry of our soul is to our Lord, Abide with me. I buried, yesterday, one of the excellent of the earth who loved and feared and served his God far better than most of us. He was an eminently devout Brother. One of the last wishes of his heart he had committed to writing in a letter to a friend, when he little thought of dying. It was this, I have longed to realize the life of Enoch and to walk with God.

*Oh for a closer walk with God!*   
He did but write what you and I feel. If such are your desires, and such I feel sure they are, so surely as you are the Lords people, then I hope a consideration of the life of Enoch may help you towards the realization of

your wish.

First, then, what does Enochs walking with God imply? It is a short description of a mans life, but there is a mint of meaning in it. Secondly, what circumstances were connected with his remarkable life? These are highly instructive. And thirdly, what was the close of it? It was as remarkable as the life itself.

I. First, then, WHAT IS MEANT BY ENOCHS WALKING WITH GOD? Paul helps us with our first observation upon this by his note in Hebrews. His walk with God was a testimony that Enoch was well-pleasing to God. Before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. This is evidently the Apostles interpretation of his walking with God and it is a most correct one, for the Lord will not walk with a man in whom He has no pleasure. Can two walk together, except they are agreed? If men walk contrary to God, He will not walk with them, but contrary to them. Walking together implies amity, friendship, intimacy, loveand these cannot exist between God and the soul unless the man is acceptable unto the Lord.

Doubtless Enoch, like Elijah, was a man of like passions with ourselves. He had fallen with the rest of mankind in the sin of Adam. There was sin about him, as there is sin about us by nature, and he had gone astray in act and deed as all we, like sheep, have done. Therefore he needed pardon and cleansing, even as we do. Then to be pleasing with God it was necessary that he should be forgiven and justified, even as we arefor no man can be pleasing to God till sin is pardoned and righteousness is imputed. To this end there must be faith, for there can be no justification except by faith. And as we have said, already, there is no pleasing God except our persons are justified.

Right well, then, does the Apostle say, Without faith it is impossible to please God, and by faith Enoch was made pleasing to God, even as we are at this day. This is worthy of earnest notice, Brothers and Sisters, because this way of faith is open to us. If Enoch had been pleasing to God by virtue of some extraordinary gifts and talents, or by reason of marvelous achievements and miraculous works, we might have been in despair! But if he was pleasing to God through faith, that same faith which saved the dying thief, that same faith which has been worked in you and in me then the wicket gate at the head of the way in which men walk with God is open to us, also!

If we have faith we may enter into fellowship with the Lord! How this ought to endear faith to us! The highest grades of spiritual life depend upon the lower ones and rise out of them. If you want to walk with God as a man of God, you must begin by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, simply, as a babe in Grace! The highest saintship must commence by the confession of your sinnership, and your laying hold upon Christ Crucified. Not otherwise does the strongest Believer live than the weakest Believer and if you are to grow to be among the strongest of the Lords warriorsit must be by faith which lays hold upon Divine strength.

Beginning in the Spirit you are not to be made perfect in the

flesh. You are not to proceed a certain distance, by faith in Christ, and then to commence living by your own worksyour walk is to continue as it begun. As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk you in Him. Enoch was always pleasing to God, but it was because he always believed and lived in the power of his faith. This is worth knowing and remembering, for we may yet be tempted to strive for some imaginary higher style of religious life by looking to our feelings instead of looking alone to the Lord! We must not remove our eyes from looking, alone, to Jesus, Himself, even to admire His image within ourselvesfor if we do we shall go backward rather than forward. No, Beloved, by faith Enoch became pleasing to God and by faith he walked with Godlet us follow in his footprints.

Next, when we read that Enoch walked with God we are to understand that he realized the Divine Presence. You cannot consciously walk with a person whose existence is not known to you. When we walk with a man, we know that he is there. We hear his footsteps if we cannot see his face. We have some very clear perception that there is a person at our side.

Now, it we look to Hebrews again, Paul tells us, He that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Enochs faith, then, was a realizing faith. He did not believe things as a matter of creed and then put them up on the shelf out of the way, as too many of us do todayhe was not merely orthodox in his headbut the Truth of God had entered into his heart.

What he believed was true to him, practically true, true as a matter of fact in his daily life. He walked with Godit was not that he merely thought of God, that he speculated about God, that he argued about God, that he read about God, that he talked about Godhe walked with God, which is the practical and experimental part of true godliness! In his daily life he realized that God was with him and he regarded Him as a living God, in whom he confided and by whom he was loved. Oh, Beloved, do you not see that if you are to reach to the highest style of Christian life, you must do it through the realization of those very things which, by faith, you have received?

Grasp them! Let them be to you substance and evidence. Make them sure, look upon them, handle them, taste them in your inmost soul and so know them beyond all question. You must see Him who is invisible and possess that which cannot be as yet enjoyed. Believe not only that God is, but that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, for this, according to Paul, is the Enoch faith! God realized as existing, observing, judging and rewarding human deedsa real God, really with usthis we must know, or there is no walking with God.

Then, as we read that Enoch walked with God, we have no doubt it signifies that he had very familiar communion with the Most High. I scarcely know a communion that is more free, pleasant and cordial than that which arises out of constant walking with a friend. If I wished to find a mans most familiar friend, it would surely be one with whom he walked daily. If you were to say, I sometimes go into his house and sit a little while with him, it would not amount to so much as when you can say, I have, from day to day, walked the fields and climbed the hills with him. In walking, friends become communicativeone tells his trouble and the other strives to console him under itand then imparts to him his own secret in return. When persons are constantly in the habit of walking together from choice, you may be quite sure there are many communications between them with which no stranger may intermeddle.

If I wanted to know a man through and through, I should want to walk with him for a time, for walking communion brings out parts of the man which even in domestic life may be concealed. Walking for a continuance implies and engenders close fellowship and great familiarity between friends. But will God, in very deed, thus walk with men? Yes, He did so with Enoch and He has done so with many of His people since. He tells us His secret, the secret of the Lord, which He reveals only to them that fear Him. And we tell Him, alike, our joys in praise, our sorrows in prayer and our sins in confession. The heart unloads itself of all its cares into the heart of Him that cares for us! And the Lord pours forth His floods of goodness as He imparts to His beloved ones a sense of His own everlasting love to them. This is the very flower and sweetness of Christian experience, its lily and its rose, its calamus and myrrh. If you would taste the cream of Christian life, it is found in having a realizing faith and entering into intimate communion with the heavenly Father. So Enoch walked with God.

Next it is implied in the term, walked, that his communion with God was continuous. As an old Divine has well remarked, he did not take a turn or two with God and then leave His company, but he walked with God for hundreds of years! It is implied in the text that this was the tenor of his life throughout the whole of its 365 years. Enoch walked with God after Methuselah had been born, 300 years, and doubtless he had walked with Him before. What a splendid walk! A walk of 300 years! One might desire a change of company if he walked with anybody else, but to walk with God for three centuries was so sweet that the Patriarch kept on with his walk until he walked beyond time and spaceand walked into Paradisewhere he is still marching on in the same Divine society! He had Heaven on earth and it was, therefore, not so amazing that he glided away from earth to Heaven so easily.

He did not commune with God by fits and starts, but he abode in the conscious love of God. He did not, now and then, climb to the heights of elevated piety and then descend into the marshy valley of lukewarmness, but he continued in the calm, happy, equable enjoyment of fellowship with God from day to day. Night with its sleep did not suspend it. Day with its cares did not endanger it. It was not a run, a rush, a leap, a spurt, but a steady walk. On, on, through three happy centuries and more did Enoch continue to walk with God!

It is implied, also, in this phrase that his life was progressive, for if a man walks either by himself or with anybody else, he makes progress, he goes forward. Enoch walked with God. At the end of 200 years he was not where he began. He was in the same Company, but he had gone forward in the right way. At the end of the third hundred years Enoch enjoyed more, understood more, loved more, had received more and could give out more, for he had gone forward in all respects. A man who walks with God will necessarily grow in Grace and in the knowledge of God and in likeness to Christ. You cannot suppose a perpetual walk with God, year after year, without the favored person being strengthened, sanctified, instructed and rendered more able to glorify God.

So I gather that Enochs life was a life of spiritual progress. He went from strength to strength and made headway in the gracious pilgrimage. May God grant us to be pressing onward, ourselves. Suffer a few more observations upon Enochs walk. In Kittos Daily Bible Pleadings there is an exceedingly pleasing piece illustrating what it must be to walk with God by the figure of a fathers taking his little son by the hand and walking forth with him upon the breezy hills. Kitto says, As that child walks with you, so do you walk with God. That child loves you now. The world the cold and cruel worldhas not yet come between his heart and yours. His love, now, is the purest and most beautiful he will ever feel, or you will ever receive. Cherish it well, and as that child walks lovingly with you, so do you walk lovingly with God.

It is a delight to such children with their fathers. The roughness of the way or of the weather is nothing to themit is joy enough to go for a walk with father. There is a warm, tender, affectionate grip of the hand and a beaming smile of the eyes as they look up to father while he conducts them over hill and dale. Such a walk is humble, too, for the child looks upon its father as the greatest and wisest man that ever lived! He considers him to be the incarnation of everything that is strong and wise. All that his father says or does he admires. As he walks along, he feels the utmost affection for his father, but his reverence is equally strong. He is very near his father, but yet he is only a child, and looks up to his father as his king.

Moreover such a walk is one of perfect confidence. The boy is not afraid of missing his way. He trusts implicitly his fathers guidance. His fathers arm will screen him from all danger and, therefore, he does not so much as give it a thoughtwhy should he? If care is needed as to the road, it is his fathers business to see to it and the child, therefore, never dreams of anxietywhy should he? If any difficult place is to be passed, the father will have to lift the boy over it, or help him through itthe child, meanwhile, is merry as a birdwhy should he not be? Thus should the Believer walk with God, resting on eternal tenderness and rejoicing in undoubted love! A Believer should be unconscious of dread either as to the present or to the future.

Beloved Friends in Christ, your Father may be trusted, He will supply all your needs   
*You are as much His care as if beside   
No man or angel lived in Heaven or earth.*

What an instructive walk a child has with a wise, communicative parent! How many of his little puzzles are explained to him, how everything about him is illuminated by the fathers wisdom! Every step the boy takes, he becomes the wiser for such companionship. Oh, happy are the children of God who have been taught of their Father while they have walked with Him! Enoch must have been a man of profound knowledge and great wisdom as to Divine things. He must have dived into the deep things of God beyond most men. His life must, also, have been a holy life, because he walked with God, for God never walks out of the way of holiness. If we walk with God, we must walk according to truth, justice and love. The Lord has no company with the unjust and rebellious and, therefore, we know that he who walked with God must have been an upright and holy man.

Enochs life must, moreover, have been a happy one. Who could be unhappy with such a Companion! With God Himself to be with us, the way can never be dreary. Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for You are with me. Granted that God is your Companion and your road must be a way of pleasantness and a path of peace. Did Enoch walk with God? Then his pilgrimage must have been safe. What a guard is the Great Jehovah! He is sun and shield! He gives Grace and Glory. He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Nothing can harm the man who is walking with the Lord God at his right hand.

And oh, what an honor it is to walk with the Eternal! Many a man would give thousands to walk with a king. Numbers of people are such worshippers of dignities that if a king did but smile at then they would be intoxicated with delight! What, then, is the honor of walking with the King of kings? What a patent of nobility it is to be permitted to walk with the blessed and only Potentate all ones life long? Who is he that is thus favored to be the Kings companion, to walk alone with Him and to become His familiar Friend? Jehovah rules earth and Heaven, and Hell. He is Lord of all who shall walk with Him!

If it were only for the honor of it, oh Christians, how you ought to desire to walk with God! Enoch found it safe, happy, holy, honorable and I know not how much more that is excellent! But certainly this was a golden life where shall we find anything to equal it?

II. Secondly, let us consider WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES WERE CONNECTED WITH ENOCHS WALKING WITH GOD. The first remark is that the details of his life are very few. We do not know much about Enoch and this is to his advantage. Happy is the nation which has no history, for a nation which has a history has been vexed with wars, revolutions and bloodshed. But a nation that is always happy, peaceful and prosperous has no chronicle to attract the lover of sensations. Happy is Enoch that we cannot write a long biography of him! The few words, Enoch walked with God, suffice to depict his whole career, until, he was not, for God took him.

If you go and look at a farmers field and you say of it when you come back, I saw yellow flowers covering it till it seemed as a cloth of gold. And then I spied out, here and there, white flowers like silver buttons set on the golden vesture. I also saw blue corn-flowers looking up with their lovely eyes, causing the whole field to sparkle, you would think that it is a very pretty field if you are a child. But the farmer shakes his head, for he knows that it is in bad condition and overrun with weeds! But if you come back and simply say, It is as fine a wheat field as ever grew and that is all, then your description, though brief, is very satisfactory.

Many of those dazzling events and striking incidents and sensational adventures which go to make up an interesting biography may attract attention, but they do not minister to the real excellence of the life. No life can surpass that of a man who quietly continues to serve God in the place where Providence has placed him. I believe that in the judgment of angels and all pure-minded beings, that a womans life is most to be admired which consists simply of thisShe loved the Lord and did all she could for Him. And that mans life shall be the most noteworthy of whom it can be said, He followed the Lord fully. Enochs life has no adventures. But is it not adventure, enough, for a man to walk with God? What ambition can crave a nobler existence than abiding in fellowship with the Eternal?

But some will say, Well, but Enoch must have been very peculiarly situated. He was, no doubt, placed in very advantageous circumstances for piety. Now, observe that this was not so, for first, he was a public man. He is called the seventh from Adam. He was a notable man and looked up to as one of the fathers of his age. A Patriarch in those days must have been a marked man, loaded with responsibility as well as with honor. The ancient custom was that the head of the family was prophet,

priest and king in his household. And abroad, if he was a man of station and substance, he was counselor, magistrate and ruler. Enoch was a great man in his day, one of the most important of the period. Therefore we may be sure he had his trials and bore the brunt of opposition from the powerful ungodly party which opposed the ways of godliness.

He is mentioned among a noble list of men. Some have unwisely thought, I could walk with God if I had a little cottage, if I lived in a quiet village, but you see I am a public man, I occupy a position of trust and I have to mix with my fellow men. I do not see how I am to walk with God. Ah, my dear Friend, Enoch did! Though he was, undoubtedly, a man distinguished in his time and full of public cares, yet he lost not the thread of sacred converse with Heaven, but held on in his holy course through a life of centuries. Note again that Enoch was a family man. Enoch walked with God and begat sons and daughters.

Some have said, Ah, you cannot live as you like if you have a lot of children about you. Do not tell me about keeping up your hours of prayer and quiet reading of the Scriptures if you have a large family of little ones. You will be disturbed and there will be many domestic incidents which will be sure to try your temper and upset your equanimity. Get away into the woods and find a hermits cellthere, with your brown jug of water and your loaf of bread, you may be able to walk with Godbut with a wife, not always amiable, and a troop of children who are never quiet, neither by day nor night, how can a man be expected to walk with God? The wife, on the other hand, exclaims, I believe that had I remained a single woman I might have walked with God. When I was a young woman I was full of devotion. But now with my husband, who is not always in the best of tempers, and with my children who seem to have an unlimited number of needs and never to have them satisfied, how is it possible that I can walk with God?

We turn to Enoch, again, and we are confident that it can be done! Enoch walked with God, after he begat Methuselah, 300 years, and begat sons and daughters, and all the days of Enoch were 365years. Thus, you see, he was a public man and he was a family manand yet he walked with God for more than 300 years. There is no need to be a hermit, or to renounce married life in order to live near to God. In addition to this, Enoch lived in a very evil age. He was prominent at a time when sin was beginning to cover the earth. It was not very long before the earth was corrupt and God saw fit to sweep the whole population from off its surface on account of sin.

Enoch lived in a day of mockers and despisers. You know that from his prophecy, as recorded by Jude. He prophesied, saying, The Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. He lived when few loved God and when those who professed to do so were being drawn aside by the blandishments of the daughters of men. Church and State were proposing an alliance, fashion and pleasure ruled the hour and unhallowed compromise was the order of the day. He lived towards the close of those primitive times wherein long lives had produced great sinnersand great sinners had invented great provocations of God. Do not complain, therefore, of your times and of your neighbors and other surroundings, for amid them all you may still walk with God.

Enoch walked with God and, in consequence thereof, he bore his witness for God. Enoch, the seventh from Adam prophesied. He could not be silent! The fire burned within his soul and could not be restrained. When he had delivered his testimony, it is clear that he encountered opposition. I am certain that he did so from the context in Jude, because the passage in Jude has to do with murmurers and complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaks great swelling words, and Enoch is brought in as having had to do with such persons. His sermon shows that he was a man who stood firm amidst a torrent of blasphemy and rebuke, carrying on the great controversy for the Truth of God against the wicked lives and licentious tongues of the scoffers of his age. He says, Behold, the Lord comes with myriads of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed.

It is clear that they spoke against Enoch, they rejected his testimony, they grieved his spirit and he mourned that in this they were speaking against God. For he speaks of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. He saw their ungodly lives and bore witness against them. It is remarkable that his great subject should have been the Second Advent! And it is still more noteworthy that the two other men whom one would select as living nearest to God, namely, Daniel and John, were both men who spoke much concerning the coming of the Lord and the Great Judgment Day. I need not quote the words of Daniel, who tells us of the judgment which is to be set, and of the Ancient of Days who shall come upon His Throne. Nor need I repeat the constant witness of John concerning the Lords Second Coming. I will only mention his fervent exclamation, Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus!

Thus you see that Enoch was a preacher of the Word of God and, therefore, he had a care over and above that which falls to the lot of most of you. And yet, with that and all the rest put together, he could please God until his lifes end! If I may speak of an end to a life which ran into an endless state of joyhe continued as long as he was here to walk in faith, to walk in a manner in which God was pleasedand so his communion with the Lord was never broken.

III. This brings us to conclude with the third headWHAT WAS THE CLOSE OF ENOCHS WALK? We would first remark that he finished his work early. Enoch walked with God and that was such a good, sure, progressive walk that he traveled faster and reached Home sooner than those of us who walk with God, sometimes, and with the world at other times! Three hundred and sixty-five years would have been a long life to us, but it was a short life for that period when several Patriarchs attained to nearly a thousand years of age.

Enochs life, as compared to the usual life of the period, was like a life of 30 or 35 years in these short-lived agesin fact, the best parallel to it is the life of our Lord. As with the extended ages of men of his period,

Enochs life was of about the same length as that of the Lord Jesus in comparison with such lives as ours. He passed away comparatively a young man, as our dear Brother and Elder Verdon, just departed, has done, and we do not wonder that he did. They say, Whom the gods love die young, and both Enoch and Verdon were men greatly beloved. Perhaps these holy men ended their career so soon because they had done their lifework so diligently that they finished early.

Some workmen, if they have a job to do in your house, are about it all day long, or rather all week long and make no end of confusion! No wonder that some people live a long while, for they need to do so much to do anything at all! But this man did his work so well and kept so close to God that his days work was done at noon and the Lord said, Come home, Enoch! There is no need for you to be out of Heaven any longer. You have borne your testimony, you have lived your life. Through all the ages men will look upon you as a model man and, therefore, you may come Home. God never keeps His wheat out in the fields longer than is necessary! When it is ripe, He reaps it at once! When His people are ready to go Home, He will take them Home. Do not regret the death of a good man while he is young. On the contrary, bless God that there is still some early ripening wheat in the world and that some of His saints are sanctified so speedily!

But what did happen to Enoch? I am afraid I have said he died, or that I shall say so, it is so natural to speak of men as dying, but he, alone, and one other of all the human race are all that have entered the heavenly Canaan without fording the river of death! We are told concerning him that, he was not. Those gentlemen who believe that the word, to die, signifies to be annihilated, would have been still more confirmed in their views if the words in my text, he was not, had been applied to all departed men, for if any expression might signify annihilation in their mode of translationthis is the one! He was not does not, however, mean that he was annihilated! And neither does the far feebler term of dying signify anything of the kind!

He was not, that is to say, he was not herethat is all. He was gone from earth, but he was therethere where God had translated him. He was, he is with God! And that without having tasted death! Do not grudge him his avoidance of death. It was a favor, but not by any means so great as some would think, for those who do not die must undergo a change and Enoch was changed. We shall not all sleep, says the Apostle, but we shall all be changed. The flesh and blood of Enoch could not inherit the kingdom of Godin a moment he underwent a transformation which you and I will have to undergo in the day of the Resurrection. And so, though he was not on earth, he was translated or transplanted from the gardens of earth to Paradise above.

Now, if there is any man in the world that shall never die, it is he who walks with God. If there is any man to whom death will be as nothing, it is the man who has looked to the Second Advent of Christ and gloried in it. If there is any man who, though he passes through the iron gates of death, shall never feel the terror of the grim foe, it is the man whose life below has been perpetual communion with God! Go not about by any other way to escape the pangs of death but walk with God, and you will be able to say, O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory? It is said of Enoch that, God took him. A very remarkable expression! Perhaps He did it in some visible manner. I should not wonder. Perhaps the whole of the Patriarchs saw him depart, even as the Apostles were present when our Lord was taken up.

However that may be, there was some special rapture, some distinct taking up of this choice one to the Throne of the Most High. He was not, for God took him. Note that he was missed. This is one thing which I could not overlook. He was missed, for the Apostle says he, was not found. Now, if a man is not found, it shows that somebody looked for him. When Elijah went to Heaven, you remember, 50 men of the sons of the Prophets went and searched for him. I do not wonder that they did they would not meet with an Elijah every dayand when he was gone away, body and all, they might well look for him! Enoch was not found, but they looked for him.

A good man is missed. A true child of God in a Church like this, working and serving his Master, is only one among five thousandbut if he has walked with God, his decease is lamented. The dear Brother whom we have just buried, we shall miss. His brother Elders will miss him. The many who have been converted to God and helped by his means will miss him. And assuredly I shall miss him. I look towards the spot where he used to sitI trust that someone else will sit there who will be half as useful as he was. It will be almost more than I can expect. We do not want to live and die so that nobody will care whether we were on earth or not. Enoch was missed when he was gone and so will they be who walk with God.

Last of all, Enochs departure was a testimony. What did the Blessed Spirit say by the fact that, he was not, for God took him, but thisthere is a future state. Men had begun to doubt it, but when they said, Where is Enoch? and those who had witnessed his departure said, God took him, it was, to them, an evidence that there was a God and that there was another world. And when they asked, But where is his body? there was another lesson. Two men had died before him, I mean two whose deaths are recorded in ScriptureAbel was killed and his witness was that the seed of the serpent hates the womans seed. Adam, too, had died about 50 years before Enochs translation, whose witness was that, however late the penalty may come, yet the soul that sins, it shall die.

Now comes Enoch and his testimony is that the body is capable of immortality! He could not bear testimony to resurrection, for he did not die for that we have testimony in Christ who is the first fruits from among the dead. But the testimony of Enoch went a good way towards it, for it bore evidence that the body was capable of being immortal and of living in a heavenly condition. He was not, for God took him. His departure also was a testimony to mankind that there is a reward for the righteous, that God does not sit with stony eyes, regardless of the sins of the wicked, or of the virtues of His saints. It proved that He sees and is pleased with His people who walk with Himand that He can give them, even now, present rewards by delivering them from the pangs of deathand therefore He

will certainly give rewards to all His people in some way or other.

Thus you see, living and dyingno, not dying, again I am mistaken living and being translatedEnoch was still a witness to his generation! And I pray that all of us, whether we live or whether we sleep, may be witnesses for God. Oh that we could live as my good Brother, Verdon, whom we have lately buried, lived, whose soul was on fire with love to Christ! He had a very passion for souls! I scarcely think there is one among us who did as much as he, for though he had to earn his daily bread, his evenings were spent with us in the service of the Lord, or in preaching the Gospel! And then, all night long he frequently paced the weary streets, looking after the fallen, that he might bring them in! He often went to his mornings work weary, except by the rest which he found in the service of Christ.

He would sometimes meet a Brother with eyes full of joy, and say, Five souls won for Christ last night! At other times, after a sermon, here he was a great soul hunter and would fetch enquirers downstairs into the Prayer Meeting. And when he had squeezed my hand he would say in his Swiss tones, which I cannot imitate, Jesus saved some more last night! More souls were brought to Jesus. For him to live was to win souls! He was the youngest in our eldership, but the gray-heads do him honor. As we stood weeping about his tomb, there was not one among us but what felt that we had lost a true Brother and a valiant fellow soldier. My the Lord raise up others among you to do what Elder Verdon did!

May the Lord quicken the older Brothers and Sisters to be more active than they are and make the young ones more devoted. Our ranks are broken, who shall fill up the gap? We are getting fewer and fewer as the Lord takes one and another Home of the best-instructed and of the bravesthearted. But, by His Grace, recruits are daily coming in! May others come forwardyes, Lord, bring them forward by Your Holy Spirit to be leaders in the front ranks, that as the vanguard melts into the Church Triumphant, the rear may continually find additions! Translated to the skies are some, may others be translated out of darkness into marvelous light, for Christs sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONPsalm 119:33-56.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK122, 780, 775.   
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THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE ONE CHURCH   
NO. 167

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 13, 1857, BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. Jude 1:19.

WHEN a farmer comes to thrash out his wheat and get it ready for the market there are two things that he desiresthat there may be plenty of it, of the right sortand that when he takes it to market, he may be able to carry a clean sample there. He does not look upon the quantity alone for what is the chaff to the wheat? He would rather have a little clean than he would have a great heap containing a vast quantity of chaff, but less of the precious corn. On the other hand, he would not so winnow his wheat as to drive away any of the good grain and so make the quantity less than it need to be. He wants to have as much as possibleto have as little loss as possible in the winnowing and yet to have it as well winnowed as may be.

Now, that is what I desire for Christs Church and what every Christian will desire. We wish Christs Church to be as large as possible. God forbid that by any of our winnowing, we should ever cast away one of the precious sons of Zion. When we rebuke sharply, we would be anxious lest the rebuke should fall where it is not needed and should bruise and hurt the feelings of any who God has chosen. But on the other hand, we have no wish to see the Church multiplied at the expense of its purity. We do not wish to have a charity so large that it takes in chaff as well as wheat. We wish to be just charitable enough to use the fan thoroughly to purge Gods floorbut yet charitable enough to pick up the most shriveled ear of wheat, to preserve it for the Masters sake, who is the Husbandman.

I trust, in preaching this morning, God may help me so to discern between the precious and the vile. And, that, I may say nothing uncharitable which would cut off any of Gods people from being part of His true and living and visible Church. And yet at the same time I pray that I may not speak so loosely and so without Gods direction as to embrace any in the arms of Christian affection whom the Lord has not received in the Everlasting Covenant of His love.

Our text suggests to us three things. First, an inquiryhave we the Spirit? Secondly, a cautionif we have not the Spirit we are sensual. Thirdly, a suspicionthere are many persons that separate themselves.

Our suspicion concerning them is that notwithstanding their superfine profession, they are sensual, not having the Spiritfor our text says, These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

I. First, then, our text suggests AN INQUIRYHave we the Spirit? This is an inquiry so important that the philosopher may well suspend all his investigations to find an answer to this question on his own personal account. All the great debates of politics, all the most engrossing subjects of human discussion may well stop today and give us pause to ask ourselves the solemn questionHave I the Spirit? For this question does not deal with any externals of religion, but it deals with religion in its most vital point. He that has the Spirit, although he is wrong in fifty things, being right in this, is saved. He that has not the Spirit, be he ever so orthodox, be his creed as correct as Scriptureyes, and his morals outwardly as pure as the Lawis still unsaved. He is destitute of the essential part of salvationthe Spirit of God dwelling in him.

To help us to answer this question, I shall try to set forth the effects of the Spirit in our hearts under sundry Scriptural metaphors. Have I the Spirit? I reply, and what is the operation of the Spirit? How am I to discern it? Now the Spirit operates in many ways, all of them mysterious and supernatural, all of them bearing the real marks of His own power and having certain signs following whereby they may be discovered and recognized.

1. The first work of the Spirit in the heart is a work during which the Spirit is compared to the wind. You remember that when our Savior spoke to Nicodemus He represented the first work of the Spirit in the heart as being like the wind, which blows where it lists. Even so, says He, is everyone that is born of the Spirit. Now you know that the wind is a most mysterious thing. And although there are certain definitions of it which pretend to be explanations of the phenomenon, yet they certainly leave the great question of how the wind blows and what is the cause of its blowing in a certain direction, where it was before. Breath within us, wind without usall motions of airare to us mysterious. And the renewing work of the Spirit in the heart is exceedingly mysterious. It is possible that at this moment the Spirit of God may be breathing into some of the thousand hearts before me. Yet it would be blasphemous if anyone should ask, Which way went the Spirit from God to such a heart? How entered it there?

And it would be foolish for a person who is under the operation of the Spirit to ask how it operatesyou know not where is the storehouse of the thunder. You know not where the clouds are balanced. Neither can you know how the Spirit goes forth from the Most High and enters into the heart of man. It may be that during a sermon two men are listening to the same Truth. One of them hears as attentively as the other and remembers as much of it. The other is melted to tears or moved with solemn thoughts. But the one though equally attentive, sees nothing in the sermon, except, maybe, certain important truths well set forth. As for the other, his heart is broken within him and his soul is melted. Ask me how it is that the same Truth has an effect upon the one and not upon his fellow. I reply, because the mysterious Spirit of the living God goes with the Truth to one heart and not to the other.

The one only feels the force of Truth and that may be strong enough to make him tremble, like Felix. But the other feels the Spirit going with the Truth and that renews the man, regenerates him and causes him to pass into that gracious condition which is called the state of salvation. This change takes place instantaneously. It is as miraculous a change as any miracle of which we read in Scripture. It is supremely supernatural. It may be mimicked, but no imitation of it can be true and real. Men may pretend to be regenerated without the Spirit, but regenerated they cannot be. It is a change so marvelous that the highest attempts of man can never reach it. We may reason as long as we please but we cannot reason ourselves into regeneration. We may meditate till our hairs are gray with study. But we cannot meditate ourselves into the new birth. That is worked in us by the sovereign will of God alone

*The Spirit, like some heavenly wind,   
Blows on the sons of flesh,   
Inspires us with a heavenly mind,   
And forms the man afresh.*

But ask the man howhe cannot tell you. Ask him whenhe may recognize the time, but as to the manner thereof he knows no more of it than you do. It is to him a mystery.

You remember the story of the valley of vision. Ezekiel saw dry bones lying scattered here and there in the valley. The command came to Ezekiel, Say to these dry bones, live. He said, Live, and the bones came together, bone to his bone and flesh came upon them. But as yet they did not live. Prophesy, son of man. Say to the Wind, breathe upon these slain, that they may live. They looked just like life. There was flesh and blood there. There were the eyes and hands and feet. But when Ezekiel had spoken there was a mysterious something given which men call life and it was given in a mysterious way, like the blowing of the wind. It is even so today. Unconverted and ungodly persons may be very moral and excellentthey are like the dry bones, when they are put together and clothed with flesh and blood.

But to make them live spiritually it needs the Divine Inspiration from the breath of the Almighty, the Divine Spirit, the Divine Wind should blow on them and then they would live. Say, my Hearer, have you ever had any

supernatural influence on your heart? For if not I may seem to be harsh with you. But I am faithful. If you have never had more than nature in your heart, you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity. No, Sir, sneer not at that utterance. It is as true as this Bible, for it is from this Bible it was taken and for proof thereof hear me. Except a man be born again (from above) of water and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God. What say you to that? It is in vain for you to talk of making yourself to be born again. You can not be born again except by the Spirit and you must perish unless you are. You see, then, the first effect of the Spirit and by that you may answer the question.

2. In the next place, the Spirit in the Word of God is often compared to fire. After the Spirit, like the wind has made the dead sinner live, then comes the Spirit like fire. Now fire has a searching and tormenting power. It is purifying, but it purifies by a terrible process. Now after the Holy Spirit has given us the life of Christianity, there immediately begins a burning in our heartthe Lord searches and tries our reins and lights a candle within our spirits which discovers the wickedness of our nature and the loathsomeness of our iniquities. Say, my Hearer, do you know anything about that fire in your heart? For if not, you have not yet received the Spirit. To explain what I mean, let me just tell a piece of my own experience by way of illustrating the fiery effects of the Spirit.

I lived careless and thoughtless. I could indulge in sin as well as others and did do so. Sometimes my conscience pricked me, but not enough to make me cease from vice. I could indulge in transgression and I could love itnot so much as others loved itmy early training would not let me do thatbut still enough to prove that my heart was debased and corrupt. One time something more than conscience pricked me. I knew not then what it was. I was like Samuel, when the Lord called him. I heard the voice, but I knew not from where it came. A stirring began in my heart and I began to feel that in the sight of God I was a lost, ruined and condemned sinner. That conviction I could not shake off. Do what I might it followed me. If I sought to amuse my mind and take it off from serious thoughts it was of no use. I was obliged still to carry about with me a heavy burden on my back.

I went to my bed and there I dreamed about Hell and about the wrath to come. I woke up and this dreary nightmare, this incubus, still brooded on me. What could I do? I renounced first one vicious habitthen anotherit mattered not. All this was like pulling one firebrand from a flame that fed itself with blazing forests. Do what I might, my conscience found no rest. Up to the house of God I went to hear the Gospel. There was no Gospel for me. The fire burned but the more fiercely and the very breath of the Gospel seemed to fan the flame. Away I went to my chamber and my closet to praythe heavens were like brass and the windows of the sky were barred against me. No answer could I get. The fire burned more vehemently. Then I thought, I would not live always. Would God I had never been born!   
But I dared not die, for there was Hell when I was dead. And I dared not live, for life had become intolerable. Still the fire blazed right vehemently till at last I came to this resolveIf there is salvation in Christ, I will have it. I have nothing of my own to trust to. I do this hour, O God, renounce my sin and renounce my own righteousness, too.

And the fire blazed again and burned up all my good works, yesand my sins with them. And then I saw that all this burning was to bring me to Christ. And oh, the joy and gladness of my heart when Jesus came and sprinkled water on the flame and said, I have bought you with My blood. Put your trust in Me. I will do for you what you can not do for yourself. I will take your sins away. I will clothe you with a spotless robe of righteousness. I will guide you all your journey through and land you at last in Heaven. Say, my dear Hearer, do you know anything about the Spirit of burning? For if not, again I say, I am not harsh, I am but trueif you have never felt this, you know not the Spirit.

3. To proceed a little further. When the Spirit has thus quickened the soul and convicted it of sin, then He comes under another metaphor. He comes under the metaphor of oil. The Holy Spirit is very frequently in Scripture compared to oil. You anoint my head with oil, my cup runs over. Ah, Brethren, though the beginning of the Spirit is by fire, it does not end there. We may be first of all convicted and brought to Christ by misery. But when we get to Christ there is no misery in Him and our sorrow results from not getting close enough to Him. The Holy Spirit comes, like the good Samaritan and pours in the oil and the wine. And oh, what oil it is with which He anoints our head and with which He heals our wounds! How soft the liniments which He binds round our bruises! How blessed the eye salve with which He anoints our eyes! How heavenly the ointment with which He binds up our sores and wounds and bruises and makes us whole and sets our feet upon a Rock and establishes our goings!

The Spirit, after He has convicted, begins to comfort. And you that have felt the comforting power of the Holy Spirit will bear me witness there is no Comforter like He that is the Paraclete. Oh, bring the music, the voice of song and the sound of harps! They are both as vinegar upon niter to him that has a heavy heart. Bring me the enchantments of the magic world and all the enjoyments of its pleasures. They do but torment the soul and prick it with many thorns. But oh, Spirit of the living God, when You blow upon the heart there is not a wave of that tempestuous sea which does not sleep forever when You bid it be still! There is not one single breath of the proud hurricane and tempest which does not cease to howl and which does not lie still, when You say to it, Peace be unto you. Your sins are forgiven you. Say, do you know the Spirit under the figure of oil? Have you felt Him at work in your spirits, comforting you, anointing your head, making you glad and causing you to rejoice?

There are many people that never felt this. They hope they are religious. But their religion never makes them happy. There are scores of professors who have just enough religion to make them miserable. Let them be afraid that they have any religion at all. For religion makes people happy. When it has its full sway with man it makes him glad. It may begin in agony, but it does not end there. Say, have you ever had your heart leaping for joy? Have your lips ever warbled songs of ecstatic praise? Do your eyes ever flash the fire of joy? If these things are not so, I fear lest you are still without God and without Christ. For where the Spirit comes, His fruits are joy, peace, love, confidence and assurance forever.

4. Bear with me once more. I have to show you one more figure of the Spirit and by that also you will be able to ascertain whether you are under His operation. When the Spirit has acted as wind, as fire and as oil, He then acts like water. We are told that we are born again of water and of the Spirit. Now I do not think you foolish enough to need that I should say that no water, either of immersion or of sprinkling, can in the least degree operate in the salvation of a soul. There may be some few poor creatures, whose heads were put on their shoulders the wrong way, who still believe that a few drops of water from a priests hands can regenerate souls. There may be such a few, but I hope the race will soon die out. We trust that the day will come when all those gentry will have no other Gospel to preach in our Churches but will have clean gone over to Rome and when that terrible spot upon the Protestant Church, called Puseyism, will have been cut out like a cancer and torn out by its very roots. The sooner we get rid of that the better. And whenever we hear of any of them going over to Rome, let them goI wish we could as easily get rid of the devilthey may go togetherwe do not want either of them in the Protestant Church.

But the Holy Spirit, when He comes in the heart, comes like water. That is to say, He comes to purify the soul. He that today lives as foul as he did before his pretended conversion is a hypocrite and a liar. He that this day loves sin and lives in it just as he was likely to do, let him know that the Truth is not in him, but he has received the strong delusion to believe a lie. Gods people are a holy people. Gods Spirit works by love and purifies the soul. Once let it get into our hearts and it will have no rest till it has turned every sin out. Gods Holy Spirit and mans sin cannot live together peaceablythey may both be in the same heartbut they cannot both reign there, nor can they both be quiet there. For the Spirit lusts against the flesh and the flesh lusts against the Spirit. They cannot rest, but there will be a perpetual warring in the soul, so that the Christian will have to cry, O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? But in due time the Spirit will drive out all sin and will present us blameless before the Throne of His Majesty with exceeding great joy.

Now, my Hearer, answer you this question for yourself and not for another man. Have you received this Spirit? Answer me, anyhowif it is with a scoff, answer me. If you sneer and say, I know nothing of your enthusiastic rant, be it so, Sirsay no, then. It may be you care not to reply at all. I beseech you do not put away my entreaty. Yes or no? Have you received the Spirit? Sir, no man can find fault with my character. I believe I shall enter Heaven through my own virtues. That is not the question, Sir. Have you received the Spirit? All that you say you may have done. But if you have left the other undone and have not received the Spirit, it will go ill with you at last. Have you had a supernatural operation upon your own heart? Have you been made a new man in Christ Jesus! For if not, depend on it, as Gods Word is true, you are out of Christ and dying as you are. You will be shut out of Heaven, be you who you may and what you may.

II. Thus, I have tried to help you to answer the first questionthe inquiryhave we received the Spirit? And this brings me to the CAUTION. He that has not received the Spirit is said to be sensual. Oh, what a gulf there is between the least Christian and the greatest moralist! What a wide distinction there is between the greatest professor destitute of grace and the least of Gods Believers who has grace in His heart. As great a difference as there is between light and darkness, between death and life, between Heaven and Hell is there between a saint and a sinner. For mark, my text saysin no very polite phrasethat if we have not the Spirit we are sensual. Sensual! says one. Well, I am not a converted manI dont pretend to bebut I am not sensual. Well, Friend and it is very likely that you are notnot in the common acceptation of the term sensual. But understand that this Word, in the Greek, really means what an English word like this would mean, if we had such a onesoulish.

We have not such a wordwe want such a one. There is a great distinction between mere animals and menman has a soul and the mere animal has none. There is another distinction between mere men and a converted man. The converted man has the Spiritthe unconverted man has none. He is a soulish mannot a spiritual man. He has got no further than mere nature and has no inheritance in the spiritual kingdom of grace. Strange it is that soulish and sensual should after all mean the

same! Friend, you have not the Spirit. Then you are nothing betterbe you what you are, or whatsoever you may bethan the Fall of Adam left you. That is to say, you are a fallen creature, having only capacities to live here in sin and to live forever in torment. But you have not the capacity to live in Heaven at all, for you have no Spirit. And therefore you are unable to know or enjoy spiritual things. And mark you, a man may be in this state and be a sensual man and yet he may have all the virtues that could grace a Christian. But with all theseif he has not the Spirithe has got not an inch further than where Adams fall left himthat is, condemned and under the curse.

Yes, and he may attend to religion with all his mighthe may take the sacrament and be baptized and may be the most devout professor. But if he has not the Spirit he has not started a solitary inch from where he was, for he is still in the bonds of iniquity, a lost soul. No, further, he may pick up religious phrases till he may talk very fast about religion. He may read biographies till he seems to be a deep taught child of God. He may be able to write an article upon the deep experience of a Believerbut if this experience is not his own, if he has not received it by the Spirit of the living God, he is still nothing more than a carnal man and Heaven is to him a place to which there is no entrance. No, furtherhe might go so far as to become a minister of the Gospel and a successful minister, too. And God may bless the word that he preaches to the salvation of sinners. But unless he has received the Spiritbe he as eloquent as Apollos and as earnest as Paulhe is nothing more than a mere soulish man, without capacity for spiritual things.

No, to crown all, he might even have the power of working miracles as Judas hadhe might even be received into the Church as a Believer as was Simon Magus and after all thatthough he had cast out devils, though he had healed the sick, though he had worked miracleshe will have the gates of Heaven shut in his teeth if he has not received the Spirit. For this is the essential thingwithout which all others are in vainthe reception of the Spirit of the living God. It is a searching Truth, is it not, my Friends? Do not run away from it. If I am preaching to you falsehood, reject it. But if this is a Truth which I can substantiate by Scripture, I beseech you, rest not till you have answered this questionHave you the Spirit, living, dwelling, working in your heart?

III. This brings me, in the third place, to THE SUSPICION. How singular that separation should be the opposite of having the Spirit. Hark, I hear a gentleman saying, Oh, I like to hear you preach smartly and sharply. I am persuaded, Sir, there are a great many people in the Church that ought not to be there. And so I, because there is such a corrupt mixture in the Church, have determined not to join anywhere at all. I do not think that the Church of Christ nowadays is at all clean and pure enough to allow of my joining with it. At least, Sir, I did join a Church once, but I made such a deal of noise in it they were very glad when I went away. And now I am just like Davids menI am one that is in debt and discontented and I go round to hear all new preachers that arise. I have heard you now these three monthsI mean to go and hear someone else in a very little time if you do not say something to flatter me. But I am quite sure I am one of Gods special elect. I dont join any Church because a Church is not good enough for me. I dont become a member of any denomination, because they are all wrong, everyone of them.

Hark, Brother, I have something to tell you, that will not please you. These are they that separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. I hope you enjoy the text. It certainly belongs to you, above every man in the world. These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. When I read this over I thought to myself, there are some who say, Well, you are a Dissenter, how do you make this agreeable with the text, These are they who separate themselves. You are separated from the Church of England. Ah, my Friends, that a man may be and be all the better for it. But the separation here intended is separation from the one universal Church of Christ. The Church of England was not known in Judes dayso the Apostle did not allude to that. These are they who separate themselvesthat is from the Church of Christfrom the great universal body of the elect. Moreover, let us just say one thing. We did not separate ourselveswe were turned out. Dissenters did not separate themselves from the Church of England, from the Episcopal Church. But when the Act of Uniformity was passed they were forcibly turned out of their pulpits.

Our forefathers were as sound Churchmen as any in the worldbut they could not take in all the errors of the Prayer Book and they were therefore hounded to their graves by the intolerance of the conforming professors. So they did not separate themselves. Moreover, we do not separate ourselves. There is not a Christian beneath the scope of Gods Heaven from whom I am separated. At the Lords Table I always invite all Churches to come and sit down and commune with us. If any man were to tell me that I am separate from the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, or the Methodist, I would tell him he did not know me, for I love them with a pure heart fervently and I am not separate from them. I may hold different views from them and in that point truly I may be said to be separate. But I am not separate in heart, I will work with themI will work with them heartily. No, though my Church of England brother sends me, as he has done, a summons to pay a Church tax that I cannot in conscience pay, I will love him still. And if he takes chairs and tables it matters notI will

love him for all that. And if there is a ragged-school or anything else for which I can work with him to promote the glory of God, therein will I unite with him with all my heart.

I think this bears rather hard on our friendsthe Strict Communion Baptists. I should not like to say anything hard against them for they are about the best people in the world. But they really do separate themselves from the great body of Christs people. The Spirit of the living God will not let them do this really, but they do it professedly. They separate themselves from the great Universal Church. They say they will not commune with it. And if anyone comes to their table who has not been baptized, they turn him away. They separate, certainly. I do not believe it is willful schism that makes them thus act. But at the same time I think the old man within has some hand in it.

Oh, how my heart loves the doctrine of the one Church. The nearer I get to my Master in prayer and communion, the closer am I knit to all His disciples. The more I see of my own errors and failings, the more ready am I to deal gently with them that I believe to be erring. The pulse of Christs body is communion. And woe to the Church that seeks to cure the ills of Christs body by stopping its pulse. I think it sin to refuse to commune with anyone who is a member of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. I desire this morning to preach the unity of Christs Church. I have sought to use the fan to blow away the chaff. I have said no man belongs to Christs Church unless he has the Spirit. But, if he has the Spirit, woe be to the man that separates himself from him.

Oh, I should think myself grossly in fault if at the foot of these stairs I should meet a truly converted child of God, who called himself a Primitive Methodist, or a Wesleyan, or a Churchman, or an Independent and I should say, No, Sir, you do not agree with me on certain points. I believe you are a child of God, but I will have nothing to do with you. I should then think that this text would bear very hard on me. These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But would we do so, Beloved? No, we would give them both our hands and say, God speed to you in your journey to Heaven. So long as you have got the Spirit we are one family and we will not be separate from one another. God grant the day may come when every wall of separation shall be beaten down! See how to this day we are separate. There! You will find a Baptist who could not say a good word to a Paedo-Baptist if you were to give him a world. You find to this day Episcopalians who hate that ugly word, Dissent. And it is enough for them that a Dissenter has done a thingthey will not do it thenbe it ever so good.

Ah, and furthermore, there are some to be found in the Church of England that will not only hate Dissenters, but hate one another into the bargain. Men are to be found that cannot let brother ministers of their own Church preach in their parish. What an anachronism such men are! They would seem to have been sent into the world in our time purely by mistake. Their proper era would have been the time of the dark ages. If they had lived then, what fine Bonners they would have made! What splendid fellows they would have been to have helped to poke the fire in Smithfield! But they are quite out of date in these times and I look upon such a curious clergyman in the same way that I do upon a Dodoas an extraordinary animal whose race is almost, if not quite extinct.

Well, you may look and look and wonder. The animal will be extinct soon. It will not be long, I trust, before not only the Church of England shall love itself, but when all who love the Lord Jesus shall be ready to preach in each others pulpits, preaching the same Truth, holding the same faith and mightily contending for it. Then shall the world see how these Christians love one another. And then shall it be known in Heaven that Christs kingdom has come and that His will is about to be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

My Hearer, do you belong to the Church? For out of the Church there is no salvation. But mark what the Church is. It is not the Episcopalian, Baptist, or Presbyterianthe Church is a company of men who have received the Spirit. If you can not say you have the Spirit, go your way and tremble. Go your way and think of your lost condition. And may Jesus by His Spirit so bless you that you may be led to renounce your works and ways with grief and fly to Him who died upon the Cross and find a shelter there from the wrath of God.

I may have said some rough things this morning, but I am not given much to cutting and trimming and I do not suppose I shall begin to learn that art now. If the thing is untrue, it is with you to reject it. If it is true, at your own peril reject what God stamps with Divine authority. May the blessing of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit rest upon the one Church of Israels one Jehovah. Amen and Amen.

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Sermon #719 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1PRAYING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

NO. 719

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 4, 1866, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Praying in the Holy Spirit. Jude 1:20.

THESE words occur in a passage where the Apostle is indicating the contrast between the ungodly and the godly. The ungodly are mocking, speaking great swelling words and walking after their ungodly lusts, while the righteous are building themselves up in their most holy faith, and keeping themselves in the love of God. The ungodly are showing the venom of their hearts by mourning and complaining, while the righteous are manifesting the new principle within them by praying in the Holy Spirit. The ungodly man bears wormwood in his mouth, while the Christians lips drop with the virgin honey of devotion. As the spider is said to find poison in the very flowers from which the bees suck honey, so do the wicked abuse to sin the same mercies which the godly use to the glory of God.

As far as light is removed from darkness, and life from death, so far does a Believer differ from the ungodly. Let us keep this contrast very vivid. While the wicked grow yet more wicked, let us become more holy, more prayerful, and more devout, saying with good old Joshua, Let others do as they will, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Observe that the text comes in a certain order in the context. The righteous are described, first of all, as building themselves up in their most holy faith. Faith is the first Divine Grace, the root of piety, the foundation of holiness, the dawn of godlinessto this must the first care be given.

But we must not tarry at the first principles. Onward is our course! What, then, follows at the heels of faith? What is faiths first-born child? When the vine of faith becomes vigorous and produces fruit unto holiness, which is the first ripe cluster? Is it not prayerpraying in the Holy Spirit? That man has no faith who has no prayer, and the man who abounds in faith will soon abound in supplication. Faith the mother, and prayer the child, are seldom apart from one another. Faith carries Prayer in her arms, and Prayer draws life from the breast of Faith. Edification in faith leads to fervency in supplication. Elijah first manifests his faith before the priests of Baal, and then retires to wrestle with God upon Carmel.

Study our text carefully and see what follows after praying in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in the love of God. Next to prayer comes an abiding sense of the love of God to us and the flowing up of our love towards God. Prayer builds an altar and lays the sacrifice and the wood in order, and then Love, like the priest, brings holy fire from Heaven and sets the offering in a blaze! Faith is, as we have said, the root of Grace. Prayer is the lilys stalk, and love is the spotless flower. Faith sees the Savior, prayer follows Him into the house, but love breaks the alabaster box of precious ointment and pours it on His head.

There is, however, a step beyond even the hallowed enjoyments of love! There remains a top stone to complete the edificeit is believing expectantlylooking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Far-seeing Hope climbs the staircase which Faith has built, and bowing upon the knees of Prayer looks through the window which Love has opened, and sees the Lord Jesus Christ coming in His glory and endowing all His people with the eternal life which is to be their portion. See, then, the value of prayer as indicating the possession of faith, and as foreshadowing and supporting the strength and growth of love.

Coming directly to the text, we remark that the Apostle speaks of prayer, but he mentions only one kind of praying. Viewed from a certain point, prayers are of many sorts. I suppose that no two genuine prayers from different men could be precisely alike. Master artists do not often multiply the same paintingthey prefer to give expression to fresh ideas as often as they grasp the pencil. And so the Master Artist, the Holy Spirit, who is the Author of prayer, does not often produce two prayers that shall be precisely the same upon the tablets of His peoples hearts.

Prayers may be divided into several different orders. There is deprecatory prayer in which we deprecate the wrath of God, and entreat Him to turn away His fierce anger, to withdraw His rod, to sheath His sword. Deprecatory prayers are to be offered in all times when calamity is to be feared, and when sin has provoked the Lord to jealousy. Then there are supplicatory prayers in which we supplicate blessings and implore mercies from the liberal hand of God, and entreat our heavenly Father to supply our needs out of His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. There are prayers which are personal in which the supplicant pleads mainly concerning himself. And there are pleadings which are intercessory, in which, like Abraham, the petitioner intercedes for Sodom, or entreats that Ishmael might live before God.

These prayers for others are to be multiplied as much as prayers for ourselves, lest we make the Mercy Seat to become a place for the exhibition of spiritual selfishness. The prayer may be public or private, vocal or mental, protracted or ejaculatory. Prayer may be salted with confession, or perfumed with thanksgiving. It may be sung to music, or wept out with groans. As many as are the flowers of summer, so many are the varieties of prayer! But while prayers are of these various orders, there is one respect in which they are all one if they are acceptable with Godthey must be, every one of them, in the Holy Spirit.

That prayer which is not in the Holy Spirit is in the flesh. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and we are told that they which are in the flesh cannot please God. All that comes of our corrupt nature is defiled and marred, and cannot be acceptable with the most holy God. If the heavens are not pure in His sight, how shall those prayers which are born of the earth be acceptable with Him? The seed of acceptable devotion must come from Heavens storehouse. Only the prayer which comes from God can go to God! The dove will only bear a letter to the cote from which it came, and so will prayer go back to Heaven if it came from Heaven. We must shoot the Lords arrows back to Him.

That desire which He writes upon our heart will move His heart and bring down a blessing, but the desires of the flesh have no power with Him. Desirous to press this great Truth of God upon the minds of my Brothers and Sisters this morning, I shall use the few words of the text in five ways.

I. First we shall use the text as A CRUCIBLE to try our prayers in. I beseech you, examine yourselves with rigorous care! Use the text as a refining pot, a furnace, a touchstone or a crucible by which to discern whether your prayers have been true or not! This is the testhave they been in very deedpraying in the Holy Spirit? Brothers and Sisters, we need not judge those who pray unintelligible prayers, prayers in a foreign tongue, prayers which they do not understand. We know without a moments discussion of the question that the prayer which is not understood cannot be a prayer in the Spirit, for even the mans own spirit does not enter into ithow then can the Spirit of God be there?

The mysterious words or Latin jargon of the priests cannot come up before God with acceptance! Let us, therefore, keep our judgment for ourselves. There may be those present who have been in the habit of using from their infancy a form of prayer. You perhaps would not dare to go out to your days business without having repeated that form at the bedside. You would be afraid to fall asleep at night without going through the words which you have set yourselves to repeat. My dear Friends, may I put the question to youwill you try to answer it honestly? Have you prayed in the Holy Spirit? Has the Holy Spirit had anything to do with that form? Has He really made you to feel it in your heart? Is it not possible that you have mocked God with a solemn sound upon a thoughtless tongue? Is it not probable that from the random manner in which one comes to repeat a well-known form that there may be no heart whatever in itand not an atom of sincerity?

Does not God abhor the sacrifice where the heart is not found? It would be a melancholy thing if we had increased our sins by our prayers! It would be a very unhappy fact if it should turn out that when we have bowed the knee in what we thought to be the service of God, we were actually insulting the God of Heaven by uttering words which could not but be disgusting to Him because our hearts did not go with our lips! Let us rest assured that if for seventy years we have punctually performed our devotions by the use of the book, or of the form which we have learned, we may, the whole seventy years, never once have prayed at all! And the whole of that period we may have been living in Gods esteem an ungodly, prayerless life because we have never worshipped God, who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth, and have never prayed in the Holy Spirit! Judge yourselves, Brothers and Sisters, that you be not judged!

But are there not others of us who never did use a written prayer? Who from our earliest childhood have eschewed and even abhorred forms of prayer, who nevertheless have good reason to try our prayer just as much as others? We have given forth extemporaneous utterances, and those extemporaneous utterances necessarily required some little exercise of the mind, some little attentionbut still we may have been heartless in them. I suppose we are well aware that we can get into such a habit of extemporaneous prayer that it is really very little or no better than if we repeated what we had learned. There may be such a fluency acquired by practice that ones speech may ripple on for five or ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour, and yet the heart may be wandering in vanity or stagnant in indifference! The

body may be on its knees, but the soul on its wings far away from the Mercy Seat.

Let us examine how far our public prayers have been in the Holy Spirit. The preacher standing here begs God to search him in that matter. If he has merely discharged the business of public prayer because it is his official duty to conduct the devotions of the congregation, he has much to account for before Godto lead the devotions of this vast throng without seeking the aid of the Holy Spirit is no light sin! And what shall be said of the prayers at Prayer Meetings? Are not many of them mere words? It were better if our friends would not speak at all rather than speak in the flesh!

I am sure that the only prayer in which the devout hearer can unite, and which is acceptable with God, is that which really is a heart prayera soul prayer, in facta prayer which the Holy Spirit moves us to pray. All else is beating the air and occupying time in vain. My Brethren, I thank God that there are so many of you in connection with this Church who are gifted in prayer, and I wish that every member of every Christian Church could pray in public. You should all try to do so, and none of you should give it up unless it becomes an absolute impossibility. But oh, my Brethren who pray in public, may it not be sometimes with you as with others of usthe exercise of gift and not the outflow of Divine Grace? And if so, ask the Lord to forgive you of such praying and enable you to wait upon Him in the power of the Holy Spirit.

We may not forget to scrutinize our more private prayers, our supplications at the family altar, and above all, our prayers in that little room which we have dedicated to communion with God. O Brothers and Sisters, we might well be sick of our prayers if we did but see what poor things they are! There are times when it is a sweet and blessed thing to lay hold of the horns of the altar and to feel that the blood which sprinkles the altar has sprinkled youthat you have spoken to God and prevailed! Oh it is a blessed thing to grasp the Angel of the Covenant, and to wrestle with Him even hour after hour, saying, I will not let You go except You bless me! But I fear these are not constant things. We may say of them that they are angels visits, few and far between.

Come, my Brethren, put your prayers into this crucible of praying in the Holy Spirit. You will cast in much metal, but there will come out little of fine gold. Come and lay your prayers upon this threshing floor, and thresh them with this text, praying in the Holy Spirit. And oh, how much of straw and of chaff will there be, and how little of the well-winnowed grain! Come and look through this window at the fields of our devotions, overgrown with nettles, and briars, and thistlesa wilderness of merely outward performances! And how small that little spot, enclosed by Grace, which God the Holy Spirit Himself has cleared, and dug, and planted from which the fruit of prayer has been brought forth unto perfection!

May our heavenly Father teach us to be humble in His Presence as we reflect how little even of our best things will stand the test of His searching eyes, and may those of us who are His saints come to Him afresh, and ask Him to fill us with His Spirit, and to accept us in His Son!

II. We shall next use the text as A CORDIAL. It is a very delightful reflection to the Christian mind that God observes His people and does not sit as an indifferent spectator of their conflicts and difficulties. For instance, He closely observes us in our prayers. He knows that prayer, while it should be the easiest thing in the world, is not so. He knows that we erring ones find it not always easy to approach Him in the true spirit of supplication and He observes this with condescending compassion. That is a precious verse for those hearts which are very weak and broken, He knows our frame: He remembers that we are dust. And that other, Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.

He takes notice of our frailties and of our failures in the work of supplication. He sees His child fall as it tries to walk and marks the tears with which it bemoans its weakness. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry. A sweeter thought remains in the text, namely, that having considered these failures of ours, which are many of them sinful, our Lord is not angry with us on account of them. And instead of being turned to wrath, He is moved to pity for us and love towards us. Instead of saying, If you cannot pray, you shall not have. If you have not Grace enough even to ask aright, I will shut the gates of mercy against you. No, He devises means by which to bring the lame and the banished into His Presence! He teaches the ignorant how to pray and strengthens the weak with His own strength!

Herein He also does wonders, for the means whereby He helps our infirmity are exceedingly to be marveled at. That help is not to be found in a book or in the dictation of certain words in certain consecrated places, but in the condescending assistance of God Himself, for who is He that is spoken of in the text but God? The Holy Spirit, the third Person of the adorable Trinity, helps our infirmities, making intercession for us with groans that cannot be uttered! It is a mark of wondrous condescension that God should not only answer our prayers when they are made, but should make our prayers for us! That the King should say to the petitioner, Bring your case before me and I will grant your desire, is kindness. But for him to say, I will be your secretary. I will write out your petition for you. I will put it into proper words and use fitting phrases so that your petition shall be framed acceptablythis is goodness at its utmost stretch!

And this is precisely what the Holy Spirit does for us poor, ignorant, wavering, weak sons of men. I am to understand from the expression, praying in the Holy Spirit, that the Holy Spirit is actually willing to help me to praythat He will tell me how to pray! And that when I get to a point where I am at a pause and cannot express my desires, He will appear in my extremity and make intercession in me with groans which cannot be uttered. Jesus in His agony was strengthened by an angelyou are to be succored by God Himself! Aaron and Hur held up the hands of Moses, but the Holy Spirit Himself helps your infirmities!

My beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, the thought needs no garnishing of oratorical expressions! Take it as a wedge of gold of Ophir and value it. It is priceless, beyond all price. God Himself, the Holy Spirit, condescends to assist you when you are on your knees, and if you cannot put two words together in common speech to men, yet He will help you to speak with God! Ah, and if at the Mercy Seat you fail in words, you shall not fail in reality, for your heart shall conquer. God needs not words. He never reads our petitions according to the outward utterance, but according to the inward groaning. He notices the longing, the desiring, the sighing, the crying.

Remember that the outward of prayer is but the shellthe inward of prayer is its true kernel and essence. If prayer is wafted to Heaven in the song of the multitude, with the swell of glorious music, it is not one whit more acceptable to God than when it is wailed forth in the bitter cry of anguish from a desolate spirit. That cry so discordant to human ears is music to the ears of God

*To Him theres music in a sigh,   
And beauty in a tear.*

Notice this, then, and be comforted.   
III. The text may further serve as A CHART to direct us in the way of  
prayer. Here I shall need to speak at greater length. Praying how? By the   
book? Without a book? In public? In private? By the way? In the house?  
On your knees? Standing? Sitting? Kneeling? Nothing is said about these!   
Posture, place, and time are all left open. There is no rubric except one  
in the Holy Spirit.   
That is indispensable. That granted, nothing else matters one whit. If it  
is praying in the Holy Spirit, all else may be as you will. What does praying in the Holy Spirit mean? The word may be translated, by the Holy   
Spirit, or, through the Holy Spirit, as well as, in the Holy Spirit. And   
the phrase means, first, praying in the Holy Spirits power. The carnal   
mind knows nothing about this. I might as well express myself in high   
Dutch as in English upon this point to an unregenerate man. But regenerate men who are born of the Spirit and live in the Spirit world are cognizant of communications between their spirits and the Holy Spirit who is  
now resident in the midst of the Church of God.   
We know that the Divine Spirit, without the use of sounds, speaks in  
our hearts. We know that without an utterance which the ears can hear   
He can make our soul know His Presence and understand His meaning.  
He casts the spiritual shadow of His influence over us, coloring our   
thoughts and feelings according to His own design and will. It is a great  
spiritual fact which the Christian knows for certain that the Holy Spirit,   
the Divine Spirit, has frequent dealings with spiritual minds and imparts   
to them His power. Our new-born spirit has a certain degree of power in it, but the power is never fully manifested or drawn out except when the   
Spirit of God quickens our spirit and excites it to activity.   
Our spirit prays, but it is because it is overshadowed and filled with the   
power of the Holy Spirit. I cannot just now explain myself, but I mean  
this, that if I, as a man, could go to the Throne of Grace and only pray as   
my fleshy nature would pray, that prayer would be unacceptable. But  
when I go to the Mercy Seat and my new nature prays as the Holy Spirit   
enables me to pray, then my prayer will succeed with God. If I do before   
God at the throne what flesh and blood can do and no more, I have done  
nothingfor that which is of the flesh still mounts no higher than flesh. But if, in coming before the Throne of the heavenly Grace, Gods eternal

Spirit speaks to my soul and lifts it out of the dead level of fallen humanity. And if He brings it up to be filled with Divine forceif that Spirit is in   
me a well of water springing up unto everlasting life, if I receive that Divine light and power of the Holy Spiritand if in His power I fervently   
draw near to God, my prayer must be prevalent with God! This power may   
be possessed by every Christian. May God grant it to all of His people   
now, that they may all pray in the Spirit!   
That, I think, is one meaning of the textpraying in the power of the  
Spirit. No doubt the principal sense of the text is praying in the Spirit as   
to matter. We do not know always what to pray for, and, Brothers and Sisters, if we were to refrain from prayer for a few minutes till we did know, it   
would be a good and wise rule. The habit into which we have fallen, in extemporaneous praying, of always praying directly what we are asking  
without an instants pause in which to think of what we are going to ask  
is very prejudicial to the spirit of prayer. I would like, when I am alone, to   
take a few minutes to consider what I am going to ask of God, for otherwise it seems to me to be like seeking an interview with one of the officers   
of State to ask for something which might occur to us at the moment. How would you like to have an audience with Lord Derby, and then   
consider all of a sudden what it was you had come for? Surely common  
sense would say, Tarry awhile till you have your case mapped out in your  
own mind, and then when you clearly know yourself what it is you want,  
you will be able to ask for what you need. Should we not wait upon God in   
prayer, asking Him to reveal to us what those matters are concerning   
which we should plead with Him? Beware of hit-or-miss prayers! Never   
make hap-hazard work of supplication. Come to the Throne of Grace intelligently understanding what it is that you require.   
It is well with us in prayer when the Holy Spirit guides the mind. Are   
not all spiritual men conscious of this, that they feel themselves shut up  
as to certain matters, and only free in another direction? Then let them   
obey the Holy Spirit and pray as He directs, for He knows what should be  
our petition. Well, then what? My dear Brothers and Sisters, pray for that   
which God the Spirit moves you to pray for, and be very sensitive of the   
Holy Spirits influence. I like a metaphor used by Thomas Shillitoe in his  
Life, when he says he wished his own mind to be like a cork upon the water, conscious of every motion of the Spirit of God. It were well to be so sensitive of the Spirit of God that His faintest breath should cause a ripple   
upon the sea of our soul and make it move as the Spirit would have it. We have reached a high state of sanctification when God the Spirit and   
our own inward spirit are perfectly in accord. May we be led into that unspeakably blessed state! We do not pray aright if we think what it is we   
want and we wish for, and then ask for it in selfish willfulness. We pray  
aright when we consent to that which is the mind of the Spirit, and speak   
as He moves us to speak. We shall be surely enriched with good things   
when we wait for the very matter of our supplications to have it all from   
Him. Lord, teach us to pray! Put the thoughts into our minds, the desires   
into our hearts, and the very words into our lips, if it is Your will, so that  
all our prayers may be praying in the Spirit and not in the flesh. The main part of praying in the Spirit must lie not merely in the Spirits   
power, or in the Spirits teaching us the matter, but in the Spirits assisting us in the manner. Observe, Brothers and Sisters, the many ways there   
are of praying which are obnoxious to Godobserve them and avoid them!   
There is but one manner of praying which the Lord accepts. You know  
what it is. I will briefly describe its attributes. He that comes to God must   
remember that He is a Spirit, and that they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeks such to worship   
Him. The very first essential of prayer is to pray in truth, and we do not  
pray in truth unless the Spirit of God leads our vain minds into the sincerity and reality of devotion.   
To pray in truth is thisit is not to use the empty expression of prayer,   
but to mean what we say. It is for the heart to agonize with God and heave   
with strong desires. And where will you obtain such a manner of prayer  
except in the spiritual man, when moved by the Holy Spirit? The carnal   
man, if he is foolish enough, can intone a prayer. The carnal man can  
read the office, and do duty as well as anybody else who can read a   
book, but he is not praying! No prayer can come from him. Only the spiritual man can sigh and long, and cry in his inmost heart, and in the   
chamber of his soul before Godbut he will not do it except as the Spirit   
of Truth leads him in sincerity into the secret of heart prayer. Praying in the Holy Spirit is praying in fervency. Cold prayers, my  
Brothers and Sisters, ask the Lord not to hear them! Those who do not  
plead with fervency, plead not at all. As well speak of lukewarm fire as of   
lukewarm prayer! It is essential that it be red hot. Real prayer is burnt as   
with hot iron into a mans soul, and then comes forth from the mans soul  
like coals of juniper which have a most vehement heat. Such prayers none   
but the Holy Spirit can give. I have heard from this spot prayers which I   
never can forget, nor will you ever forget them either.   
Last January and February there were times when certain of our Brethren were helped to pray with such power that we were bowed down in   
humiliation, and afterwards borne up as on the wings of eagles in the   
power of supplication! There is a way of praying with power in which a  
man seems to get hold of the posts of Heavens gate, as Samson grasped  
the pillars of the temple, and appears as though he would pull all down   
upon himself sooner than miss the blessing. It is a brave thing for the heart to vow, I will not let You go except You bless me. That is praying in the Holy Spirit. May we be tutored in the art of offering effectual fervent   
prayer!   
Next to that, it is essential in prayer that we should pray perseveringly.   
Any man can run fast at a spurt, but to keep it up mile after milethere   
is the battle! And so, certain hot spirits can pray very fervently every now  
and then, but to continue in prayerwho shall do this except the Spirit of   
God sustains him? Mortal spirits flag and tire. The course of mere fleshly  
devotion is as the course of a snail which melts as it crawls. Carnal minds   
go onward and their devotion grows small by degrees and miserably less,  
as they cry out, What a weariness it is! But when the Holy Spirit fills a  
man and leads him into prayer, he gathers force as he proceedsand  
grows more fervent even when God delays to answer! The longer the gate   
is closed the more vehemently does he use the knocker till he thunders in   
his prayer! And the longer the Angel lingers, the more resolved is he that if  
he grasps Him with a death grip he will never let Him go without the   
blessing.   
Beautiful in Gods sight is tearful and yet unconquerable importunity.   
Jesus delights to be laid hold of by one who says, I cannot take No for an  
answer, this blessing I must have, for You have promised it and You have   
taught me to ask for it, and I will not believe that You can belie yourself.   
Surely we must have the Holy Spirit to help us thus to pray. Praying in   
the Spirit we shall be sure to pray in a holy frame of mind. Brothers and   
Sisters, do you ever get distracted in your minds? Ah, you say, I wonder  
when I am not. I will venture to say that you have come into this house   
burdened, and yet on the road you were saying, This is a blessed Sunday, I feel I have Gods Presence.   
Then some silly gossip met you on the steps and told you an idle tale   
which distracted you. You may even get quietly seated here, and then the  
recollection of a child at home, or the remembrance of what somebody   
said about six weeks ago will perplex your mind so that you cannot pray.   
But when the Holy Spirit comes, He takes a scourge of small cords and   
drives these buyers and sellers out of the temple and leaves it clear for   
God. And then you can come with a holy, devout frame of mind, fixed and   
settled in your great object of approach to God. This is to approach Him in  
the Spirit. Oh for more of this blessed, undisturbed devotion! I could not, however, finish the description of praying in the Spirit if I   
did not say that it means praying humbly, for the Holy Spirit never puffs   
us up with pride. He is the Spirit that convicts of sin and so bows us   
down in contrition and brokenness of spirit. We must pray before God like  
the humble publican, or we shall never go forth justified as he was. We   
shall never sing Gloria in Excelsis except we pray to God De Profundis  
out of the depths must we cry, or we shall never see the glory in the highest! True prayer must be loving prayer if it is praying in the Holy Spirit.   
Prayer should be perfumed with love, saturated with lovelove to our fellow saints, and love to Christ. Moreover, it must be a prayer full of faith.   
The effectual fervent prayer of a man prevails only as he believes in God, and the Holy Spirit is the Author of faith in us, and nurtures and   
strengthens it so that we pray believing Gods promises.   
Oh that this blessed combination of excellent Graces, priceless and   
sweet as the spices of the merchant, might be fragrant within us because   
the Holy Spirits power is shed abroad in our hearts! Time fails me, therefore I must dispense with a full description of what praying in the Holy  
Spirit is, but I hope you will possess it and so understand it. IV. Fourthly, I shall use the text as A CHERUB to proclaim our success  
in prayer. Praying in the Spiritblessed words! Then with such prayer it   
is an absolute certainty that I must succeed with God in prayer. If my   
prayer were my

own prayer, I might not be so sure of it. But if the prayer   
which I utter is Gods own prayer written on my soul, God is always One  
with Himselfand what He writes on the heart is only written there because it is written in His purposes.   
It is said by an old Divine that prayer is the shadow of Omnipotence.  
Our will, when God the Holy Spirit influences it, is the indicator of Gods   
will. When Gods people pray, it is because the blessing is coming and   
their prayers are the shadow of the coming blessing! Rest assured of this,  
Brothers and Sisters, God never did belie Himself! He never contradicted  
in one place what He said in another. You and I may contradict ourselves,   
not only through untruthfulness, but even through infirmity. We may not be able to stand up to our word, and we may forget what   
we saidand so in another place may say something that contradicts it  
but God is neither infirm as to memory, nor yet changeable as to will.  
What He promised yesterday He fulfils today. What He said in one place,  
He declares in another. Then if God said in my heart, Pray for So-andSo, it is because He has said it in the book of His decrees. The Spirit of  
Gods writing in the heart always tallies with the writing of destiny in the   
book of Gods eternal purpose. Rest assured that you cannot but succeed   
when you have laid your soul like a sheet of paper before the Lord and   
asked Him to write upon it! Then it is no more your own prayer, merely,  
but the Spirit making intercession in you according to the will of God. At such time you need not say, I hope God will answer the prayer. He   
will do itHe is pledged to do it. It is a kind of infidelity to say, I do not   
know whether the Lord is true to His promise or not, but I hope He is. He   
is true! Let God be true and every man a liar. Oh, if more of you tried Him   
as some of us have been compelled to do, you would have to hold up your  
hands in astonishment, and say, Truly, whatever else is not a fact, it is a   
fact that God, who sits in the highest heavens, listens to the cries of His   
people, and gives them according to the desire of their hearts. If the Spirit   
teaches you to pray, it is as certain as two times two make four that God   
will give you what you are seeking for.   
V. Then I will use the text in conclusion as A CHARIOT in which to   
convey our own souls onward in the delightful exercise of prayer. The exercise allotted to us today and tomorrow is that of praying in the Spirit.  
Brothers and Sisters, it is delightful to some of us to believe that the Spirit   
of God is the Author of the great wave of prayer now breaking over the  
Churches to which we belong. It was not of our devising or planning, but it was the motion of Gods Holy Spirit upon a few Brethren who desired to spend a day in solemn prayer and found such blessing in it that they   
could not but tell others of it!   
That, then, others spontaneously moved, and without a word of opposition or difference of opinion all said, Amen. Let us also meet together for   
prayer. The spirit of brotherly kindness, unanimity, and love was given to  
our denomination, and then a spirit of earnest desire to bring down a   
blessing from God. We have known the time when it was not so. We have   
known the time when a day of fasting and prayer, if not despised, at any  
rate would not have been appreciated as it will be now. We are of one   
heart in this matter and I know from communications with many Christian men that many of Gods people already feel as if they were peculiarly   
in prayeras if it were no effort now to pray, but as if it were their very   
breath now to breathe out longing desires for the revival of saints and the   
ingathering of sinners.   
Brothers and Sisters of this Church, you have had Gods Presence. For   
many years you have been favored with much of praying in the Holy  
Spirit, and seen with your own eyes the great things God has done in answer to supplication. Will one of you draw back now? Will there be one   
man today or tomorrow who will not be earnest in prayer? Will one man,  
or even one child in union with this Church, be lukewarm in prayer? I   
would say, Sin not against the Lord by abstaining from going up to the   
Mercy Seat with your Brothers and Sisters. Offend not the Lord so that He  
deprive you of the blessing because you deprive yourself of joining in the  
exercise.  
My dear Friends, it was when they were all met together with one accord in one place that suddenly they heard the sound as of a rushing,   
mighty wind. We cannot be all in one place, but, at any rate, let us be all  
with one accord. What? Do you say you have nothing to pray for? What?   
No children unconverted, no friends unsaved, no neighbors who are still   
in darkness? What? Live in London and not pray for sinners? Where do  
you live? Is it in some vast wilderness, amidst some boundless contiguity   
of shade, where rumor of sin and of ignorance has never reached your   
ear? No, you are living in the midst of millions of ungodly millions! Millions that despise the God who made them! Millions that despise the Gospel of Christ!   
Millions, not thousands! Hear that word and see if you can tell its   
meaning! Millions who are living without God and without hope, and are  
going down to Hell! We have, throughout the realm, too, dangerous mischiefs spreading. Need I continually remind you of them? Infidelity wearing the miter, and Popery usurping the place of Protestantism! You are   
assailed by the wolf and the lion, the serpent and the bear! All forms of  
mischief are coming forth to attack the Church. Not pray? If you pray not,   
shall I say, May you smart for your negligence? No I dare not in the slightest shade speak as though I imprecated a woe upon you, but the woe will  
come upon you, depend upon it! If I say it not, yet will God say it at this  
present hour. Curse you Meroz, said the Lord, because they came not up   
to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty. We are not asking you to contribute of your wealth in this case. If we   
did, the Lord Jesus has a right to it, and you should freely give it. Neither  
are we asking you all this day to preach. If we did, some of you might be   
excused for lack of ability. But we claim your prayers, and must not be   
denied! Not able to pray? Then are you graceless, Christless, hopeless,  
lost, and I will not ask you to join with us! But I ask you first to go to God   
for yourselves. And if you are a Christian you can pray. Poverty does not  
make you poor in prayer. Lack of education need not hinder you upon  
your knees. Lack of position and rank in society will be no encumbrance   
to you when you deal with God who hears the poor man when he cries   
and answers him with a largess of Divine Grace!   
Brothers and Sisters, if you love Christ, if you ever felt His love shed   
abroad in your heart. If you have been washed in His blood. If you have   
been saved from wrath through Him. If you are new creatures in Him. If   
you hope to see His face with acceptance at the last, I might put it to you   
as a demand! But I press it upon you as a brotherly entreatyjoin with us   
in praying in the Holy Spirit! Shall one start back? Take heed, then, if you   
refuse to unite with your Brethren in prayer, lest when you choose to cry   
you should find yourself straitened and shut up in prison! Beware, lest by  
refusing to pray now, that the Spirit of God has come, you afterwards feel   
yourself deprived of the comfortable Presence of the Holy Spirit and find   
the sweetness of devotion to have departed from you.   
The Lord send a blessing. He must send itour hearts will break if He   
does not! We feel that it is coming. We have grasped the promise. We have   
pleaded with Jehovah! We have pleaded the blood of Jesus! We are pleading it now! We mean to continue in such pleading till the blessing comes,  
and we may rely upon it that the heavenly shower will soon descend! He   
has not said to the seed of Jacob, Seek you My face in vain. Brothers   
and Sisters, be hopeful, and let us unanimously join in praying in the  
Holy Spirit!   
May the Lord bless you, dear Friends, in this respect for Jesus sake.

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A WEIGHTY CHARGE   
NO. 1286

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORDS-DAY MORNING, MARCH 26 1876, BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

Keep yourselves in the love of God.   
Jude 1:21.

JUDE gives a very terrible picture of what will happen in the last days. He describes apostates and paints them in the blackest colors. And he then informs us that there will come, in the last time, mockers and with them separatists and sensualists, all of whom will assail the Church of the living God. It feels very natural, that after foretelling our adversaries and describing them, and so bidding us view the hosts assembled for the war, he should next instruct us how to prepare our defenses and set our forces in battle array. In the 20th and 21st verses of his epistle, Jude mentions the great Christian Quadrilateral, the four forts which must be well manned and carefully maintained if we would battle the advancing foe.

I shall call your attention to the four important points, though I must do so with the utmost brevity. The Apostle says, You beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith. Edification is a grand defense against the assaults of skeptics and heretics. These prey upon the ignorant and unestablished, but fail to overthrow those who are rooted and grounded in the Truth of God. We need to be continually built uplearning more, loving moreand living more the grand Truths of the Gospel. We must see to it that the foundation is right, for it will be useless, or worse than useless, to be built up upon false principlesit is on our most holy faith that the building must be based.

We should be so established in the Doctrines of Grace as to recognize their holiness and to imitate them in our own lives. Only a most holy faith is safe for the soul and woe unto the man who rests content with any other. See, then, Brothers and Sisters, that to ward off the ills of these last times we must labor to know the Truth ourselves, and must endeavor to instruct our Brethren in them. Personal and mutual edification in the Church should be zealously maintained as one of the most valuable defenses against the invasion of error.

The second most necessary defensive principle in the Church is devotion. Praying in the Holy Spirit is the weapon with which the hosts of the Lord will put to rout the armies of the alien. The prayers of saints are the mighty artillery with which the walls of our Jerusalem are protected. Supplication is a cannon which throws tremendous bolts against the advancing foe, as Sennacherib knew when Hezekiah pleaded with God. The prayers, however, must be deeply spiritual, written on the heart by the Holy Spirit and presented with energy of His creating. Formal, lifeless petitions are but a Chinese painted fortresswhile praying in the Holy Spirit is an impregnable castle!

Those groans which cannot be uttered are pieces of ordinance which make the gates of Hell tremble. But we must put our hearts under the influence of the blessed Spirit of God, to have this, and then lift them up in continued intercession before God. Then there can be no fear about the preservation of our minds from the error of the wicked. A praying Church soon tries the spirits of false Prophets and casts them forth as evil. I have far more faith in prayer than in controversy. Keep the Prayer Meetings going! Maintain private prayer with earnestness and we may laugh to scorn all the sophisms of unbelievers and deceivers!

Jude next mentions as a third important matter the affections of the Church. If the hearts of the members of the Church are right, mockers and scoffers can do very little against them. Keep yourselves in the love of God, for a warm-hearted company of Christians who love the Lord with all their hearts and with all their souls, are not likely to be overcome by mockers and sensualists. Love to God will be as a wall of fire round about them. In dull, decaying Churches, errors spread like ivy on the crumbling walls of an old abbey. But life, zeal, earnestness, warm-heartedness throw off these evils even as a red-hot iron plate evaporates the drops which fall upon it. Love God and you will not love false doctrine. Keep the heart of the Church right and her head will not go far wrong. Let her abide in the love of Jesus and she will abide in the Truth.

The fourth point to which he calls attention is the brightness of our expectancy. Looking, says he, for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Expect that Christ will come and come with blessings undeserved, which shall display the mercy of God to us! Expect that when He comes it will be to end our conflicts, to tread Satan under our feet and to reveal and perfect that eternal life which He has already implanted in us! Looking forward to the sure coming of Christ, the Church will not be afraid of the great swelling words of men, nor dread their murmurings. She will have an answer to the tyrants question, Where is the promise of His coming? She will reply, Behold the Lord comes with 10,000 of His saints to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.

First, building, and then, looking from her watchtower, the Church will defy the powers of evil, confident of victory at the appearing of her Lord. Brethren, if the darkest times should come, if these four points are diligently maintained we shall be perfectly safe against the cunning assaults of the arch enemy! O servants of the living God, seek with all your hearts the edification of the saints! Keep your devotions warm, keep your affections pure and keep bright your expectancy, for so shall you stand fast in the tempest! In prospect thereof we may sing with Jude, Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the Presence of His Glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

At this time we take the third of the four exhortations as our text keep yourselves in the love of God. This may refer, and I have no doubt it does, to mutual oversight. Christians are to labor to keep each other in communion with God. If they see a Brother grow cold in his attachment to the Lord, it is their duty to endeavor, by gentle rebukes, consolations and admonitions, to restore the heart of the backsliding one to a proper warmth. Keep yourselves in the love of God, that is to sayexercise a mutual oversight and practice watchfulness over each other, lest any of you should, by little and little, lose your sense of the love of God. Let not the wolf steal here a lamb and there a sheep, and so diminish your numbers as a Church, but ask for the Spirits aid that you may keep yourselves and your Brethren near to the great Shepherd, for so shall you be safe.

Mutual oversight will not, however, be the theme of this mornings discourse. I must narrow the text down to a personal dutylet each man keep himself in the love of God. To many minds, this exhortation will appear to be somewhat unguarded. I am quite certain that if I were the author of the sentence, my very sound Brothers and Sisters would seriously object to it and would say, We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvationto exhort us to keep ourselves is useless, carnal, and legal. To whom I replydear Brethren, I am not the author of the phrase and, therefore, if you have any quarrel with it, will you be so kind as to remember that your dispute is with the Holy Spirit and not with me? I find it in the Inspired Volume and I have no power or wish to blot it out!

Moreover, I find in the Word of God many other exhortations against which the same objection may be brought and I do not intend, either to twist them to mean something else, or to avoid expounding them from fear of being thought unsound. With half an eye, one can see that while in Holy Scripture we are taught that we can do nothing without Christ, we are, at the same time, exhorted to do all sorts of things and are even bid to be perfect, even as our Father in Heaven is perfect! If this is inconsistent it is the inconsistency of Scripture and I bow before it and leave others to quibble if they choose. All power to do good comes from the Holy Spirit and all will towards good is from the same source, yet are we bid to perform right things as freely as if we could and would do them of ourselves.

Nor are the exhortations of the Word of God couched in guarded language and hedged round with limiting phrases. Holy Scripture seldom guards its own utterances, but speaks freely, and whereas men are so fearful lest they should be mistaken that they frequently interject parentheses and explanations and so spoil the effect of what they are saying, we find the Holy Spirit speaking out what He has to say and leaving it to the instructed minds of Believers, themselves, to remember those other Truths of God which balance the doctrine in hand. We are too fearful about Truthshe needs no armorher naked beauty is better protection than a coat of mail.

As no one thinks of wrapping the sun in a blanket on a winters day, so we need not anxiously guard and protect the Truth of Godlet it shine forth and it will be its own interpreter! Yet look at the connection and you

will see that it lends no sanction to the proud idea that a man can keep himself apart from the Grace of God, for the sentence which precedes the text is, praying in the Holy Spirit. Remember to keep yourselves, but do so by praying in the Holy Spirit, and so confessing that you are dependent upon His Divine power. The following sentence also lifts my text out of a legal atmosphere by saying, Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal lifeshowing that your eyes are to be on Jesus and to the mercy of God and not to yourselfand by no means to any merit or power of your own.

My Brothers, we must never be afraid to exhort one another because of the Scriptural doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit! This should urge us forward and by no means hold us back. We are not to feel ourselves muzzled and gagged when we preach practical precepts because we believe comforting doctrines. Let us speak the whole Truth with a gracious liberty, resting quite assured that the Lord can reconcile His own Truth in the hearts and experiences of His people and does not need us to be perpetually agitated with the fear of damaging His Truth, as if it were some delicate eggshell china which we might break with a touch, or a cobweb which would be swept away by the movement of our hand. Let us speak the Truth with all boldness as we ought to speak and say as the text does, keep yourselves in the love of God.

This implies, however, beloved Friends, that you are in the love of God. It is not an exhortation directed to every man, for some men are not in the love of God. It is directed to those of you who are in that love to keep yourselves in it. Let me, then, begin by enquiring, are you in the love of God? Not, are you an object of Divine benevolence, for that He exercises towards all His creaturesbut do you know His love in Christ Jesus? Have you believed in Jesus Christ unto eternal life and seen the Fathers love beaming in the face of Jesus? If you have believed it, you have also enjoyed it, for the love of God has been shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit which is given unto youand you have been conscious of a joy superior to anything which this world can create.

Well, then, continue to believe in that love so deep, so strong, so true! Abide, also, in the enjoyment of that love and pray for more. Do not lose the sense of it by careless living. If you have ever known that love, it is quite certain that you love God in return. Therefore continue to love the Lord. This is, probably, the particular meaning of the exhortation before us. The love of God in you is made manifest by the love which you have towards Godand the consequent affection which you feel to all His people. Endeavor, then, to always love God and to love Him more and more. Feed the sacred flame of Divine affection till it becomes an all-consuming fire. Oh, love the Lord all you His saints. With all your heart, with all your soul and all your strength, love the Lord and love your neighbor as yourselves!

Especially cultivate love unto all the saints, for this, also, is the love of God. Let brotherly love continue. Walk in love as Christ, also, has loved you. Keep yourselves in the love of God. You are in that loveyou believe it, you enjoy it, you reflect it, you manifest it to othersthen continue, both to believe and enjoy it and persevere in displaying and manifesting it in your love to God and your love to men. Two things this morning, and only two. The first will be motives for keeping ourselves in the love of God. And the second will be means to assist us in so doing.

I. First, MOTIVES for keeping yourselves in the love of God. It is as though a courtier, having gained the favor of his sovereign, should receive, upon his entrance into court, this good advice from a friendYou are now, yourself, in your sovereigns favor, so act as to retain your position, that you may never be sent away from his presence and made to occupy a lower place. He is not capricious, but he is jealous, therefore be careful, so you may dwell in the light of his countenance.

Believers are always Gods servants, but they are not always smiled upon. Let them so live as never to lose that smile. When we go to the sunny south in the winter for our health, we are advised by the physician to keep ourselves as much as possible in the sun. We are told to let our rooms look towards the rising sun and to keep clear of sunless streets and courts. This is the advice of wisdom, for if you lodge in rooms upon which the sun never shines, you might as well be at home in our own chilly land. The sun is the great physician and, by basking in his beams, we find healing beneath his wings.

It is even thus with the love of God, Keep yourselves in it, sun yourselves in it all day long. The flowers teach us this, for when the sun shines upon them, they open themselves and turn their faces towards its light. They love him and they delight to be kissed by his beams and, therefore, they keep themselves as much as they can in his brightness. When trees are planted in a spot where the sun only reaches them in one direction, they put forth their boughs towards the suns quarter and seek his beams. Do you the same! You are in Gods love, continue in it, grow towards it, keep yourselves in it! Your Father loves you. Do not, like the Prodigal, go away from that love, or forget it, or slight it, or grieve it. Enjoy it, be warmed by it and be sanctified by it evermore.

What is to be the motive for this? It is clear that all the motives which led you to desire Gods love at first should lead you to keep in it. If it is to mea poor broken-hearted sinnerof the utmost importance to find the love which heals my wounds, then, being healed, it is equally important that I should keep in that love lest I should be wounded again. If being my fathers prodigal child, it was a great thing to get back and once more receive the kiss of love, and hear him acknowledge me as his son, it must be equally good for me to stay at home and never play the prodigal again. The true son abides in the house forever and dreads the very idea of going forth from it. You know, Beloved, with what earnestness you were formerly pleaded with that you should not rest without the love of God in Christ.

Now, I have but a few minutes, this morning, to spend on any one argument and, therefore, I shall leave it to you to remember what those arguments were and to enforce them upon yourselves. That which is worth getting is worth keeping. If Divine love was worth seeking, even if you had been called to lay down your lives in the search, it must be equally worth

retaining, cost what it may. I have heard that many who have been shrewd at making money, have not been able to keep a fortune after they have gained it. And I fear there are many Christians who, with much zeal, obtain a high degree of enjoyment of the love of Godand become very warm and earnest in the ways of Godbut they cannot retain their fervor and, after a while, relapse into lukewarmness.

Many get into the sunlight of full assurance, but they soon leave it and are darkened with doubts and fears. They are chilled with insensibility and indifference and so they do not keep themselves in the love of God as they should do. Let it not be so with you, but hear your Masters words, wherein He says, Abide in Me. If love within the soul is worth the getting, it is worth the keepingcontinue in it.

Next, we should continue in Gods love because it is His due. Brethren, that I should know that God loves me and should rejoice in itand then should love Him in returnis His due under the Law. This is the substance of His Law to Israel, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength. And that because He had revealed His love to Israelfor the preamble of the Commandments runs thusI am the Lord your God that brought you out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage. He claims their love because of His love to them.

Much more is it so under the Gospel. That matchless display of Divine mercy should exercise upon us a Divine influence. It should be permitted to melt, renew, restrain, constrain and govern us. Receiving its blessings and meditating upon its glories, we ought to be as much affected by it as wax by the flame. Touched with its flames of love, our hearts ought to burn with loving gratitude, as with coals of juniper. See God in the Gospel and not love Him? It is monstrous!

Brothers and Sisters, if you have a part and lot in the Covenant of Grace, the love of God with all subduing power must and will hold you beneath its sway. That Gods love should be felt and returned is a duty, but at the same time a privilege unbounded. Remember that Gods Nature makes love to be His due. Such a Character as His engrosses the love of every intelligent and right-minded creature. Not to love such an one as God is, would be impossible to renewed hearts! He reveals himself as Father, Son and Spirit, and in each Divine Person displays a sacred form of matchless goodness, so that not to love Him is baseness and profanity.

Gods Nature claims it and our nature, also, cannot rest without itI mean, of course, our regenerate nature. Grace has made us the children of God and true children must love their Father. It cannot be that the life of God is in your soul if there is no sense of the Divine love and no return of that love to Him from where it came. As the sparks seek the sun, who is the father of flame, so in warm affections and communing, the love of God in the soul seeks the God who gave it. You cannot be Gods children and yet not love Him! Well, then, since Law and Gospel, since His Nature and your renewed nature, since Father, Son and Spirit all have claims upon your hearts, oh, if you love the Lord Jesus, keep yourselves in the love of God.

Remember, too, dear Brethren (and this is a strong argument) that love is the evidence of faith and the Grace by which faith operates. The faith which saves the soul is always attended by love. It is written, Faith works by love. Faith without works is dead, but faith without love is faith without works, therefore faith without love is a dead thing and cannot possibly save a soul. If you say, I believe in Jesus Christ, my dear Brother, if that is true, you have proved it already by loving God. Therefore prove it, still, by loving on, even to the end! May the ever blessed Spirit help you to do so.

Another argument lies here the love of God is the spring of all our Graces. I include in the term, the love of God, both Gods love to us and our love to Him, for they are very much the same. Let me use one illustrationYou have a burning-glass and hold it up before the sun till you focus the rays upon a piece of dry wood and set it on fire. Now, while you see the wood burning to ashes, will you tell me what it is that burns? Does the heat of the sun burn the wood or does the wood burn? The heat which you feel while the wood is burning, is it due to the sun or to the wood? Of course, at first, the fire is purely and simply the flame of the sun. But afterwards the wood, itself, begins to burn. The sun burns the wood and then the wood, itself, burns. Even so, the love of God comes into our heart and then our heart loves, too, and in both cases, love is of God.

No man is a Christian unless he, himself, loves God with his own heart, but yet our love to God is nothing more nor less than the refection of Gods love to usso that it comes to the same thing. The love of God, whether from Him to us or from us to Him, is, practically, one and the same thing. This, I say, we must retain in our souls, because it is the source of every virtue. No man can do anything aright if he does not love God. Without love to God, where is zeal for His Glory? Where is patient endurance for His sake? Where is cheerful obedience to His will? Without love to God where is true knowledge of God? Can any man know a God whom he does not love? Without love to God can any action be acceptable in His sight?

Brothers and Sisters, if you have more love you will have more of every Graceyour love will be the test of the healthiness of your condition. When love burns, the whole of our nature blazes with holy fire, but when love smolders, every Grace is like a smoking flax. Love must be maintained as a primary necessity of the Divine life if we are, indeed, to glorify God. Keep yourself in the love of God, because though your love is all you can give, it is very little. Suppose you loved Christ more than any saint that ever lived, more than any Apostle or martyr? Yet I put it to you What is the highest supposable love compared with the love of Christ to you?

If you regard the excellency of the Character of God, does He not deserve a vastly more intense admiration and affection than we have, as yet, been capable of? Our whole heart is all too little, let it not be divided!

Daily increasing in love, give Him all your affections. Consider that if you do not give Him all your love, you have given Him nothing. If you give your body to be burned and have not love to God, it profits you nothing. Though I should speak with the tongues of men and of angels, though I should traverse the whole world to preach the Gospel of Christ, though with dauntless courage I should brave the gates of Hell, yet if I loved not God what would it all be but a dead sacrifice which could not be accepted upon His altar? Keep yourselves, then, dear Friends, in the love of God, for it is the least you can do.

Remember, too, that we must give the Lord our love, or else that love will go somewhere else. We are so created that we must love something or other. If the Ever-Blessed One does not win our love, the world, the flesh, or the devil will gain it. The worst witch in all the world is the world herselfand she soon casts her spell over the man who grows chill in his love to Jesus. You are hankering after some idol or other, my Brethren, if God is not all in all to you! If His love is not very sweet within you and if it does not cause you to love Him intensely, you will fall under the dominion, either of some lust or passion or corruption, or else your heart will be cankered and consumed with the rust of care, covetousness and worldliness. Your heart cannot be kept from lovingits only safety lies in keeping it in the love of God.

As a motive for loving God, I should remind you that here lies happiness. Without an exception, this is the rule, that he who loves God most, is happiest. But there must be exceptions, says one. If a man is in prison, if he is on the eve of a cruel death, will love to God fill him with delight? It has done so many a time! But if a man rolls in riches, if he is blessed with good health and every comfort of life, surely he can be happy without the love of God in his soul. There is abundant evidence to show that it is not so, for the most favored children of this world become, before long, heart-sick of its joys. And the more honest among them have declared that they could find no satisfaction in all their possessions.

It scarcely needs a Solomon to tell us that all the world, apart from the love of God, is vanity of vanities. A Christian at his worst is really more to be envied than a worldling at his best! I would sooner have a dram of the love of God than be loaded down with the wealth of nations. When the soul is filled with the love of Christ, it seems lifted beyond ordinary manhood. It burns with holy fire and, as it glows, it mounts on wings of flames and soars towards Heaven! Loves feet are like hinds feet, so that it treads upon the high places of the earth and leaves care and doubt below it, even as the hinds of the mountains leaves the marshes of the plains for those who cannot climb.

The love of God breeds an enthusiasm and a sacred fervor within the soul which lifts men out of themselves and bestows on them a sort of celestial other-life, a Divine furore, by which the soul is borne up as on eagles wings and triumphs in unspeakable joy! This makes them 10 times stronger, braver, grander, happier than they were before. I suppose to make us equal to the angels, we have but to love God more. And to make us superior to the angels, as we shall be in Heaven, there will be nothing more needed than to fill us with a superior love to that which angels feel.

Brothers and Sisters, this shall be my last argument. Get love to God and keep it, because it will make you like Jesus. Jesus Christ, your Lord and Master, dwelt in the love of God and was full of love to God. And, consequently, of love to men. This made it His meat and His drink to do His Fathers will. The secret of the life of Christ lies in the supremacy of love within Him. He was, indeed, embodied Loveinto His heart no selfishness, ambition, anger, wrath, or any gross or sinister motive had ever entered. The Prince of this world found nothing in Him, because God had everything in Him. Love shone in His eyes and spoke from His mouth.

The Fathers love upheld Him and His own love to the Father covered Him with zeal as with a cloak. Get love, much love, healthy love, sacrificing love and you will be like Jesusand so you will be fit to dwell with Him in Heaven. Love is the very atmosphere of Paradise, it is the odor of the flowers of the new Eden. Put on your beautiful garments, O bride of Jesus, the garments of glory and beauty which become your rankthe garments which the Bridegrooms love has worked out for you! Gird on the sandals of love, which are fairer than the lily and more precious than the gold of Ophir. Robed in the love of Jesus, you shall shine as if you were clothed with the sun, while your love to Him shall make you fair as the moon in His sight!

Wear love to Jesus as your jewels and your adornments and, when you put them on, take care you never lay them aside, but wear them evermore, for so shall the King greatly desire your beauty. These are some of the motives out of a mass, but having no time to mention them all, we must leave to your own instructed minds the easy task of arguing for love.

II. Secondly, THE MEANS for calming out the exhortation of the text shall now be considered. Keep yourselves in the love of God. I am not going to dwell upon prayer because that is in the sentence before my text. Nor will I, at this moment, insist upon the necessity for the Holy Spirits aid in this work, for that Truth you all know and believe, and we have frequently dwelt upon it of late. The text does not make that doctrine prominent and, therefore, I forbear to enlarge upon it. Not because I undervalue it, but because, just now, it is not our theme.

Keep yourselves in the love of Godhow are you to do that? Well, first I should say, Brethren, endeavor to be full of that love at this present moment. If I were told that a city was about to be besieged and if I were commanded to keep the people supplied with provisions during the siege, I should lay in a plentiful store, at once, to provide for the famine. So, if you desire to continue in the love of God, have much of the love of God, now, and pray for more of it. Oh, to know the love of God as much as ever it can be known! Be greedy, be hungry, be covetous after it! Store it up, fill your soul full of it as a man would fill his storehouses and granary if he knew that a dearth would be in the land.

Notice that just before my text these words occurYou, Beloved, building, which means increasing and growing up. The way to keep yourselves in the love of God is to obtain more and more of it. Love is like a fire which, if it does not consume more fuel, burns low. You cannot stop

where you areto retain you must annex. Napoleon used to say, Conquest has made me what I am and conquest must maintain me. O Christians, remember that you must advance or backslide! You must build higher and higher! Love must become more and more supreme in your souls, or you will decline. If you would remain warm, be warm now!

Alas, what a little stock of love some Christians have! You may look into their hearts long before you can spy it out. They are true Believers and, therefore, there must be some love in their bosoms, but their cruse of oil is almost run out. There is just a little at the bottom, hardly enough to cover the wood of the barrel. We ought not to be in so evil a case, for if we have so little Grace in prosperous seasons, what shall we do in times of temptation and trial? If the heart is full to overflowing, there is a likelihood that its stores will hold out. But scant affection makes us fear that it is a transient emotion and not the love which is born from above.

If you desire to keep yourself in the love of God, avoid everything that would dampen your love. Avoid sin, especially, for sin is the poison of love to God. Love of sin is the death of love to God! I mean by sin, not merely the grosser forms of vice, but everything which has a tendency to tarnish the virgin purity of your soul. I know some Christians who complain a good deal about their need of love to Jesus and the smallness of their faith, and so on. When I track them to their haunts, I find that they keep ill company and frequent amusements and assemblies where love to Christ is sorely wounded and almost slain. I put it to their own consciences whether they are ever likely to increase their love to Christ by going where His name is not adored and His cause is not befriended.

I heard of one who professed to be a Christian, that he claimed to be able to attend the theater and yet to live very near to God. And I remembered the remark of a minister who said, When I see great Grace in those who frequent the theater, I shall at once grow prize roses in my coal cellar. Just so! I shall cultivate not only roses, but palms and oranges in the vault under my house when that is the case! He who says that gay amusements help him to grow in the love of God utters a lie! Conscience condemns the worldly professorhe cannot come home from a place of amusement, where the ungodly congregate, without feeling, I have been where I had no right to be.

I am not now judging the outside world, but I am dealing with the members of our Churches who profess to be separated from the world. If a worldling loves worldly amusement, I do not wonder at it, nor wish to deny him his enjoyments. Just as one feels about the swine, that they ought to have their pig wash, for it suits them, but none of us want to share it, so say we of the unconverted and their frivolities! But the case is otherwise with the children of God! O man of God, run not with the multitude! Wantonness, chambering, lewdness and unclean mirth are not for you. No, let them not be mentioned among you as becomes saints.

I would also have you avoid, as much as possible, the company of those who deaden your spirituality. I like to drop into the house of the poorest Christian man whose conversation will edify me. But though a man may be richer than I am, and his company may be desirable to me in many ways, if I find, on coming out of his house, that he has insinuated doubts into my mind, or that his language has tainted the purity of my conscience, I am bound to avoid him. If business calls me into connection with him, I must go, or else I must go out of the world, but I will not seek, as my companion, any man who in any measure takes me off from keeping myself in the love of God.

Neither should we read books which have an injurious effect upon the mind. I wish some of our younger friends would take good heed to this remark. You have little enough of the love of God in your soulsyou do not need to pour cold water on it by emptying trashy novels upon it. Go not into the chill, cold air of irreligion and vanity! Brothers and Sisters, put everything aside that would hinder your loving God and knowing that He loves you. And if you have erred and you find out, this morning, that you have done so, do not be angry at my rebuke, nor yet be led to despair of yourselffor the times of your ignorance God winks at and forgives!

Go to your heavenly Father and say, O Lord, help me to make this the rule of my conductthat whatever prevents my feeling that You love me, and prevents my loving You, I may withdraw from at once and have nothing more to do with it, for You have bid me keep myself in Your love. If you would love the Lord, meditate much upon what He is and what He has done for you. Your debts to Him are overwhelmingtry to feel them and you will love Him because He first loved you. See your daily dependence, your hourly indebtedness and the patience, constancy, faithfulness and tenderness with which He cares for you! Here I need not enlarge, for you will not fail to do this if you are, indeed, the subjects of Divine Grace.

Next, dear Friends, if you want to be kept in the love of God, follow earnestly the means of Grace. Do not neglect the hearing of the Word, nor the reading of it in private, nor secret prayer, nor the assembling of yourselves together. Come often to the Lords Tableyou will find it a very blessed means of quickening the pulse of your soul. There are Gods appointed ordinances for stirring up your lovedo not be so proud as to think you can do without them. I fear there are some Christians who are so busy in doing good that they do not allow themselves opportunities of getting good. Incessantly do I urge Christian people here to be engaged in some work for Christ and I would urge it again and again. But some of you young people ought not to absent yourselves from public worship in order to go and teach in ragged schools or elsewhereyou have not yet enough knowledge, nor enough strength to be able to bear the frequent loss of the instructive ordinances.

And even those of you who can bear to go upon half rations will be wise not to do so, for a man who works so long every day that he does not sleep enough, or eat enough, will, in the long run, be less capable of labor than if he had attempted less and had taken more time for the feeding and resting of his body. Do remember that Martha, though she was very busy, was not so much commended as Mary, who sat at Jesus feet. Be busy as Martha, but be devout as Mary and so will you keep your heart in the love of God! You will do this very much, too, by communing with the Lord. Never spend a day without hearing your Masters voice! Do not come down

from your chamber to see the face of man till you have seen the face of God. Do not let week after week roll by without communion with Heaven.

There is no trading like itsend the ships of prayer to the gold coast of communion with the Lord and they will come back to you with priceless treasures! Hold high communion with the supreme Invisible and your soul will be sure to love Him, for never man drew near to God without the love of God flowing into his soul. Then I would say next, if you would love God, be sure to work for Him. If I wanted a man to love me and I had my choice of two things, either to do something for the man or to let that man do something for meif my sole object were to secure his love, I know which I would doI would let him serve me.

If you do a kindness for a man, he may be ungrateful and forget you, but if you let him do something for you, the more he does for you the more he will stick to you through life. For this reason, therefore, you will not only love God because of what He has done for you, but you will love Him because you have been allowed to do something for Him. Read the song of Deborah when she and Barak had chased away the adversaries. You do not read much in Judges about love to God, but at the end of her song you find it appearingSo let all Your enemies perish, O Lord: but let them that love You be as the sun when he goes forth in his might.

She felt that she loved God because she had bravely led, with Barak, the host of God, and love to God had been kindled while she was battling for Him. Go and teach the ignorant, visit the sick, help the poor and guide those that are out of the wayand though you thought you did not love Christ, you will soon discover that you do. Laziness is a bolster with which to suffocate love, but honest service of Jesus Christ is a platform upon which love shows herself in all her beauty and there, also, she gathers her strength. O love the Lord, all you His saints!

And if you need yet another means of keeping in His love, then live in expectation of seeing Him. Nothing inflames a Christians love more than feeling how much he owes in the past and how much he expects in the future. Jesus is coming! You are soon to be with Him! Perhaps before another week is over you will behold His face! Surely you feel, even now, the kindling of warm desirea passion for Him springs up within your spirit and you long for the lagging days to flythat you may be in His arms! Keep yourselves thus in His love. May God help you so to do, for Jesus Christs sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMONJohn 15.** HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK766, 804, 811. Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.  
Sermon #3378 Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit 1

GODS PRISON, WARDEN AND PRISONER   
NO. 3378

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1913.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 4, 1866.

Keep yourselves in the love of God.   
Jude:21st verse.

THIS exhortation is not addressed to all who are here present. It is only addressed to those who are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called. It is, in fact, addressed only to the true Christian who has passed from death unto lifewho is a new creature in Christ Jesusand in whom dwells the Holy Spirit. To such persons the Apostle Jude says in the text, Keep yourselves in the love of God. To other persons we have this to sayYou cannot keep yourselves in the love of God, for you never knew what it was to be in it. You have livedwith shame and sorrow be it spokenyou have lived all this while in a world that is full of God and yet you have never perceived Him! You have been a pensioner upon His bounty, clothed by His charity, protected by His Providence and yet you have been altogether forgetful of the God whom you ought to have loved with all your heart, soul and strength! Ah, little do you know what you have lost by living without the love of God! The love of God is that which fills our mortal existence with the brightness of Heaven and makes us feast on immortal joys, even in this vale of tears! If some men were born and bred in mines, where they saw not the light of day, I can suppose that they would think themselves possibly better off than those who had lived above and who had walked abroad in the light. I can suppose them to be even conceited because they found themselves better able to find their way about in the gloomy caverns below than those would be whose eyes had been used to the lightmore at home there in the gloomy bowels of the earth than the sons of light who had lived above. I can imagine their getting much conceit to themselves because of their enjoying the darkness which is beneath. But still, what a miserable life would it always be to live in that gloomand what a change to be taken suddenly and for the first time from the dark pit out into the lightto look upon the green fields, the god of day, the flashing waves of the sea and the glories of the starry night! So I can conceive many of my hearers having lived so long in the dark world where there is no light, that they have acquired the art of living in this gloom until they are wiser in their generation than the children of light. They can do a thousand things better than Gods people can do and they, therefore, perhaps despise the Christian. But oh, my Friends, if you could but be brought out into the world of love, the world of light, where God, the blessed Sun of Love who floods the earth with peace and blessedness could shine upon those darkened eyeballs of yoursif you could but know the love of Christ which passes knowledgeyou would think that you had never lived before and would pity yourselves to think you could have spent so many years without knowing what true life means! May that come to pass with some tonight! Pray, Christian, pray for those who know not God, that He may be found of them. Ask for them that mighty Grace may come and meet with them and that they may also begin to understand what the love of God means!

But the text is spoken to Christians and we must keep it to them and come at once to apply it to the Believer.   
The word, keep, which is used here, has in it, in the Greek, the idea of keeping under a guard, or of keeping a prisoner in custody. There is the thought of watchfully regarding one who is likely to escapeand so we are told to keep ourselves in the love of God as the warden keeps his prisoner in his cell. I do not like to use such a metaphor in connection with so sweet a text, and yet I must, and so we will have three thoughts. First, we will speak a little about this prisonoh, that we may be always shut up in it!the love of God. Secondly, about the earnest warden who is told to keep the prisoner. And then, thirdly, about the free prisoners, keep yourselves in the love of God. Keep yourselves in heavenly custody, being never so free and never so happy, as when shut up in this Divine enclosure!   
I really do not like to use the text with such a meaning, but I cannot very well bring out the meaning of it in any better way. Let us speak, then, first of   
I. THE HEAVENLY PRISON OF THE LOVE OF GOD.   
There is no restraint about this prison. He who gets into it finds, for the first time, true liberty! Then his mind is free from all its bondage. Then his faculties find themselves in a sea where they may swim. Then are his purest longings gratified. Then are his passions allowed to take wing and mount as they will. Then the soul has space to float onwards and when it comes fully to the love of God, the new-born soul is in its element!  
But what is the meaning of this love of God, in which we are to keep ourselves? It means, first, Believer, that you are to

keep your mind in the remembrance of the love of God to you. We, alas, forget too often what a Friend we have above. Keep up, Christian, the recollection of what the Father did for you when He chose you before all worlds! Be continually mindful of what the Son did for you when He poured out His precious blood upon the Cross and gave His life a ransom for many. Never be unmindful of what the Holy Spirit did for you when He called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. About the neck of memory let the glittering pearls of Gods mercy always hang! Take care, whatever else you may forget, that you forget not the love of God to you! As the Krishna said   
*Let every idol be forgotten,   
But oh, my Soul, forget Him not.*   
Let your ear be bored to this doorpost of Gods love to you! Set this as a seal upon your arm and as a ring upon your finger. Brand it into your inmost heart and let your souls core always wear in it the thought of Gods love to you. Queen Mary said that when she died they would find the word, Calais, written upon her heart, for the loss of that town had grieved her so. But while the Christian livesfor he shall not diethere shall always be engraved upon his heart the name of Christ, for the love of Christ shall abide there! Yes, we will remember Youwe will remember Your love, for Your love is better than wine!   
The Apostle means, tooKeep yourselves in the assurance of the Divine Love. Brothers and Sisters, you have known that Christ loves you. You have had it proven to you as clearly as a mathematical demonstration, that God loves you. You have even been able to speak in the singular, and say, He loved me, and gave Himself for me. There have been blessed moments when no ripple of doubt disturbed the glossy surface of your calm and peaceful soul. Oh, keep that assurance! Pray that no evil doubt may come in to make you think that God does not love you. Ask that you may be always able to say, This is my Beloved: my Beloved is mine, and I am His. Do not sometimes climb the mountain and then slip down into the treacherous mists of the valley, but ask that you may always bathe your forehead in the sunlight of the Divine Assurance of the love of God to you! And so keep yourselves in the love of God.   
It means next, keep yourselves in the enjoyment of the love of God. No one knows what the enjoyment of the Divine Love is but the man who has experienced it. Oh, the calm which a sense of that Divine Love will bring to the heart! Our Lord said to the noisy billows of the lake, Be still, and they quickly hushed their raging and there was a great calm! But the love of Christ is more than peacefulit is joyful, it is inspiring! The man who has it has a cup filled to the brim and running over! And he who drinks of that holy chalice can say, There is none like it. Like the water of the well of Bethlehem by the gate, if any of Gods people should not be able to get at it, they will sigh for it and say, Oh, that one would give me a drink of that water again! Some of us know what mirth meanswe are of a genial nature and can enter into the common joys of men. We can sit around the social hearth and feel the joys of childhoods prattle and the glee of the little ones. We thank God we are not stoics we can share the joys that are common to mankind, but oh, we do proclaim and bear our witness that all the joys of earth heaped together are as nothing compared with the bliss of having the love of God shed abroad in the heart! The others are but common joys, but the love of God is Heavens own joy! They are but husks, which are well enough in their way, but the kernel of joy lies in a full understanding of the love of God in the soul. Oh, that we could always live upon it! That this manna dropped from Heaven every morning, that we gathered our omer of it as soon as the sun dawned and fed on it till the sun went down! Happy Christians, seek to keep yourselves thus in the love of God!   
But, Brothers and Sisters, this is not all. The Apostle also means, Keep yourselves in the power of the love of God. Oh, the power of the love of God has in governing and influencing a man! Nothing can master a strong temper, a forceful will, an obstinate disposition, or a wayward heart like the love of God! Even Gods Law is but a frail reed compared with Gods love, which is the rod of Omnipotence. If the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, the idols will soon depart and the love of sin will take its flightand the wickedness which you and I could not conquer without it will be driven out with this two-edged sword of the power of the love of God manifested in the soul! I love to feel myself bowed down under this power until I would sacrifice my own interest, relinquish all self-seeking, abandon all care of being obedient too my own will and be passive in the hand of the Omnipotent Ruler to mold me, rule me and govern me just as He wills! We are not like the horse and the mule that have a bit in their mouths and that require the rod, but when love impels us, our willing feet in swift obedience move and we feel it to be a blessed thing to obey His commandments, or even His gentle leadings by His gracious Spirit!   
Brothers and Sisters, I pray you take this exhortation in its practical, as well as its experimental form. Keep yourselves in the love of God, in the manifestation of it. Love the souls of your fellow men! Pity the poor and needy. Have compassion upon the ignorant and the wicked. Let no strangeness nor excess of sin prevent your loving the sinnerand let no extravagance or unkindness prevent your forgiving one another even unto 70 times seven! Keep yourselves in the love of Christ under provocations as multiplied as those which fell upon your Masters shoulders and so prove that your charity suffers long and is kind, hopes all things, endures all things because it is not mere human charity, beautiful as that is, but is the love of God reigning and commanding your heart! Keep yourselves in the love of God in your relations one to another. May no root of bitterness spring up in this Church, nor in any other. Love one another as one happy family. Love one another, for you will have to dwell together forever in Heaven! Bear with each other, as you hope to be borne with by your loving Savior. Be knit together in brotherly love! Be as one manbe forceful like a phalanx of soldiers marching on to victory. Let the love of God reign in your hearts! Let it gleam from your eyes! Let it flash radiantly from your countenance! Let it bedew your lips and let its savor sweeten your words! Let it give a holy blessedness to your deeds and your thoughts!   
Keep yourselves, in all these senses, in the love of God. It is a wondrous prison for a man to be in a blessed paradise for him to walk in. Paradise had a gate and once Adam never wanted to get out of itjust in that sense keep yourselves in this blessed paradise of the love of God and wander not from it. And now, secondly and briefly, let us say two or three words about   
II. THE EARNEST WARDEN WHO IS TO KEEP HIMSELF IN THE LOVE OF GOD.   
This warden is not the minister. The minister has to preach and assist me, but the minister is not to take care of my soul as though I had nothing to do with it. I do not believe in any such nonsense as that you can be responsible for other peoples souls, so that others may assist you with their vigilance. Never, I beseech you, Englishmen and Englishwomen, never be such fools as to put yourselves at the feet of a priest! Believe that you have as much prevalence with God as these pretenders have and that if you go to God, and take your burden of sin, you will get it taken offbut if you go roundabout to seek relief and pardon through themyou will never get it, for you insult God in the way by which you go to work! Oh, may God grant that we may never live to see our countrymen so befooled as to put their necks under the Romish yoke once again! May England never be beneath a Popes feet, but may we always have too much manliness ever to fall to the snare of this cunning fowler! May we always be kept from it and so may always keep ourselves in the love of God.  
And now, Mr. Warden, we are to say a word or two to you. See, then, your prisoner. He is one, alas, who is very apt at escaping from the gracious prison. So infatuated does he become with worldly joys that he will oftentimes let his God, his Savior, go. And besides this, there are many who are prison breakers and who will break his prison bars for him. Shall I tell you their names? There is one fellow called sin. Sin will soon prevent your enjoying the love of God. Let the Christian hesitate to walk disorderly and he will soon begin to talk lightly of his wickedness, and this, again, will soon stop his communion with God. Though the Christian shall not perish, yet many of his joys shallthough God will keep him so that he shall not be utterly destroyedyet the gladsome sense of the love of God will soon depart when sin comes in to lead astray!   
And so it shall be when another breaks the prison, namely, those under the command of idolatry. Let your hearts begin to idolize an earthborn creature and very soon you will not be able to keep yourselves in the love of God. Father, that dear child of yours may become as much an idol to you as even the golden calf was to the Israelites! Husband, wife, friends, acquaintances, brothers, sisters, our goods, our persons, our fame, our reputationany one of these may become our idoland when this is the case, there is no keeping the heart in the love of God, for the prison doors are opened and the prisoner, unhappily, comes out.   
Warden, if you would keep your prisoner, remember he cannot well come out except through the doors, and, therefore, watch well the door by which he has communications with the outward world. If you would keep yourself in the love of God, Christian, watch yourself well when you are in business! Watch yourself when you are in the family. Watch the door in private. Watch the communications which you have with the ungodlyand as it is here that you would be apt to fritter away your joys and lose the richness of your communionbe the more watchful here. And, Warden, watch in the night, when it is dark in your soul, for many a prisoner has made his escape at nightfall. Watch well when trouble comes, lest doubts and fears should come in. And if you would lock your prisoner securely in and keep him from escaping from the allsurrounding love of God, watch yourself carefully at all times, lest by any means you slip from this good way!

And, Warden, I would recommend you to take care that every bolt in the prison door is securely fastened. God has given you certain Gospel ordinances and if you would keep yourself in the love of God, read His Word, for it will stir you up to bind yourself to Him! Be much in private prayer, for this has a force like a bolt to keep out the world and keep you in.   
Come to the Communion Table, for at the time when Christ is known in the breaking of bread, another bolt is put between you and the world! In fine, whatever He says unto you, do it, for in keeping of His commandments there is great reward.   
And, Warden, since you have a prisoner to keep who needs much watching, load him well with chains. Do you think this is a hard suggestion? The chains are such that the more of them the prisoner wears, the more free, light, and happy he will be! Shall I tell you how to forge them? Forge them on the anvil of meditation! Think of what God did before the earth was. Think of eternal love before the day star had begun to shine. Think of what Jesus did for you in the Covenant and in the suretyship engagements of eternity! Bind about your soul the chain of the Saviors pangs and griefs. If you would keep your heart a blessed prisoner in the love of God, nail it with nails which pierced the hands of Christ and bind it to the pillar where the Lord was scourged! Make every drop of blood which Jesus sweat in the Garden and shed upon the Cross, to be a course of mighty network bound about your heart to hold it a fast prisoner forever!   
Oh Brothers and Sisters, we have indeed enough to bind us to Christ if we were not the most willfully forgetful men and women in the world! Oh, what has Jesus done for me? Rather, what has He not done for me? He is All-in-All and being to me more than all, let me bind the sacrifice with cords, even with cords to the horns of the altar! Let the hands of a man and the cords of love be cast about this prisoner so that he may never get out of the Divine enclosure of the love of God!  
I cannot set before you as I would, nor with all the earnestness I want to command, the necessity of thus binding your heart to the love of Christ, but I will add this. Warden, take care to call in help and remember there is One who can help you very efficiently. It is the Holy Spirit. You keep yourself in the love of God? Indeed, you cannot do it unless you call in Divine Power. If ever you get the love of God in your heart, go down on your knees and ask the Holy Spirit to always keep it there! You shall never catch this bird and shall never be able to keep it unless the Holy Spirit helps you. Oh, to be crucified with Christ! We may well desire it to be fastened to His Cross so that we shall never again desire to wander, but feel ourselves the happy bond-slaves, the free servants of our Lord Jesus Christ! And now, time flies and we have, thirdly, to say a word or two about   
III. THE FREE, THE HAPPY AND THE BLESSED PRISONER who is thus exhorted to keep himself in the love of God.   
My dear Brothers and Sisters, if by the help of God we shall be able to do this, how happy we shall be. I would make no stipulation of any kind if God would grant me one request, namely, that He would keep me in His love. If I might but have this request granted, I am sure it would be equal to me whether He may have appointed me life or death, or whether He may have appointed me weal or woe! It would make no difference where one lived, if one lived in the love of God!   
It would make no difference, either, whether one were in wealth or poverty, if the love of Christ had consumed all care about self. When once the love of God, like a devouring flame, has consumed and destroyed all care about self, then we are perfectly happy. It is impossible to then be miserableall that the heart wants is to be kept in the love of Godfor then it would always be in a state of true blessedness! Dear Brothers and Sisters, how important it is that we should be happy! Moses, without the brightness of his face, would be little more than other men. And a Christian without holy joywhat is he? I am certain that nothing has done more mischief to Christianity than the loss of joy of some professors. Why, there are some of you that only dishonor your religion by your constant moans and groans! If we are not happy, who ought to be? Children of God, heirs of Heaven, accepted in the Belovedall our sins forgiven and we ourselves on the way to Heavenif we do not sing, who can sing? If there is no holy mirth in our hearts, no joyous songs set to glorious tunes in our souls as we go along our pilgrimage to Heaven, then it must be a miserable world indeed! But a happy Christian entices others to Christ. His very face and bearing are a Gospel ministry of invitation to others. And those otters say, We will go with you, for we perceive that the Lord is with you.   
And there is another thing. If you are kept in the love of God, besides being happy, you will be so useful. If we do not enjoy the love of God, ourselves, we cannot do much good to others. You will be blessed to your families. You will be blessed to the ungodly and you will be blessed wherever you are if you are kept in the love of God. I can conceive that a man with the love of God in his heart, if he saw a stranger here, would be pretty sure to have a word with him and, perhaps, the stranger would be very glad. I am sure there are here every Sunday a great many people who would be quite willing to have a little talk about Divine things and to whom a little private conversation might be far more useful than any sermon that I could deliver. You who have the love of God in you will look after suchyou cannot help it. You love, and God loves. God is blessing you and you want to bless menand you will pine and pant to bring others to the Savior! I need you, the members of this Church, particularly to have the love of God in your hearts just now, so that these daily Prayer Meetings of ours may be seasons of great and miraculous power! When a cold heart comes into the Prayer Meeting, if it does not hinder, at any rate it brings no helpbut every warm and loving heart that comes increases the general fire. You each bring your bundle of wood, as it were, and put it on the hearth, and so it makes one great blaze! Oh, when a thousand hearts that are full of love come together, then prayer is sure to speed!   
If your heart is full of the love of God, it will keep on going up to Heaven in prayer, even when you are at your business or your work, as well as when you are in the House of God. Brothers and Sisters, we shall yet have great times! God is going to bless us and we shall see greater things than the world has ever beheld since the day of Pentecost! I trust we are seeking for it and expecting itand if so, we shall get it! Let us seek to have the blessing in ourselves and ask to be kept in the love of God!   
It would not do for the farmer to have his men ill in harvest timethey must be strong and hearty and robust when they have to reap. Oh, that you and I may be made strong to reap here! At such times they bring out the big bottle and though some of us do not think that that is the best thing that could be done for the workman, yet I would like, tonight, to bring out among you the big bottles of the promises of God of which you may drink without any fear of getting intoxicated! Oh, that you could drink of such a promise as this, I will be with you, and then, full of strength, go out into the fields and work for Christ without weariness! When Heaven begins to open its golden gates and throw open its windows, and cast out its blessings, then, at all events, let us open the doors of our hearts, throw them wide open in expectancy and open the doors of our mouths wide that God may fill them! Let us come up to this House and go to our own houses, too, with the love of God plenteously shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit and let this be always our prayer   
*Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove,   
With all Your quickening powers.   
Come, shed abroad a Saviors love,   
And that shall kindle ours.*   
Now, to many here I am afraid I have been saying some things which are no more understood by them than Latin or Greek would be! You could not understand it, but there is one thing I want you to understand before you go tonight, and that is this, God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life, and whoever here believes in Himthat is, trusts Christ to save himshall not perish, but have everlasting life! Whatever his past life may have been, however black his character may be, if he will but come to the Heavenly Father, through Christ, trusting in Christ who bore the punishment for sin, such a man or woman or child shall be forgiven! They shall be saved, shall be made a new creature, shall go on their way rejoicing! And they will be filled with the love of God and, with all the blood-washed, shall pass through the pearly gatesand in Heaven shall join with them in singing of the love of God, world without end! May you and I have a portion there, for Christs sake.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: **JOHN 14.**

Verse 1. Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in Me. You will be troubledthat cannot be helped. But let not your heart be troubled. You are like a ship and all the water in the sea cannot hurt a ship if it is kept outside of her. Let not your heart be troubled. How are you to prevent it? Faith is the remedy. You already believebelieve more. You believe in God, believe also in Me. You have a trust in the infinite power of Godbelieve in Me as the Incarnation of His infinite love.

2. In My Fathers house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. There is no room for you on earththere will be in Heaven. If troubles should so multiply that it seems impossible to live in them, you shall be carried away where you shall live above them. In My Fathers house are many mansions. You may depend upon the love of Christ, Beloved, for if there were anything dark, mysterious, or distressing which would lead you to despair, He would not have kept it back. He treats you frankly. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go and you are sorry that I go. It is one source of your sorrow. But I go to prepare place for you.

3. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. Oh, this is ground for sweet comfort, and it ought to yield it to us tonight! He has gone, but He will come again. He has not left us forever. Space divides us for awhile, but, skipping over the mountains like a roe and a young hart, He will come again, even to this poor world and to us, His waiting Church, He will come again. Therefore, have patience. Let not your heart be troubled. Jesus Christ will come very soon.

4. And where I go, you know, and the way you know. You know where Christ is gone. You know how to get at Him. The Throne on which He sits is the Throne of Grace. He is gone to the Father, and your prayers will find the Father. You know the way. Then frequent it and though as yet in your bodies you cannot reach Him, yet in spirit you can. Where I go you know, and the way you know.

5. Thomas said unto Him, Lord, we know not where You go; and how can we know the way? Which was a contradiction of His Master, which Thomas ought not to have uttered! He should have put it much rather in the form of a question for explanation, than of such a flat denial. His Master said, Where I go you know. Thomas said, We know not where You go. We must take care that we do not contradict Christ! Our unbelief would be shamed out of us if we were to look at it and examine it. I am persuaded that your faith will be justified the more you examine it, till you will discover that faith in God is nothing, after all, but sanctified commonsense! So unbelief will appear to be more shameful the more you examine it, till you discover at length that it is nothing but garish folly. An outrage upon the first principles of wisdom is distrust of God!

6, 7. Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also: and from now on you know Him, and have seen Him. This, then, is the main point of knowledge with usto know Christ. All the studies in the world are vain compared with the study of Christ Crucified! This is the most excellent of all the sciences. He that knows Christ, knows the way, the truth, the life, yes, and God Himself!

8, 9. Philip said to Him, Lord show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us. Jesus said to him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet have you not known Me, Philip? He that has seen Me has seen the Father; and why do you say, then, Show us the Father? The best view of God we can ever have is Christ! In the Person of His Son there is more seen of God than in all Natureyes and in all history added to Nature! God has given us a full-length portrait of Himself in Jesus, while in all His works, we have no more than a mere miniature of Him. Oh, that we knew Christ more! Then should we know the Father.

10-12. Believe you not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwells in Me, He does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believes on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do because I go to My Father. Oh, what strength there is in faith! These are the same people who are not to be troubled. They are to rise so much above trouble of heart that they are to become performers of works like Christs! Yes, and since Christ has gone and He has endowed us with the Holy Spirit, we are to do yet greater works than He did! Oh, to know the possibilities of our natureto know what God can do by us! What appears to us as we are, as unable to be done, we may be enabled to do through the spirit of God which is in Christ Jesus.

13, 14. And whatever you shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the

Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask anything in My name, I will do it. It does not mean that every prayer will be answered. The power to ask a thing in Christs name is not given to everybody. It is not merely to say at the end of your prayer, for Christs sake. It is another thingit is to be able to feel that as Christ stood in your place, so you dare stand in Christs placeand what you have asked, you have asked in His name, feeling that what you have asked is such that Christ would have asked it. Now, when you can feel that, and can feel that Christ puts His seal on what you have asked, then you ask in His name! A person cannot always speak in the name of anothercannot do it at all unless he has received an authorization to do so. Then he stands as that persons deputystands in his placespeaks in his name. I am sure that nine out of ten of the prayers of Christians are not offered in the name of Christ and could not be! It would be a sin against Christ for such prayers to be supposed to be the prayers of Christ! But when we talk of the Spirit of God, and we dare ask in the name and use the seal of Christto set His signature at the bottom of our petition, then, Brothers and Sisters, depend upon itChrist will do it!

15. If you love Me, keep My commandments. Oh, some of us would have liked Him to have said, If you love Me, give all your money! Go into a convent! If you love Me, perform some wonderful action. Go into the streets and preach where you will be hooted. Go to some foreign country and get yourself made a martyr. No, no! If you love Me, keep My commandments. Stay at home near your father and mother. If you love Me, love My disciples. Let love rule you. And in that place in life in which I have set you, try to honor My name by exhibiting My Character. If you love Me, keep My commandments.

16-19. And 1 will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you forever. Even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees Him not, neither knows Him: but you know Him: for He dwells with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world sees Me no more; but you see Me: because I live, you shall live also. Yet a little while and the world sees Me no more; but you see Me. Now, when the world does not see Him, we still see Him. He is present to our faith, though passing from our sight. Because I live, you shall live also. Is He a dead Christ? Then He has a dead people for His Church. He is a living Savior! He has a living people and they shall no more die than He shall die, for He, being raised from the dead, dies no more; death has no more dominion over Him. Because I live, you shall live also.

20 *.* At that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in You. What a wonderful union this isChrist in the Father, the saints in Christ and Christ in the saints! These are riddles which are not meant for the children of this worldbut they who are the children of God shall understand them, shall live upon them!

21. He that has My commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves Me. Not He that preaches about them, talks much about them, boasts about a higher life and all sorts of things, but, He that has My commandments and keeps them, He it is that loves Me: and he that loves Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.

21, 22. And He that loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him. Judas said unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself unto us, and not unto the world? If you do manifest Yourself to us, who are only a few poor fishermen, You do not extend Your Kingdom much. But if You would manifest Yourself to the world in all Your Glory, surely they would be surprised and overwhelmed, and Your Kingdom would thus come. But that is not Christs way. His manifestations are for His own: not for glitter, but for edification. He comes to bless themnot that He may be ostentatious among men.

23. Jesus answered and said to him, If a man loves Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him. Oh, what an honored man thatfor the Father and the Son to be his gueststo make an abode in his heart!

24-28. He that loves Me not keeps not My sayings; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Fathers which sent Me. These things have I spoken unto you being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world gives, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. You have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If you loved Me, you would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for My Father is greater than I. Christ had stooped to take a lower place for our sakes.

29-31. And now I have told you before it comes to pass, that when it is come to pass, you might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world comes, and has nothing in Me. But that the world may know that I love the Father: and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go from here.

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Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen. Jude 1:24,25.

THE point and pith of what I may have to say will lie in the alteration of this text caused by the revision of the New Testament. The Revised Version runs thus, Now unto Him that is able to guard you from stumbling. I am not going to speak at any length upon the rest of the text, but shall dwell mainly upon this remarkable alteration, which certainly gives the meaning of the original better than the rendering in the Authorized Version.

To begin, then, here is a doxology. Jude is writing upon very practical subjects, indeed. His short Epistle is of the most practical kind, but he cannot finish it without a doxology of praise. Is there any work which we should complete without praise to God? Prayer should always have praise mingled with it. The preaching of the Gospel, or the writing of it. The teaching of the young and every other form of Christian service should be combined with the spirit of praise. I think that I may say of praise what we read of salt in the Old Testamentsalt without prescribing how much. You cannot have too much of praise! With all your offerings you shall offer salt, and, with all your offerings you shall offer praise. It seems delightful to me to notice how the Apostle Paul stops almost in the midst of a sentence to bow his knees and utter a doxology of praise to his God. And here Jude, with burning words denouncing sin, and urging Believers to purity, cannot conclude his Epistle without saying, Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.

Beloved Friends, we may well continue to praise God, for our God continues to give us causes for praise! If we will only think, we shall begin to thank! If we will only consider, even, the mercies of the present, we shall break out with ascriptions of praise to Him. At this very moment, every Believer here has a reason for a doxology. My text begins with, Now, and closes with, now and forever. The praise of God should be given at the present time and it is to be perpetually carried ontherefore now is the time for it to be renderedboth now and forever. Amen.

Consider, then, dear Brother or Sister, you have at this moment a cause for ascribing praise to God, and you have this reason for it, at any rate, that He is able to guard you from stumblingHis ability is to be employed for your good! His power is intended for your keeping! Oh, sing unto the Lord a now song, tonight, with heart and soul bless Him who is able to guard you from stumbling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy!

I. Coming to the text at once, I shall notice, first, THE DANGER TO BE DREADED. It is stumbling. What is that?   
Well, first of all, it is a lesser form of falling. A horse may stumble and not fallyet it is a sort of falling. If there is much stumbling, it will be a fall! Now, there are faults to which the child of God is very liable, which do not amount to actual fallingbut they are stumblings. Like David, we have to say, My feet were almost gone; my steps had well near slipped. We are not actually down, but it is a wonder that we are not. We have not broken our knees, but we were within an inch of doing so! A little more and we would have fallen to our serious hurt. The text speaks of, Him that is able to guard you from stumblingto preserve you from the smallest form of grieving the Spirit, or the faintest trace of sin which would not amount to a fall. The Lord can keep you from that which is not a fall, but which might lead to it. I want to set a high standard before you tonight. Jude does not say that you are able to guard yourselves from stumbling, for you are notbut the ascription of praise is to Him who is able to guard you, even, from stumbling, and to present you, not only pardoned, but faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy!   
Stumbling is, next, not only a form of falling, and a matter, therefore, to be grieved over, but it is a prelude to falling. Oftentimes we first stumble and then, after a while, down we go! If we could recover ourselves from the stumble, we should not have to gather ourselves up from the fall. Long before the child of God falls into public sin and injures his character, those who watch him will have perceived his stumbling. He stayed up, just stayed upbut you wondered that he did. He kept on, perhaps for months, but as you looked at him, you said to yourself, I am afraid that he will come to something worse. I feel sure that he will have a stumble, and another stumble, and then another stumble. And he will be down, byand-by. Oh, that a child of God could notice his own stumblings! Then he would soon be delivered from them! But it is too often with us, to change the metaphor, as Hosea says, Gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knows it not. He is getting feeble, he is becoming prematurely old, but he has not seen the change in the color of his hair! He has not looked in the glass of the Word lately, so he is unconscious that he is declining. If Satan cannot conquer Mansoul by storming it, he sometimes triumphs by sapping and mining, gradually undermining the walls and getting a secret entrance in that way. May the Lord make us very watchfulthat we may not be ignorant of Satans devicesand may our Savior guard us, even, from stumblingfor then we shall be kept from falling!   
I think that I can put this matter pretty plainly. You must have known, you must have read of, or you must have seen some people whom you believe to be true and real Christians. And in their lives there is nothing glaringly wrong, nothing that is so offensive that they can be excluded from the Church, or for which their Christian friends would condemn them as hypocrites. Yet, somehow, their lives are, to say the least, questionable, doubtful. There is good in them, but that good is blotted. We trust that there is in them a true desire to be right, but there are so many sad failures in their lives that they seem to stumble to Heaven rather than to run there! Now, our desire is that our life may not be of that kind and, therefore, we would lay hold upon this text and plead it before the Throne of God, Lord, You are able to guard us from stumbling, be pleased to do so, to the praise of the glory of Your Grace!   
You will see that stumbling is itself a form of evil, if you think of another phase of it. There were some who stumbled at the doctrine of Christ in His own day. He had a number of followers who kept with Him up to a certain point. But when the Savior said, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you, they went back and walked no more with Him. They could not understand what He meant and they murmured, saying, How can this Man give us His flesh to eat? So, being staggered and stumbled at the depth of this great mystery, they turned aside and walked no more with Him.   
Beloved, we need God so to uphold us and guard us that, whatever the teaching of His Holy Word may be, we shall receive it without a doubt. I know that there are some Christian people who stumble at one doctrine, especially if they hear somebody denounce it. And there are others who are staggered at another doctrine because they have met some very wise man who knows better than the Word of God and says that it cannot be true! In these days there is very great liability to this kind of stumbling, especially among Christians who do not read their Bibles muchand, I am sorry to say, that there are plenty of such Christians! They read magazines, or perhaps works of fiction, rather than the sure Word of God! And they are thus easily caught in the snare of the fowler.   
Many professing Christians do not know what Gods Word really teaches, so they are not established in the faith. They do not know, even, the elements of the doctrines of Christthey have not examined the immutable foundations of the faithand they are staggered. And truly, the mysteries of the Kingdom of God are so deep, and the teachings of Christ are so contrary to the reasonings of flesh and blood, that we need not wonder if some are stumbled! Let us cry to Him who is able to guard us from stumbling that, with steady step, we may press on in the way of life and never be ashamed of the Truth of God, lest the Truth of God should be ashamed of us! Let us believe what the Bible says, however difficult the believing may be, because God has said it! This should always stand for us as the grand master argumentnot the reasonableness of the doctrine, not because it commends itself to our judgementbut the fact that God has said it! That ends all debate. Christ is able to guard from stumbling as to doctrine.   
Many others are stumbled at the Cross. Strange to say, the Cross of Christ has always been the stumbling stone to the ungodly and to mere professors. What? The Cross of Christ an occasion of stumbling? Why, it is the very center of Apostolic teachingWe preach Christ Crucified. Nowadays, there are two great points of attackthe one is the Inspiration of Scriptureand the other is the Substitutionary work of our Lord Jesus Christ. The enemies of the Cross will not have a crucified Savior! They stumble at that which is the very foundation of our faith! The Lord will keep us from stumbling at Christs Cross, I am quite sure. It is the rock of our refuge, the pillar of our hope!   
The Cross that Christ carried involves one for us to carry. No sooner does a Christian man become a Believer and confesses Christ in Baptism, than he is sure to meet with some who straightway revile him. He has to take up his cross. A working man among skeptical companions, a young girl in a book-folding warehouse, a wife who has an ungodly husbandas soon as they come out boldly on the side of Christ, straightway they have a cross to carryand this causes a great many to stumble. Persecution and ridicule are too much for themby-and-by they are offendedthat is, they stumble at the Cross. They would have Christ, but not any shame for Christs sake! They are like Mr. Pliable, who set out to go to the Celestial City, but when he tumbled into the Slough of Despond with Christian, he said that if he could only get out on the side nearest to his own house, Christian might have the Celestial City all to himself, for he could not go through a slough to get there! How many there are of this kindfearful onescowardly ones! But there is a God who is able to guard us from stumbling and I trust that He will do so. May we never be stumbled by anything that happens to us for Christs sake! May we take joyfully the spoiling of our goods, if need beyes, and suffer death itself if it should ever come to thatsooner than turn aside from bearing the Cross after the crucified Christ!

And this stumbling sometimes happens not only at the doctrine of Christ and at His Cross, but at the precepts He has given. If we are to be Christs, we must obey Him. You call Me Master and Lord: and you say well; for so I am. But one will stagger at one command of Christ and another at another! Though Christ bids us love one another, there are some who can do anything but love. They can give their bodies to be burned, but they have no charity. When Christ bids us walk in integrity before all mankind, there are some who can do many good things, but they like little sly practices in tradeand they stumble at Christ because of those evil ways. You know there are many ways in which people try to be as little Christians as they can be, so as just to get into Heaven. Miserable wretches, they want to save their souls and yet, after all, to follow the ways of the world! So they stumble at the precepts of the Holy Christ. They cannot put up with commands like His which lay the axe at the root of the tree. If you are kept by Him who is able to guard you from stumbling, you will love every way of Christ, and every Word of Christ, and your prayer will be, Teach me Your statutes, and your heart will willingly obey every precept of the Lord!   
Once more, there are some who are staggered by the experience of Believers. I speak, now, especially to young beginners. You have begun to be believers in Christ and you have been very, very happy. I am very glad that you are. Long may your happiness continue! But there is another who has been, perhaps, in the way of the Lord for a few months, and suddenly a depression of spirit has come over him and he says to himself, Oh, dear me, is this the way of Gods people? I remember that within a week after I had found joy and peace in believing, I began to feel the uprisings of inbred sin and I cried out, O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I did not know that such a sigh and cry could never come out of an unbelieving heartthat there must be a new heart and a right spirit within the man to whom sin is a burden and who loathes it. I did not know that, then, and I wondered whether I could be a child of God at all! Oh, there are strange experiences for those who are on the road to Heaven! You remember how John Newton sings *I asked the Lord that I might grow   
In faith, and love, and every Grace   
Might more of His salvation know,   
And seek more earnestly His face.   
I hoped that in some favored hour   
At once Hed answer my request,   
And by His loves constraining power,   
Subdue my sins, and give me rest.   
Instead of this He made me feel   
The hidden evils of my heart,   
And let the angry powers of Hell   
Assault my soul in every part.*   
The good man began to discover more and more his own sinfulness and he said, Lord, is this the way to holiness? and he was stumbled for a moment.   
O Beloved, it is only the Grace of God that can make us feel that whatever experiences we have within us, our faith looks to a living Christ who never changesand we rest in His finished work! Whether we are up or whether we are down, whether we sing or whether we sigh, we look beyond our changing moods unto Him who loved us and gave Himself for us! Yet many have been stumbled by their own inner experiences, not understanding them. There is only One who can guard us from such stumblings.   
So, then, dear Friends, to close this description of stumbling, if we are guarded from stumbling we shall certainly be kept from falling. This is an inclusive blessing. It includes preservation from falling into outward sin and, especially all final falling, all fatal falling! Christ is able to guard us from stumblingmuch more is He able to preserve us from falling away, from utterly departing from the faith. But we would do that if it were not for His guardian care. There is nothing that the worst of men have done which the best of men could not do if they were left by the Grace of God! Do not think so much of yourself as to imagine yourself incapable of even the greatest crime. That very thought proves that you are capable of committing any crime. I think that it is Mr. Cecil who says, I thought myself humble, one day, when I said that I did wonder that I should have sinned as I had done in such a way. Whereas, he said, if I had been truly humble, I should not have wondered that I sinned like that! I should have wondered at the Grace of God that kept me from even greater sin! And I should have understood that my natural tendencies all went towards eviland that the marvel was that they did not master me and lead me farther into evil than I had gone.   
Oh, Beloved, we must be kept by God, Himself, or else stumbling, fallingfoully and fatally fallingwill be our lot! From that, however, the Lord will preserve us who are truly His. So much, then, upon the danger to be dreaded.   
II. Now, I must be somewhat more brief on the second point, THE PRIVILEGE TO BE ENJOYEDNow unto Him that is able to guard you from stumbling.   
Well, beloved Friends, it is a great privilege to be guarded from stumbling, for it is a privilege that we greatly need. I was thinking of the many things that make us in danger of stumbling. There is, first, our weakness. It is the weak horse, you know, that stumbles and falls. It is out of condition, out of healthand down it goes. And we are weak, very weak. Then, consider the many roads that we have to travel. Here is a man who is a preacher, a husband, a father, a master. Some of you are tradesmen, or workmen and, beside your daily occupation, you have all your domestic relationships. Now, what you need is to be guarded all round from stumbling. We have heard of one who was all right at home, but he was very vulnerable outside his house. I have heard of another who was an excellent man in the Church, but if you had asked his wife about him, she would not have liked to describe him. A man may be a very good man at a Prayer Meeting, but he may be a very poor hand when you get him at his work. I have known some move very slowly, indeed, at that timenobody would have liked to pay them by the day. Now, it is an evil thing when a Christian is bad anywhere, but it is a grand thingand only God can enable us to attain to itwhen we do not stumble in any one of the ways which we have to go, but are always kept walking uprightly.   
And then, you know, it is the pace that makes some people stumble. See the pace we have to go at now. When I think of our dear old fathers in the country, I almost envy their quiet livesnot up too early, and seldom going to bed very latenot much to do, leading very steady sort of lives. They traveled by broad-wheeled wagons, and we fly over the ground by express trainsand need to go twice as quickly as we canand all the while we have so much to do.   
And, then, it is not only the pace, dear Friends, but it is the loads that some of you have to carry. Oh, the weights that are piled upon some of Gods people in their business! Only God can keep an overloaded heart from stumbling and the ways are very rough just now. You hardly meet anybody in trade who does not say, Ah, we have a rough bit of ground to travel over nowstones in plenty, and no steam roller! But there is One who is able to keep you from falling.   
Perhaps there are some of you who have not to travel over a rough bit of road. Your path is very smooth, you have all that heart can wish for and every comfort that you could desire. You need to be guarded from stumbling, for you are on a very slippery road. If there has been a thaw and then a frost comes on at night, the road may be very pretty to look at, but it is very bad for a horses feet, and so prosperity is a very slippery way for Gods people. The Lord must keep them from falling or they will go down with a crash.   
Then there is the length of the road as well as the other things I have mentioned. If we had to serve God only for a short time, one might easily do it, but we may have to go on for 50 years, 60 years, 70 years, 80 years. I think, sometimes, that if martyr days were to come, and they would burn me quickly, I could endure it. But it would be a terrible trial to be roasted on a slow fire! Yet our lives are often so prolonged and filled with trial and temptation, that it is like being roasted alive by a slow fire. The road is long and the pace has become very trying, so we may easily stumble. But the text gives us good cheer, for it tells us of Him that is able to guard us from stumbling.   
It is not only necessary for us to be kept, but it is very gracious on Christs part to keep us. Beloved, what if you should have this text fulfilled in you, so that, through a long and trying life, you should so live that when your enemies wanted to find fault with you, they would not know where to begin? Live so that if they look you up and down, they will have to say of you as they said of Daniel, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the Law of his God. Oh, if you should go down to the grave faultlessnot that we can, any of us, be in ourselves faultless in the sight of Godbut if you live such blameless lives that no one shall be able to say evil of you, but shall be compelled to confess that in you the life of Christ has been reflected in your measure, what a privilege it will be! And this is the privilege set before you in the textthat you shall not be stumbled.   
What distress you will be saved from if you are guarded from stumbling! A stumbling Christian has to be a sorrowing Christian. When a child of God stumbles, and knows it, he very soon takes to weeping and humbling himself in the Presence of his God. But if you are kept by the Grace of God, you will be saved from many a bitter pang, and helped to go from joy to joy and Grace to Grace.   
What a blessing such a person is to other people in the Church of God! Without saying anything against our fellow Christians, we know where our respect and confidence usually go. When we have seen Brothers and Sisters who have been upheld and sustained in trial and temptation, and have not stumbled, we take delight in them! Those of us who are younger and weaker, go and hide, as it were, under the shadow of their wings.

And what a blessing such people are to the world! Those are the true saints who help to spread the Gospel of Christ! A holy life is a missionary enterprise. An unstumbling life is an incentive to others to run along the heavenly road, trusting in the Divine Power to guard them, also, from stumbling!   
Best of all that I have to say is this, that this privilege is attainable Unto Him that is able to guard you from stumbling. Oh! says one, if I just get to Heaven, it will satisfy me. Will it? I pray you, do not talk so. Just to get in, like a tempest-tossed boat, water-logged, or like a wreck just towed into the harborwell, it is a great mercy to get to Heaven anywaybut that is a poor way of getting in! Better would it be to steam into the harbor with a fall cargo and plenty of passengers on board, and all the flags flying to the honor of the Great King and Pilot who has guarded you through the storm, that, so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.   
May it be so with you! Oh, that we may not have to send off the tugs and tow you into the harbor, but that, instead thereof, you may come in with a fleet of little ships behind you, able to say, Here am I, and the children that You have given me! This is a privilege worth having, but it cannot be attained except through Him who is able to guard you from stumbling.   
III. Now I will lead you on, in the third place, with great brevity, to remember THE POWER WHICH BESTOWS THIS PRIVILEGE.   
To be guarded from stumbling throughout a long life, is not of ourselves. It is not to be found in our own experiencenot even in the means of Grace alone. That same power that made the heavens and the earth, and keeps the earth and heavens in their places, is needed to make a Christian, and to keep him standing before the sons of men.   
Unto Him that is able to guard you from stumbling. God has this power. He has power over all circumstances. He can so arrange the trials of your life that you shall never be tempted beyond what you are able to bear. He has power, also, over Satan, so that, when he desires to sift you as wheat, the Lord can keep him back. God will not allow him to overcome you.   
Best of all, God has power over our hearts. He can keep us alive with holy zeal. He can keep us so believing, so loving, so hoping, so watching, so fully obedient that we shall not stumble at His Word, or stumble at anything else.   
Jude speaks of the only wise God, so that, Gods power is joined with wisdom. He knows your weakness and He can guard you against it. He knows your tempters and He can thrust them aside, or help you to overcome them. It is the wise God, as well as the strong God, who is able to guard you from stumbling. He knows where the stumbling stones are and where your weakness isand He can and He will bring you safely through.   
Yet once more, the One who guards us from stumbling is our Savior as well as the only wise God. It is His business to save you. It is His office to save youand save you He will! Commit yourself tonight to His guardian care, and walk with him. That is a high favor, that you may not only be kept from falling, but even be guarded from stumbling, to the praise and glory of His Grace.   
I have been very brief where I should have liked to enlarge.   
IV. I finish with this point, THE GLORY WHICH IS DUE TO CHRIST FOR THIS PRIVILEGE. If we are guarded from stumbling, we may take no credit to ourselves, but we must lay the crown at the feet of Him to whom the power belongs.   
If He has kept us from stumbling until now, let us praise Him for the past! Oh, what a mercy to have had this keeping year after year! Notwithstanding many imperfections and follies, which we have had to confess, yet we have been kept from any grievous stumbling that would have dishonored the holy name of Christ! Bless God, tonight, that you have been kept from stumbling, today. I do not know where you have been, but I have no doubt you have been where you might have slipped if you had been left by the Spirit of God! You have been in the shop. You have been in the home. You have been in the street. You have been on the Exchange. You have been among ungodly men. Yes, and even among Christian men, you can soon commit yourself and trip up. If you have been kept, today, do not say, How good I am! No, no, no! Say, Now unto Him who has guarded me from stumbling, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.   
Now, will you begin to praise Him for the future as well? You have not experienced it, yet, but remember that verse which we often sing *And a new song is in my mouth,   
To long-loved music set!   
Glory to You for all the Grace   
I have not tasted yet.*   
Begin to thank the Lord that He will keep you from falling in the future! Bless Him that He will present you faultless before the Presence of His Glory with exceeding joy.  
And the next time that danger comes to you, praise Him that He can guard you from stumbling. Tomorrow morning, perhaps, you have a difficult task before you. You are looking forward, in the course of the week, to something that will be very trying. Well, praise God now, that He is able to guard you from stumbling! But oh, what a song we will give Him when we are once over the river! When we climb the celestial hills, when we enter Heaven and find ourselves among the white-robed, blood-washed throng, I wonder which of us will praise Him most? Well, let us not wait till then, but let us begin herelet us rehearse the music of the spheres now! Let us say, Now unto Him that is able to guard us from stumbling, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.   
This sermon does not belong to all of you, I am sorry to say. I wish that it did, but remember, dear Hearer, that He who can keep the saint from stumbling can bring the sinner into the right way! The same Grace that can preserve the child of God from falling into sin can bring you out of sin! And as we have to look wholly to Christ, certainly you must do so. May the Lord lead you to look, tonight, out of yourself, your feelings and your works and trust to the Lord Jesus, who died, but lives again, and lives to save guilty men!   
Whoever believes in Him has everlasting life and He will bring them into His way! And He will keep them from stumbling and present them among the rest of His blood-washed, to praise His name forever. The Lord bless this meditation for Christs sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON. **PSALM 91.**

Verse 1. He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. It is not every man who dwells there, no, not even every Christian. There are some who come to Gods House, but the man mentioned here dwells with the God of the House! There are some who worship in the outer court of the Temple, but, he that dwells in the secret place of the Most High lives in the Holy of Holieshe draws near to the Mercy Seat and stays there! He walks in the Light, as God is in the light. He is not one who is sometimes on and sometimes off, a stranger or a guest, but like a child at home he dwells in the secret place of the Most High. Oh, labor to get to that blessed position! You who know the Lord, pray that you may attain to this high condition of dwelling in the inner shrine, always near God, always overshadowed by those cherubic wings which indicate the Presence of God. If this is your position, you shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. You are not safe in the outer courts. You are not protected from all danger anywhere but within the veil. Let us come boldly there and, when we once enter, let us dwell there.

2. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust. This is a daring utterance, as if the Psalmist would claim for himself the choicest privileges of any child of God. When you hear a glorious doctrine preached, it may be very sweet to others, but the honey lies in the particular application of it to yourself. You must, like the bee, go down into the bell of the flower, yourself, and fetch out its nectar. I will say of the Lord, He is mythen come three mys, as if the Psalmist could grasp the Triune Jehovahmy refuge, my fortress, my God: in Him will I trust. What a grand word that is, My God! Can any language be loftier? Can any thought be more profound? Can any comfort be surer?

3. Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler. If you dwell near to God, you will not be deceived by Satan. In the Light of the Lord you will see light and you will discover the limed twigs and the nets and the traps that are set to catch youHe shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler.

3. And from the noisome pestilence. The pestilence is something that you cannot see. It comes creeping in and fills the air with death before you perceive its approach. But, He shall deliver you from the noisome pestilence. There is a pestilence of dangerous and accursed error abroad at this timebut if we dwell in the secret place of the Most High, it cannot affect uswe shall be beyond its power! Surely, oh, blessed word! there is no doubt about this great Truth of God, Surely, He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the noisome pestilence.

4. He shall cover you with His feathers. The Psalmist uses a wonderful metaphor when he ascribes feathers to God and compares Him to a hen, or some mother bird, under whose wings her young find shelter. Yet the condescension of God is such that He allows us to speak of Him thus He shall cover you with His feathers.

4. And under His wings shall you trust. God is to His people a strong defense and a tender defense. His wings and His feathers suggest both power and softness. God hides not His people in a casing of irontheir shelter is stronger than ironyet it is soft as the downy wings of a bird for ease and comfort. As the little chicks bury their tiny heads in the feathers of the hen and seem happy, and warm, and comfortable under their mothers wings, so shall it be with you if you dwell with your GodHe shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings shall you trust.

4. His Truth shall be your shield and buckler. Twice is he armed who has Gods Truth to be his shield and buckler.   
5. You shall not be afraid for the terror by night. Nervous as you are, and naturally timid, when you dwell near to God, your fears shall all go to sleep. That is a wonderful promiseYou shall not be afraid. If it had said, You shall have no cause for fear, it would have been a very comforting word, but this is even more cheering! You shall not be afraid for the terror by night.   
5. Nor for the arrow that flies by day. Both night and day you shall be safe. Your God will not leave you in the glare of the sun, nor will He forsake you when the dampness of night dews would put you in peril. We, dear Friends, may have secret enemies, who shoot at us, but we shall not be afraid of the arrow! There may be unseen influences that would ruin us, or cause us dishonor, or distressbut when we dwell with God, we shall not be afraid of them.   
6, 7. Nor for the pestilence that walks in darkness; nor for the destruction that wastes at noonday. A thousand shall fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you. When God takes His people to dwell in nearness to Himself and they have faith in this promise, I make no doubt that, literally, in the time of actual pestilence, they will be preserved! It is not every professing Christian, nor every Believer who attains this height of experience, but only such as believe the promise and fulfill the heavenly condition of dwelling in the secret place of the Most High. How could cholera or fever get into the secret place of the Most High? How could any arrows, how could any pestilence, ever be able to reach that secure abode of God? If you dwell there, you are invincible, invulnerable, infinitely secure!   
8-10. Only with your eyes shall you behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because you have made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the Most High, your habitation; there shall no evil befall you. There shall no evil befall you. It may have the appearance of evil, but it shall turn out to your good. There shall be but the appearance of evil, not the reality of it There shall no evil befall you.   
10, 11. Neither shall any plague come near your dwelling. For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. You remember how the devil misapplied this text to Christ. He was quite right in the application, but he was quite wrong in the quotation, for he left out the words, in all your ways. God will help us in our ways if we keep in His ways. When we meet with trouble and Providence, we ought to enquire whether we are in Gods way. That famous old Puritan, holy Mr. Dodd, having to cross a river, had to change from one boat into another and, being little used to the water, he fell in, and, when he was pulled out, in his simplicity and wisdom, he said, I hope that I am in my way. That was the only question that seemed to trouble him. If I am in my way, then God will keep me. We ought to ask ourselves, Now, am I in Gods way? Am I really moving, today, and acting, today, as Divine Providence leads me, and as duty calls me? He who travels on the kings business, by daylight, along the kings highway, may be sure of the kings protection. He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. Come here, Gabriel, Michael, and all the rest of you, says the great King of Kings to the angels around His Throne. And when they come at His call, He says, Take care of My child. Watch over him, today. He will be in perilsuffer no evil to come near him.   
12. They shall bear you up in their hands, lest you dash your foot against a stone. What royal protection we have, a guard of angels, who count it their delight and their honor to wait upon the seed-royal of the universe, for such are all the saints of God!  
13. You shall tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shall you trample under feet. Strength and mastery may be unitedThe young lion and the dragonbut the child of God shall overcome them. Talk of St. George and the dragon! We ought to think more of the saint and the dragon! It is he that dwells in the secret place of the Most High, who, by Gods help, treads upon the lion and adder and of whom it is written, The young lion and the dragon shall you trample under feet.   
14. Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him. Does God take notice of our poor love? Oh, yes, He values the love of His people, for He knows where it came fromit is a part of His own lovethe creation of His Grace!   
14. I will set him on high, because he has known My name. Does God value such feeble and imperfect knowledge of His name as we possess? Yes, and He rewards that knowledgeI will set him on high.   
15. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him. Notice, that it is, He shall, and, I will. The mighty Grace of God shall make us pray, and the Almighty God of Grace will answer our prayerHe shall call upon Me, and I will answer him. How I love these glorious shalls and wills!   
15. I will be with him in trouble. Whatever that trouble is, I will be with him in it. If he is dishonored, if he is in poverty, if he is in sickness, if that sickness should drive his best friend away from his bed, still, I will be with him in trouble.   
15. I will deliver him, and honor him. God puts honor upon us, poor dishonorable worms that we are! One old Divine calls a man, a worm six feet long, and it is rather a flattering description of him, dont you think? But God says, I will deliver him, and honor him.   
16. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation. He will live as long as he wants to live. Even if he should have but few years, yet he shall have a long life, for life is to be measured by the life that is in it, not by the length along which it drags. Still, Gods children live to a far longer age than any other people in the world. They are, on the whole, a long-lived race. They who fear God are delivered from the vices which would deprive them of the vigor of life and the joy and contentment they have in God help them to live longer than others. I have often noticed how long Gods people live. Some of them are speedily taken Homestill, this text is, as a rule, literally fulfilled, With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation. He shall see Gods salvation even here! And when he dies, and wakes up in the likeness of his Lord, he will see it to the fullest. May that be the portion of each of us! Amen.

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JUDES DOXOLOGY   
NO. 2994

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 28, 1906.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON LORDS-DAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 7, 1875.

Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory   
and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen. Jude 1:24, 25.

PAULS writings abound in doxologies. You will find them in different forms scattered throughout all his Epistles. But he is not the only Apostle who thus pauses to magnify the name of God. Here is Judas, not Iscariot, but the true-hearted Jude who has been writing an Epistle which seems all ablaze with lightning, it burns so terribly against certain orders of sinners. Almost every word that Jude writes seems to have the roll of thunder in ithe appears to be more like the Haggai of the Old Testament than the Jude of the New. Yet he cannot close his short Epistle until he has included some ascription of praise to God!

Learn from this, dear Friends, that the sin of man, if we are ever called to denounce it, should drive us to adore the goodness and glory of God. Sin defiles the world, so after you have done your best to sweep it out, resolve that, inasmuch as man has dishonored the name of God, you will seek to magnify that name. It is true that you cannot actually redress the wrong that has been done, but, at any rate, if the stream of sin has been increased, you may increase the stream of loyal and reverent praise! Take care that you do. Jude is not satisfied with having rebuked the sons of men for their sin, so he turns round to glorify his God!

Observe that these doxologies, wherever we meet with them, are not all exactly the same. They are presented to the same God and offered in the same spirit, but there are reasons given for the doxology in the one case which are not given in the other. Our morning text [Sermon No. 1266,

Volume 21PAULS DOXOLOGYRead/download the entire sermon, free of charge at

http://www.spurgeongems.org.] told us of what God is able to do and so does this. They both begin with praising Gods ability, but while Paul spoke about the greatness of that ability in what it could do for us, Jude speaks of the greatness of that ability in preserving us from falling and perfecting us so that we may be presented faultless before the Presence of the Glory of God. Let us, in an adoring frame of mind, think over this sublime subject.

I. First, LET US ADORE HIM WHO CAN KEEP US FROM FALLING. I now address myself, of course, only to Gods own people. When shall we ever see a congregation in which it will be needless to make such a remark as that? I cannot call upon some of you to adore God for keeping you from falling, for, alas, you have not yet learned to stand upright! Gods Grace has never yet been accepted by you. You are not on the Rock of Agesyou have not yet set out upon the heavenly pilgrimage. It is a wretched state for you to be inin which you cannot worship Him whom angels worship. It is a sad state of heart for any man to be in! To be excludedself-excludedfrom the general acclamations of joy in the Presence of Godbecause you feel no such joy and cannot, therefore, unite in such acclamations!   
But to the people of God, I have to say this. Dear Brothers and Sisters,

we need keeping, therefore let us adore Him who can keep us! As saved souls, we need keeping from final apostasy. Oh, says one, I thought you taught us that those who are once saved shall never finally apostatize. I do believe that doctrine and delight to preach ityet it is true that the saved ones would apostatizeeveryone of themif the Lord did not keep them! There is no stability in any Christian, considered in himself. It is the Grace of God within him that enables him to stand. I believe than the soul of man is immortal, yet not in and of itself, but only by the immortality which God bestows upon it from His essential immortality. So is it with the new life that is within us. It shall never perish, but it is only eternal because God continues to keep it alive. Your final perseverance is not the result of anything in yourself, but the result of the Grace which God continues to give you and of His eternal purpose which first chose you and of His almighty power which still keeps you alive. Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, the brightest saints on earth would fall into the lowest Hell if God did not keep them from falling! Therefore, praise Him, O you stars that shine in the Churchs sky, for you would go out with a noxious smell, as lamps do for lack of oil, did not the Lord keep your heavenly flame burning! Glory be unto the Preserver of His Church who keeps His loved ones even to the end!   
But there are other ways of falling beside falling finally and fatally. Alas, Brothers and Sisters, we are all liable to fall into errors of doctrine. The best-taught man, apart from Divine Guidance, is capable of becoming the greatest fool possible! There is a strange weakness which sometimes comes over noble spirits and which makes them infatuated with an erroneous novelty, though they fancy they have discovered some great Truth of God. Men of enquiring and receptive minds are often decoyed from the old pathsthe good old waysand while they think they are pursuing the Truth, they are being led into damnable error! He only is kept, as to his thoughts and doctrinal views, whom God keeps, for there are errors that would, if it were possible, deceive even the very elect! And there are men and women going about in this world with smooth tongues and plausible arguments, who carry honeyed words upon their lips, though drawn swords are concealed behind their backs! Blessed are they who are preserved from these wolves in sheeps clothing! Lord, You alone can preserve us from the pernicious errors of the times, for You are the only wise God, our Savior.   
And, dear Friends, we need keeping from an evil spirit. I do not know whom I should preferto see one of my dear Christian Brother fall into doctrinal error, or into an un-Christian spirit. I would prefer neither, for I think this is a safe ruleof two evils, choose neither! It is sad to hear some people talk as if they, alone, are right, and all other Christians are wrong. If there is anything which is the very essence and soul of Christianity, it is brotherly lovebut brotherly love seems to be altogether forgotten by these people. And other Christians who, in the judgment of sobriety, are as earnest and as true-hearted and as useful as themselves, are set down as belonging to a kind of Babylonian systemI hardly know what they do not call it, but they give it all sorts of bad namesand this is thought to be a high style of Christianity! God grant that the man may be forgiven who thought it to be a worthy purpose of his life to found a sect, whose distinguishing characteristic should be that it would have no communion with any other Christians! The mischief that man has done is utterly incalculable! And I can only pray that in the Providence of God, some part of it may die with him.   
O Brothers and Sisters, I charge you, whatever mistakes you make, not to make a mistake about this one thingthat even if you have all knowledge, and have not charity, it profits you nothing! Even if you could get a perfect creed and knew that your modes of worship were absolutely Apostolic, yet if you also imbibed this idea that you could not worship with any other Christians and that they were altogether outside your camp, your error would be far worse than all other errors put together for to be wrong in heart is even worse than to be wrong in head! I would have you true to Gods Truth, but, above all, I would have you true to Gods Love! My Brother, I think you are mistaken about this matter or that, but do you love the Lord Jesus Christ? If so, I love you. I have no doubt that I, also, am mistaken about some things, but do not, therefore, withdraw your hand and say that you cannot have fellowship with me! I have fellowship with my Father who is in Heaven and with His Son, Jesus Christ, and with His blessed Spirit. And I think that it ill becomes you, if you call yourself a son of that same God, to refuse to have fellowship with me when I have fellowship with Him! God save you from this evil spirit, but you may readily enough fall into it unless the Lord shall keep you. Your very zeal for the Truth of God may drive you into a forgetfulness of Christian love! And if it does, it will be a sad pity. O Lord, keep us from falling in this way!   
But there are falls of another sort which may happen to the brightest Christian. I mean, falls into outward sin. As you read Judes Epistle through, you will see what apostates some professors became and you will be led to cry, Lord, keep me from falling! And if you were the pastor of a large church like mine, you would see enough to convince you that traitors like Judas are not all deadthat amidst the faithful, the unfaithful are still foundthat there are bad fish to be thrown away, as well as good fish to be kept. And every time we execute an act of disciplineevery time we have to bemoan the fall of one who looked like a Brotherwe may thank God that we have been keptand may sing this doxology, Unto Him who is able to keep us from falling, be glory and power forever.   
And, dear Friends, there is a way of falling, out of which people are not so often recovered as when they fall into overt sin. I mean, falling into negligence as to natural or Christian duties. I have known professors who have been very lax at homechildren who were not obedient to their parentshusbands who did not love their wives as they oughtwives who were quite at home at this meeting and that, but very negligent of their domestic duties. And, mark you, where that is the case, it is a thing to mourn over, for the Christian ought to be absolutely reliable in everything he has to do! I would not give twopence for your religion if you are a tradesmanbut not fair in your dealings! I do not care if you can sing like David, or preach like Paulif you cannot measure a yard of material with the proper number of inches, or if your scales do not weigh rightly, or your general mode of business is not straight and trueyou had better make no profession of religion! The separation at what is called, religious, from the, secular, is one of the greatest possible mistakes. There is no such thing as a religion of Sundays, and of chapels and churches. At least though there is such a thing, it is not worth having. The religion of Christ is a religion for seven days in the weeka religion for every place and for every act! And it teaches men, whether they eat, or drink, or whatever they do, to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and to the glory of God! I pray that you may be kept from falling away from that religion, and that you may be kept up to the mark in serving the Lord in all things and attending diligently to the little commonplace matters of daily life.   
And you know, dear Friends, there is another sort of fallingthat is when the heart gets gradually cold, when the Christian wanders away little by littlewhen the life become more or less inconsistent with the profession. Oh, how many professors get into this state! They are like people who are not as well as they used to be. They do not know when they began to feel worseit was months ago and every day they have got weakertill now you can see their bones, though once they were full of flesh. Now they discover that whereas once they could have walked ten miles without fatigue, half a mile or less wearies them! Their appetite, too, has gradually gone. They scarcely know how. Ah, these are the sick folk with whom the physician has more trouble than he has with those who are suddenly seized by some well-known disease! And that gradual decline of spiritual health which does not come all at once, but, little by little, is one of the most perilous of evils and we have need to continually cry, Lord, keep us from this! And to praise His name that He is able so to keep us!   
Thus I have shown you that we need keeping and, Brothers and Sisters, none but the Lord can keep us. No man can keep himself. Without Gods Grace, he will surely fail! And no place can keep us. Some people think that if they could get into such-and-such a family, they could keep from sin, but they are mistaken. In every position which man occupies, he will find temptation. We have heard of the hermit who hoped to get rid of all sin by living in a cave. He took with him his little brown loaf and his jug of water, but he had hardly entered the cave before he upset his jug and spilt the water. It was a long way to the well and he got so angry with himself for what he had done that he soon discovered that the devil could get into a cave as quickly as he could! So he thought he might as well go back and face the trials of ordinary society. There is a story which they tell in Scotland of a family who were thriftless and, therefore, did not succeed. But they thought it was one of the brownies that kept them from getting on, so they decided to flit. They put all their things into a cart, but just as they were about to start, they heard a noise that made them cry out, The brownie is in the churn! So, wherever the churn went, the brownies would go too. And you may remove wherever you like and think, If I get into such a position, I shall escape from temptation, but you will find that the brownie is still in the churn, and he will follow you wherever you may go! You cannot be kept from falling by choosing another situation. You had better stay where you are, Brother, and fight the devil there, for perhaps the next place that you select as the scene of combat may not be as suitable as the one you have now.

Ah, says one, I wish I could get to

*A lodge in some vast wilderness,   
Some boundless contiguity of shade   
Where rumor of oppression and deceit,   
Of unsuccessful or successful war,   
Might never reach me again.*

Yes, yes. But that is not the way to conquer sin, is it? Suppose the battle of Waterloo is just beginning and here is a soldier who wants to win a victory. So he runs awaygets off to Brussels and hides himself in a cellar! Is he likely to be numbered among the heroes of the day? No, Brothers and Sisters, and if there is any sin to be overcome in this world, there is no credit to the man who says, Im going to hide somewhere out of the world. No, no, my Brother, accept the lot that God has provided for you! Take your place in the ranks of His soldiers and whatever temptation comes, look up to Him who is able to keep you from falling but do not dream of running away, for that is the way to fallthat is being defeated before the battle begins! Nobody but God can keep you. You may join whatever church you like. You may wear a hat with a broad brim and say thou and thee. You may meet with those who break bread and preach nothing but the Gospel of the Grace of God. You may dwell among the best people who ever lived, but you will still be tempted! Neither place nor people, neither manners nor customs can keep you from fallingGod alone can do it!

But here is the mercy, God can do it. Notice how Judes doxology puts itTo the only wise God our Savior. It is because He, alone, is wise that He, alone, is able to keep us from falling. He does it by teaching us the Truth, by warning us against secret sin and by His Providential leading. Sometimes He keeps temptation from us. At other times He allows a temptation to come to us that, by overcoming it, we may be the stronger to meet another one. Oftentimes He delivers us from temptation by letting affliction come upon us. Many a man has been kept from falling into sin by being stretched upon a bed of sickness. Had it not been for the loss of the eye, he would have looked upon vanity. Had it not been for that broken bone, he would have run in the ways of ungodliness. We little know how much preservation from falling we owe to our losses and crosses! The story of Sir James Thornhill painting the inside of the cupola of St. Pauls is probably well known to you. When he had finished one of the compartments, he was stepping backward that he might get a full view of it and so went almost to the edge of the scaffoldingand would have fallen over if he had taken another stepbut a friend, who saw his danger, wisely seized one of his brushes and rubbed some paint over his picture. The artist, in his rage, rushed forward to save his painting and so saved his own life! We have all pictured lifewhat a fairy picture we made of it! And as we admired it, we walked further and yet further away from God and safetyand got nearer and nearer to perilous temptation! But when trial came and ruined the picture we had painted and then, though scarcely knowing why, we came forward and were saved, God had kept us from falling by the trouble He had sent to us!

God has often kept us from falling by a bitter sense of our past sin. We have not dared to go near the fire again for our former burns have scarcely healed. I have also noticed, in my own case, that when the desire for sin has come with force, the opportunity for sin has not been presentand when the opportunity of evil has been present, then, by Gods Grace, the desire has been absent. It is wonderful how God prevents these two things from meeting and so keeps His people from falling.

Above all, it is by the Divine Spirit that God bears us up as upon eagles wings. The Spirit teaches us to hate sin and to love righteousnessand so we are daily kept from falling.

Brothers and Sisters, join with me in adoring the Lord that He will keep us to the end. Have we committed our souls into the hands of Jesus? Then our souls are safe forever! Are we trusting to Him to keep us till the day of His appearing? If so, He will keep usnot one sheep or lamb out of His flock shall by any possibility be destroyed by the wolf, or the bear, or the roaring lion of Hell! They shall all be His in the day when they pass again under the hands of Him that counts them!

II. NOW, SECONDLY, LET US ADORE HIM BECAUSE HE WILL, AT THE LAST, PRESENT US FAULTLESS BEFORE THE PRESENCE OF HIS GLORY WITH EXCEEDING JOY.

There will come a day, Brothers and Sisters, when we shall either be presented in the courts of God as His courtiers, or else be driven from His Judgment Seat as rebels against His authority. We look forward with the confident expectation that we shall be presented as the friends of Christ, unto God, even the Father and that is, indeed, a cause for adoring gratitude!

Do you notice how Jude puts it? To present you faultless. There shall be none in Heaven but those who are faultless. There shall by no means enter into those holy courts anything that defiles. Heaven is perfectly pure and if you and I are ever to get there, we must be pure as the driven snow. No taint of sin must be upon us, or else we cannot stand among the courtiers of God. His flaming Throne would shoot forth columns of devouring fire upon any guilty soul that dared to stand in the courts of the Most High, if such a standing were possible! But we are impure impure as to our acts and, worst of all, impure as to our very nature! How, then, can we hope to ever stand there? Yet, dear Brothers and Sisters, our confidence is that we shall. Why?

Is it not because Christ is able to present us faultless there? Come, Christian, think for a minute how faultless Christ has made you so far as your past sin is concerned. The moment you believed in Him, you were so completely washed in His precious blood that not a spot of sin remained upon you. Try to realize that whatever your past life has been, if you now believe in Jesus Christ, you are cleansed from all iniquity by virtue of His atoning Sacrifice and you are covered by a spotless robe of righteousness by virtue of His blessed life of perfect purity and obedience to His Fathers will. You are now without fault, as far as your past sin is concerned, for He has cast it all into the depths of the seabut you feel that you are not without fault as to your nature.

Oh, you say, I feel everything that is evil rising at times within me. But all that evil is under sentence of death. Christ nailed it to His Cross. Crucifixion is a lingering and very painful deathand the culprit struggles before he breathes his last. But your sins have had their deathblow. When Christ was nailed to the Cross, your sins were nailed there, too, and they shall never come down again. Die they must, even as He died. It will be a blessed hour when sin shall at last give up the ghostwhen there shall be not even the tendency to sin within our nature! Then shall we be presented faultless before the Throne of God!

Can that ever be? asks one. Well may you ask that question, Brother. Can it ever be that we shall not be tempted by one foul lust, nor be disturbed by one unbridled passion, nor feel the emotions of envy or of pride again? Yes, it shall surely be! Christ has secured this blessing for you. His name is Jesus, Savior, for He shall save His people from their sins. He must and will do this for all who trust Him. Rejoice that He will do this, for no one but God can do it. It must be the only wise God our Savior who can accomplish thisand accomplish it He will! Does your faith enable you to picture yourself as standing faultless before the Throne of God? Well then, give to the Lord the glory which is due unto Him for such a wondrous act of Grace as that!

This is how you are to be presented by Christ in Glory. There is a great stir in a family when a daughter is to be presented at court and a great deal is thought of it. But one day you and I who have believed in Jesus, shall be presented to the Father. What radiant beauty shall we then wear when God, Himself, shall look upon us and declare us to be without faultwhen there shall be no cause for sorrow remaining and, therefore, we shall be presented with exceeding joy! It shall be so, my Brother! It shall be so, my Sister! Therefore do not doubt it. How soon it shall be, we cannot tellpossibly, tomorrow. Perhaps before the sun rises again you and I may be presented by Christ before the Presence of His glory with exceeding joy. We cannot tell when it will be, but we shall be there in His good time. We shall be perfect! We shall be accepted in the Beloved and, therefore, unto Him be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

III. That is the note with which I have to close my discourse. LET US, BECAUSE OF THESE TWO GREAT BLESSINGS OF FINAL PRESERVATION AND PRESENTATION BEFORE HIS GLORY, OFFER UNTO THE LORD OUR HIGHEST ASCRIPTIONS OF PRAISE.

Jude says, Both now and forever. Well, we will attend to the forever as eternity rolls on, but let us attend to the praise of God nowat this moment! To the only wise God our Savior be glory and majesty, dominion and power now! Come, Brothers and Sisters, think of what you owe to Him who has kept you to this dayand will not let you go! Think of where you might have been and think, I may say, of where you used to be in your unregenerate state. Yet you are not there nowbut here you are, without self-righteousness, made to differ from your fellow men entirely through the Grace of God! You have been kept perhaps 20 years, 30 years, 40 yearspossibly 50 years! Well, unto Him be the glory! Give Him the glory even now!

How can you do it? Well, feel it in your hearts! Speak of it to your neighbors! Talk of it to your children! Tell everybody you meet what a good and blessed and faithful God He is, and so give Him glory now. And be happy and cheerful. You cannot glorify God better than by a calm, quiet, happy life. Let the world know that you serve a good Master. If you are in trouble, do not let anyone see that the trouble touches your spiritno, more,

do not let it trouble your spirit. Rest in Godtake evil as well as good from His hands and keep on praising Him. You do not know how much good you may do and how greatly you may glorify God if you praise Him in your dark times. Worldlings do not care much about our Psalm-singing unless they see us in pain and sorrow and observe that we praise God then. I like, and the world likes, a religion that will washa religion that will stand many showers and much rough usage. Some Christians joy disappears in the wear and tear of lifeit cannot endure the worlds rough handling. Let it not be so with us, Beloved, but let us praise, bless and magnify the name of the Lord as long as we have any being!

I know that in speaking thus, I am only addressing a part of my congregation. I wish that every man and woman here were now praising the Lordand I am sure that you could not have a better occupation to all eternity. Remember that if you do not praise God, it is impossible for you ever to enter Heaven, for that is the chief occupation of Heaven! And also remember that praise from your lips, until those lips are divinely cleansed, would be like a jewel in a swines snout, a thing altogether out of place! For you, dear unsaved Hearer, the first thing is not praise, but prayerno, not even prayer first, but faith. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. And then, in faith, pray the prayer which God accepts. But you must first believe in Jesus. And what does believing in Jesus mean? you ask. It means thisyour sin deserves punishment, for God, who is just, must punish sin. But His Son came into the world to suffer in the place of those who trust Him. And now, God can be just and yet the Justifier of every soul that believes in Jesus! In the Person of His Son, God hangs upon a tree and dies a felons deathwill you believe in the merit of that death and in the love of God who spared not His own Son in order that He might spare us? Can you trust Jesus as your God and Savior? Will you do it now? Then you are saved!

The first moment of thus trusting God is the beginning of a new lifea life which will drive out the old death of sin. The moment that you thus trust your God, you will be placed upon a new footing with regard to Himyour whole aspect towards God will be changed. Repentance will take such possession of your spirit that you will be actuated by new motives and swayed by new desires! In fact, you will be a new man in Christ Jesus. This is being savedsaved from the love of sin, saved from returning to sin, saved from falling and so completely saved that Christ shall one day present you faultless before the Presence of His glory with exceeding joy. May God do this for everyone of you, my Hearers, according to the riches of His Grace! It is my hearts last, best and strongest desire that everyone of you may be saved. May we all meet in Heaven, before the Throne of God, never more to be parted!

While I am away, listen with all earnestness to other heralds of the Cross, and pray the Lord to bless their messages to your salvation, if mine have not been so blest. I pray that by some instrumentality, you may all be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:  
THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE.

Verse 1. Jude. That is to say Judas, not Iscariot.  
1. The servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James. He does not say, and brother of our Lord, for we know that James and Judas were, both of them, among the Lords kinsman according to the flesh. But now, after the flesh, knows he Christ no more, but is content and happy to be known as the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.   
1. To them that are sanctified by God the Father. For the decree of election, the setting apart of the chosen is usually ascribed unto God the Father.   
1. And preserved in Jesus Christ, and called. We have here a very blessed description of the whole work of our salvationset apart by the Father, joined unto Christ and preserved in Himand then, in due time, called out by the Spirit of God.   
2. Mercy unto you, and peace, and love be multiplied. Christian letters should be full of love and good will. The Christian dispensation breathes beneficenceit is full of benediction! Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. May the Divine Trinity give you a trinity of blessings!   
3. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was necessary for me to write unto you and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith that was once delivered unto the saints. In the sense of being once and for all given to the saints, the faith of Christians is not a variable quantity. It is not a thing which changes from day to day, as some seem to suppose, vainly imagining that fresh light is bestowed upon each new generation. No, the Truth of God was delivered once and for all, it was stereotyped, fixedand it is for us to hold it fast as God has given it to us.   
4. For there are certain men crept in unawares. They did not boldly avow their heresy when they came inthey would not have been allowed to enter if they had done sobut they sneaked in, they climbed into the pulpit, professing to be preachers of the Gospel when they knew, all along, that they intended to undermine it. Basest of all men are those who act thus! There are certain men crept in unawares.

4. Who were before of old ordained to this condemnation. Proscribed by God as traitors long ago! Those who have not the courage of their convictions probably have no convictions at all, but seek to undermine the faith which they profess to hold.

4. Ungodly men, turning the Grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and Our Lord Jesus Christ. Antinomians, turning the Grace of our God into lasciviousness, falsely declaring that the Law has no binding force upon the Christians life and saying that we may do evil that good may comeand Socinians, denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

5. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though you once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. If we have no real faith, we may appear to go a long way towards Heavenbut we shall not enter the heavenly Canaan.

6. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. See, then, the need of stability, the need of abiding in the faith and abiding in the practice of it, lest we should turn out to be like the Israelites, who, though they came out of Egypt, left their carcasses in the wilderness, or like the angels, who, though they once stood in Gods Presence in Glory, have fallen to the deeps of the abyss because of their apostasy!

7, 8. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion and speak evil of dignitaries. They cast off all restraint; they claim to have liberty to do whatever they likeand when reproved, they utter railing words against those who honestly rebuke them!

9. Yet Michael the Archangel, when contending with the devil when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke you. To what does this refer? I am sure I do not know. I cannot think it refers to anything recorded in the Old Testament, but to some fact, known to Jude, who here speaks by Revelation and records it. We believe it and learn from it that when an archangel disputes with the devil, he does not use hard words even against him, for hard words are an evidence of the weakness of the cause which they are used to support! Hard arguments softly put, are the really effective weapons, but it takes some of us a long time to learn this and generally, in our younger days, we wear away our own strength by the violence with which we use it.

10. But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. It is a horrible thing when a mans sin goes the full length of his knowledge and he sins up to the degree of his possibilities!

11, 12. Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah. These are spots. These are spoilers, so it may be rendered.

12. In your feasts of charity. They spoil your love feasts at the Communion Table. They mar your fellowship when you gather together for worship.

12. When they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear. Some of the best Christians who come to the Lords Table, come there in great fear and trembling. And I have known some who have had an undoubted right to be there, half afraid to come. Yet those very persons who have a holy fear lest they should come amiss, are those who really ought to come. Feeding themselves without fear is the mark of those who are further off from God.

12. Clouds they are without water, carried about of winds. They believe according to what is said to them by the last man who speaks to them they are easily persuaded to this doctrine, and to that, and the other.

12. Trees whose fruit withers, without fruit. They seem to be bearing fruit, but it drops off before it ripens.   
12, 13. Twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea. They have nothing to say for Christ, yet they must say something, so they are raging waves of the sea.   
13. Foaming out their own shame, wandering stars, to whom is reserved the thickness of darkness forever. These are the false professors of religion, the members of the church for whom there are seats reserved in Hell! This is a dreadful thoughtto whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forevernot for the heathen, not for the open refusers of the Gospel, but for such as creep into the churches unawares, teach false doctrine, live unholy lives!

14, 15. And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. How Jude knew that Enoch said that, I cannot tellit is another instance of Divine Inspiration.   
16. These are murmurers, complainers. You know the sort of people alluded to here, nothing ever satisfies them. They are discontented even with the Gospel. The bread of Heaven must be cut into three pieces and served on dainty napkins, or else they cannot eat it! And very soon their soul loathes even this light bread. There is no way by which a Christian can serve God so as to please them. They will pick holes in every preachers coat and if the great High Priest, Himself, were here, they would find fault with the color of the stones of His breastplate!   
16-19. Walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaks great swelling words, having mens persons in admiration because of advantage. But, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before of the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time who should talk after their own ungodly lusts. These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. People who must, if they make a profession of religion at all, be continually breaking up churches and holding themselves aloof from others, having no fellowship with anybody but those who can say shibboleth as plainly as they can, and sound the h pretty loudly.   
20-22. But you, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference. Some of those professors who are not living consistently with their profession, in whom you can see signs and tokens of sin, yet there may be some trace of repentance, some reason to hope that they will forsake the evil when they see it to be evilhave compassion upon them.   
23. And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. When you have to deal with unclean professors, there must be an abhorrence and detestation of their sin even when there is great gentleness towards the sinner. We must never be such believers in the repentance of the guilty as to be willing to wink at sin, for sin is a great evil in any case and repentance cannot wipe it away. And though it behooves us to be tender to the sinner, we must never be tender to the sin. How beautifully this short and sad Epistle ends! Having described the many who, after making a profession, yet turn aside, Jude bursts out with this jubilant doxology!   
24, 25. Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK 441, 245, 160.   
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DANGER. SAFETY. GRATITUDE.   
NO. 3074

A SERMON   
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 1908,

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,   
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 8, 1874.

*Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.  
Jude 1:24, 25.*

[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon, upon the same text, are #s 634, Volume 11CHRISTIANS KEPT IN TIME AND GLORIFIED IN ETERNITY and #2296, Volume 39SAINTS GUARDED FROM STUMBLINGRead/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at http://www.spurgeongems.org.]

WE may derive much evil or much good from the falls of others. We may derive much evil from their falls if we follow their bad example, or if our pride suggests to us that we are better than they are. It is an evil thing for a man to look upon his fallen brother and then to say, in the spirit of the Pharisee, God, I thank You that I am not such a sinner as that man is. This kind of spirit would make it very probable that we should yet become even worse than the poor fallen one.

But, on the other hand, much good may come to us through the falls of others if the moment we see or hear of the falling of our brethren, we reflect that we would have done the same if we had not been upheld by Godthat all the evil that has come out of them might also have come out of us, for it is in every one of us by nature. Unless Gods restraining hand shall prevent its being displayed, it will be displayed in our life as well as in theirs! Every wreck ought to be a beacon. One mans fall should be anothers warning. Do you see your brothers foot trip against a stone? Then take care how you go along that way. Do you see him yield to temptation? Then mind that your ears are closed against that which fascinated him and turned him aside from the right path. Wherein you see that he failed in anything, set a double guard upon yourself just thereand ask God to give you Grace to keep you with special keeping in that particular point which was his weakness and which may, unknown to yourself, be also your own!

I am led to make these remarks because the Epistle of Jude describes certain gross offenders. The Apostle says a good deal about persons who were in the Church, but were evidently not of it and who, therefore, were the Churchs weakness and dishonorspots in her solemn feasts, clouds without water, trees without fruitraging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame. Now, if the reflection from that description should be, in the case of any of us, We are superior persons to them and are not at all likely to fall into such a condition as this, the consideration of their condition would have had a very unhappy influence upon ourselves. But if we use this Epistle in the right way, as Jude means us to do, and begin to look at our own weakness and to dread our own failureand then close all, as he does, with a doxology to Him who is able to keep us from falling where others have fallen, and to present us faultless when others will be condemned, and to bring us to exceeding joy while they will be banished to the place where they will have to endure exceeding misery surely we ought to give honor, praise and glory to the only wise God our Savior. And this will be a blessed way of extracting good out of the failings and falls of others.

This is my objective in speaking to you upon this text. And I am going to talk to you very simply upon three thingsfirst, our danger. Secondly, our safety. And, thirdly, our gratitude.

I. The first thing we are to consider is OUR DANGER. We are in danger of fallingnot only some of us, but all of us! Not merely the weak, but also the strong. Not the young only, but the old and the middle-aged. All are in danger of falling into sin and so bringing dishonor upon our profession, sorrow to our souls and disgrace upon the name of Christ, whom we profess to love and serve!

That we are in danger should strike us very clearly because we have seen others fall into sin. I scarcely dare to recall all that I have seen during my observation of the professing Church of Christ. Though I think I have been peculiarly favored as a pastor, there are sore places in my soulbleeding wounds that will never be healed this side of Heaven that have been caused by the backsliding of men with whom I took sweet counsel and in whose company I used to walk to the House of God. I have known some who have preached the Gospel, and preached it with power, live to depart from it altogether. I have known others who have served at the Lords Table who have discharged the duties of the deaconship or the eldership with considerable diligence, who have afterwards given way to their evil passions. I have thought some of them to be among the holiest of men. While they have been praying, I have been lifted up in devotion to the very gates of Heaven! And if anyone had said to me that they would one day fall into gross sin, I could not have believed it. I would sooner have believed it to be possible of myself. When I have heard of their fall, it has struck me with a sharp pang and when it has been my sad duty to enquire into the matterand I have been compelled to be convinced of the truthfulness of the accusation brought against themI have been staggered to think how far a man may go in profession and yet not possess the Grace of God in truth and how like a Christian a man may beand yet not really be a child of God. And how he may have many resemblances to the Grace of God and yet may not have that Grace in his soul indeed and of a truth.

Howl, fir tree, for the cedar is fallen, is a cry that may still be heard! Those who seemed stronger than we are have fallen, so why may not we? No, shall we not fall unless Sovereign Grace shall prevent that dread calamity? Our Lords disciples, who sat at the table with Him, when they were told that one of them would betray their Master, each one enquired, Lord, is it I? That was a very proper question. There was not one who asked, Lord, is it Judas? Probably no one of them even suspected himand it may be that the worst hypocrite in this assembly is the one upon whom there does not rest at this moment a single shade of suspicion! He has learned to play his part so well that his true character has not yet been discovered. One of these days the 30 pieces of silver will prove too attractive to himand then he will sell his Master. Will that traitor be you, dear Friend, or will it be me? Surely, if this has been the case with others, it must be a matter for our own serious consideration, seeing that we also are as liable to be tempted as they wereand as liable to yield to the temptation. John Newton was right when he wrote

*When any turn from Zions way,   
(Alas, what numbers do)!   
I think I hear my Savior say,   
Will you forsake Me too?   
Ah, Lord! With such a heart as mine,   
Unless You hold me fast,   
I feel I must, I shall decline,   
And prove like they at last.*

Beside that, not only have others fallen, but we ourselves, although in a great measure kept by Divine Grace, have not been faultless. If all men knew all about us that might be known, we would hardly be able to look them in the face! Someone is said to have once wished that he had a window in his heart so that everybody could look in and see all that was there. But if he had such a window, he would need to have blinds on it and he would probably keep them down for the most part, for who would like his neighbor to read the thoughts of his heart even for a single hour? Have there not been times with you, my Brothers, honorable men, Christians of good standing in the Church, when your feet had almost gone, your steps had well near slipped? And Sisters in Christ, preserved as you have been in the faith of Jesus and enabled to honorably maintain your Christian character, have there not been times when temptation has been very strong upon you and when you have half consented to the sin that has been suggested to you? I know if you are flesh and blood like the rest of us, you must confess that it has been so with you.

So, then, we have this double warningwhat we have seen in others and what we have felt in ourselves. Besides, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, ought we not to realize the danger of our falling when we consider the world we live in, the flesh we live in and the tempter who is continually tempting us? The road we have to tread is often so slippery that we have need not only to watch our feet, but also to pray, O Lord, hold me up and I shall be safe. There are also many who watch for our haltingand some who do more than that, for they set traps for us. And if they could but catch us in them, how rejoiced they would be! If we do not fall, it is not because they have not tried to make us fall, but because God has upheld us by His Grace. If we know ourselves at all, we must have come to the conclusion that apart from the Grace of God, we are a mass of sin and corruptionand capable of anything that is evil. I do not wonder that John Bradford said, as he saw men taken to be hanged at Tyburn, There goes John Bradford but for the Grace of God. There is powder enough in all our hearts to blow our character to pieces if God does not keep the devils sparks away, or quench them in a mighty stream of Grace before they can do us mischief! Utter weakness are you, O Man, and many and mighty foes are seeking your destruction! You need an infinite Friend to keep you in safety against all the machinations of your adversaries!

We constantly need to cry to God to keep us from falling, remembering what a dreadful thing it would be for us to fall. We know that a true child of God cannot fall fatally or finally, but we also know that some who profess to be the people of God, do fall foully, fatally and finallyand that others who are really the people of God have fallen to their own great grief and to their Lords dishonor. O my dear Sister, what sorrow there would be in the hearts of those who know you if you were to turn aside! And how the enemy would blaspheme and how would those who are weak in the faith be staggered if you were to be permitted to disgrace your Christian profession! And my dear Brother, you who are of venerable years, looked up to and respected by manywhat grief would fill your own heart when the Lord brought you to penitence for your guiltif you were allowed to fall into sin and, meanwhile, how much mischief you would have done to the Church of God and to souls seeking the Savior! Pray very specially for those of us who stand in prominent positions, for it is not easy to keep a clear head when one is upon the top of a pinnacle. And when you have prayed for us, pray also for yourselves. God can keep men in safety on the tops of pinnacles if He puts them there. But the men in the valley will fall if they think they can securely keep themselves.

I remember talking once to a lady who assured me again and again that she prayed daily for me that I might be kept humble. I told her that I would pray the same prayer for her. And when she said, Oh, I am never tempted to be proud, I replied, Well, dear FriendI am afraid you are already very far gone in that direction, or else you would not talk as you do. We can easily perceive the danger in which others areand if we do, we ought to pray for thembut let us not forget our own peril, for the greatest danger does not lie in the position we are called to occupy, but in our relying upon our own strengthand not upon our God

*Lord, through the desert drear and wide, Our erring footsteps need a Guide.   
Keep us, oh keep us near Your side.   
Let us not fall. Let us not fall!   
We have no fear that You should lose   
One whom eternal love could choose,   
But we would never this Grace abuse.   
Let us not fall. Let us not fall!   
Lord, we are blind, and halt, and lame,   
We have no stronghold but Your name   
Great is our fear to bring it shame.   
Let us not fall. Let us not fall!   
Lord, evermore Your face we seek   
Tempted we are, and poor, and weak.   
Keep us with lowly hearts, and meek.   
Let us not fall. Let us not fall!   
All Your good work in us complete,   
And seat us daily at Your feet.   
Your love, Your words, your name, how sweet! Let us not fall. Let us not fall!*

There are dangers that are peculiar to every position. To those who live a very quiet life, there is the danger of the rust and the moth. And to those who live an active life, there is the danger of being cumbered with much service. You who are young are certainly in danger from impetuous companions, and yet it is remarkable that among the offenders, even against morality, mentioned in Scripture, we do not read of many who were young! David falls not into such foul sin until he is advanced in years, as if to show us that it is not age that gives strength to resist evil. Age brings experience, but unless Grace comes with the experience, it gets to be like the manna in the wilderness which bred worms and stank when men tried to feed upon it after its proper time. We are all safe while we are in Gods hands, but we are, none of us, safe in our own keeping! And every position that we may occupy has its own peculiar perils. Do not be in haste to get away from a job in which you are tempted, for you will be tempted in every job and, possibly, the temptation which assails you in your present circumstances may be less powerful for evil than the one to which you would be exposed if you were to change your place. Many a man of God has leaped out of the frying pan into the fire. I have even known some who have thought that they were going to get into a port where they would never again suffer from stormsand they have gone out of their proper course in order to get into that port. And there the most dreadful hurricane they ever knew has come upon them! Always be afraid of not being afraidand be always in fear when you feel that you are perfectly safe. When you realize your danger and fly to the Lord to guard you, then you are safe. But when you begin to think, All is right with me, nothing will make me fall now, you are not very far off a bad fall in which you may suffer serious hurt. May God keep you, my dear Brothers and Sisters. May He preserve each one of us till we see His face in Glory at the last!

Did you notice that the text indicates what a joy it will be to be kept from falling? Jude says, Christ is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His Glory with exceeding joy. It will indeed be exceeding joy to be kept from falling and to be presented faultless at the end. I have often prayed that I might be able to say what George Fox, the founder of the Quakers, said just before he died. His words were these, I am clear. I am clear. I am clear. He felt that he had faithfully discharged his ministry and spoken all that the Spirit of God had taught him. And if I may say what he didthat I am clear of the blood of all men when I lay down my body and my chargeI will not ask anything more. And if each professing Christian here shall be clear at the last, and be able to say, with Paul, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, you will have exceeding joy! I do not think so much of the harps of gold and the streets that shine with dazzling splendor, and the other descriptions of the glories of Heaven, as of this

*May I but safely reach my Home,*

*My God, my Heaven, my All!*   
May I get where I shall never again sin and where I shall not even be tempted to sin! May I get where flesh and sense shall no more destroy the sacred pleasures of my soul! It will be exceeding joy, even to dancing and leaping of spirit, as the Greek has it, if we may but be presented faultless at the last, having been kept by Sovereign Grace even to the end! This must suffice concerning our danger.

II. Now secondly, I am to speak upon OUR SAFETY. Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling...to the only wise God our Savior. Our safety lies in our SaviorGod our Savior. Just think of that great Truth of God for a moment. When we first came to Christ, we rejoiced that He was a Saviora sinners Savior. All our hope and comfort lay in the fact that God had appointed Him to be our Savior. Well now, Beloved, in looking forward to the temptations that will assail you in your future life, keep your eye on your Savior! You did not have Him to be a Savior for a time, to cleanse you from sin and then to leave you to fall back into sin! When you took Him to be your Savior, I hope you took Him for all your life and for eternity. That is how He took youHe espoused you unto Himself in an everlasting wedlock and, therefore, He would have you depend as much upon Him for sanctification as for justificationrely as much upon Him to keep you from sin as to keep you from Hell! And trust as much to Him to enable you to overcome your present temptation as you trusted to Him at the first to overcome your fear of condemnation. Christ is your Savior from beginning to end, so always regard Him in that light. And as your Savior, let it be very comforting to you to reflect that He is DivineThe only wise

God our Savior. He who has undertaken to save you is no mere man and no angelHe is nothing less than the Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient God! Your peril can be averted by His Omnipotent might. The hidden dangers in your pathway all lie unveiled to His all-seeing eyes. You are safe, not because you can see and avoid the dangers that beset you, nor yet because you are strong and can conquer your adversaries, but because your Savior is God and, therefore, you shall be saved, continuously saved, perfectly saved and presented as a saved one at the last!

Observe how Jude puts this precious TruthUnto Him that is able to keep you from falling. Why does the Apostle lay such stress upon the ability of Christ? You know that our faith sometimes fails us concerning Christs ability and sometimes concerning His willingness to save us. One came to Christ and said, Lord, if You will, You can make me clean. And another said to Him If you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us. Now, in this matter to which Jude is referring, I suppose that we should not have had any doubt about Gods willingness because it must be the will of the thrice-holy God to keep His people from falling! If any question did arise, it would be concerning Gods powernot concerning His willingness.

And here let me remark that this is a very wonderful power. The power to create a world, the power to divide the rocks, the power to shake the mountains or set them on a blaze is a very inferior power compared with that which is able to keep us from falling because God has been pleased to make us free agentsand He never deprives us of our free agency. Yet, without the destruction of a quality which is necessary to our responsible manhood, God is nevertheless able to keep us from falling. Of course He could keep us from falling into certain sins by shutting us up in a prison, or by depriving us in some other way of the power to commit those sins. But He does not keep us in that way. He leaves us as free agents with every faculty and propensity that we had before. Yet, by some mysterious, Omnipotent working of His Holy Spiritwhich we can no more understand than we can the blowing of the windHe does keep His people from falling. If He turned them at once into angels, so that they never had a desire to sin again, that would be a simple process. But He lets them remain men and, as I know from my own experience, men with the same passions as before and with the same possibilities of sinning as before! And yet, by a Divine working which is nothing less than a continuous miracle, He keeps them from falling again into the sins in which they once indulged! And everyone who knows by experience the power of God to keep a child of His from falling, must and will magnify the name of the Lord, even as Jude does in this doxology!

Observe, too, that the Apostle puts Gods wisdom side by side with His abilityto the only wise God our Savior. You know that it needs great wisdom in a parent to keep his child from evil, but it needs far greater wisdom for God to keep men and women, whom He treats as men and women, and not as logs, or bricks, or stones, from falling into sin. And, oh, what Divine Wisdom there is in the dispositions of Providence and in the manifold workings of the Holy Spirit in using saints to protect saints, and even in using sinners to warn saints, in using holy pleasures to allure saints to good and using evils to drive saints from evil! What you and I owe to Gods rod we shall never know till we get to Heaven! The love there is in every twig of it and in every smart and bruise that it makes, we shall never fully estimate until our faculties are enlarged beyond the narrow bounds of this finite state. It is the tender mercy of God that keeps some of you poorand makes others of you so frequently depressed in spirit. It is Gods loving kindness which prevents you from prospering in your endeavors and which makes you cry out in the bitterness of your spirit, All these things are against me. God wounds us that He may heal us! He kills us that He may quicken us! He lays us low and digs out our very foundations that He may build us up to be fair temples in which He may abide forever!

So our safety is assured by the fact that we have a God who is able and is as wise as He is able to keep us from falling.   
And then we have something more than mere safety, for the text adds, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. We have this word, present, several times in the New Testament. Paul wrote to the saints in Rome, I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. He also wrote to the Christians in Corinth concerning his desire to present them as a chaste virgin to Christ. To the Ephesians he wrote that Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it...that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. And here Jude writes concerning Christ presenting His people faultless before the presence of His glorynot presenting them unfallen, but faultless. I suppose there are some Brothers and Sisters who have grown so familiar with the idea of their own perfection that they can quite understand what it is to feel perfect. But I am so familiar with the sense of my own imperfections that it takes me a long while to grasp the fact that I shall one day be without fault before the Throne of God. I can sit down, sometimes, with an aching head and believe that it will wear a crown, by-and-by. I can look at these hands and believe that I shall one day wave a palm-branch of victory. I can and do fully expect to wear the white robe and to sing the everlasting song in Glory. But it will be more than all this to be absolutely perfect with never a risk of a hasty temper rising, or the fear of men checking ones lips from saying what is right! There will be no undue haste and, at the same time, there will be no sloth! There will be no preponderance of any Grace so as to cause it to grow into a fault and no deficiency in any point of character. To be faultless before men is a great thing. To be faultless before the devil so that even he cannot find any fault in us, is greatly to be desired. But the most wonderful thing of all must be to be presented by Christ faultless before the presence of His glory. That is where the light is brightest and no speck of sin is to be seen! The saints shall be so perfectly purified by the Omnipotent Grace of God the Holy Spirit that even the Lord, Himself, in whose sight the heavens are not pure and who charges His angels with folly, shall look upon His redeemed people and declare that they are faultless, holy and unblameable and unreprovable in His sight! Oh, blessed portion, glorious hope! This is something that is worth struggling for!   
So, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, let us fight more valiantly than ever against our sins and corruptions! Armed with the two-edged sword of the Spirit, we shall win the day! He who is able to keep us from falling will not be satisfied with acting on the defensive for us and protecting us from our enemies, but He will enable us to carry the war into the enemys country and we shall be more than conquerors through Him that loved us! And we shall have this resplendent character at last, that we shall be without fault before the Throne of God. [See Sermon #2324, Volume 39THE

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III. The last thing upon which I have to speak is OUR GRATITUDE. I must speak upon it briefly, but I hope you will think and act upon it at great length. Yes, throughout your whole lives, and I shall do the same. The Apostle says, Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be Glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.

So, then, the text winds up with the thought that to God must be all the praise. It is well to know on whose head we are to put the crown. If we could save ourselves, we might praise ourselves. But I trust that we are, none of us, so foolish as to imaging that we can do anything to save ourselves! I have heard of a vessel that was once in a stormnot a very severe onebut a gentleman on board thought it was and went about among the sailors and passengers finding fault with the captains management of the vessel and saying that he was sure the ship would go to pieces, and that all on board would go to the bottom of the sea. He did so much mischief by his foolish talking that, at last, the captain said to him, We must rely upon every man doing his duty. Will you go and hold that rope over there? He went at once and there he stood like a martyr and held the rope until the storm had abatedand then he began congratulating himself upon the eminent part that he had played in saving the ship in that terrible storm! When he got too proud, the captain said to him, I only gave you that bit of rope to hold, to keep you quiet. Your holding it was of no other use whatever.

Then the gentleman saw what a fool he had been! And when a man thinks he has done something towards his own salvation, if he could only know the truth of the matter, he would soon see what a fool he is. He was a far more sensible man who said that he was saved because Christ did His part and he did all the rest. Somebody asked him, But what was the rest that you did? and he replied, Why, Christ did it all and I only stood in His way and hindered Him all I could. That is about all that we shall ever do in the matter of our souls salvation. It must rest with Christ alone, and our wisdom is to commit ourselves to Him who is able to meet all the necessities of our case and to conduct us safely to our journeys end. But since, from the first to the last, salvation is of the Lord

*Then give all the Glory to His holy name, For to Him all the Glory belongs.*   
Whenever you hear anybody praising some good minister whom God has blessed to him, join in his praises as one Brother should do concerning another, but then add, We have had enough of that strain, dear Friend!

So now unto Him that is able to keep us from falling, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. And if anybody should ever praise you for any spiritual help you may have given, always pass on the praise to Him that is able to keep you from falling, for He deserves it all. Give to Him, in the very highest degree that is possible, glory and majesty, dominion and powerthe highest praise of which your thankful heart is capable and the deepest devotion to which your grateful spirit can attain! How much better we will praise God one day than we can ever do while we are in this body! Good old John Berridge, speaking of the saints above singing in Heaven, says

*O happy saints, who dwell in light,   
And walk with Jesus, clothed in white!   
Safe landed on that peaceful shore,   
Where pilgrims meet to part no more.   
Released from sin, and toil, and grief,   
Death was their gate to endless life!   
An opened cage to let them fly   
And build their happy nest on high!   
And now they range the heavenly plains, And sing their hymns in melting strains. And now their souls begin to prove   
The heights and depths of Jesus love.   
Ah, Lord! With tardy steps I creep,   
And sometimes sing, and sometimes weep. Yet strip me of this house of clay,   
And I will sing as loud as they!*

And so it shall be with us, yet we shall always feel as if our loftiest praises could not rise to the height of His great love wherewith He has loved us. I remember saying in a sermon, one night, When I get to Heaven, I will sing more loudly than anybody else, for I shall owe the most to Sovereign Grace. At the close of the service, a good old Sister said to me, You made a mistake in your sermon tonight. What was that? I asked. Why, you said that you would sing the loudest in Heaven, but you will not, for I shall, for I shall owe more to Grace than you will. I soon found that all the 30 other Christians there were of the same opinion as that dear old soulthat each one of them would owe more to the Grace of God than all the rest! And surely, that will be the only contention among the birds of paradisewho shall sing the most sweetly to the praise of their adorable Lord!

But the text seems to me to say that while we are to give God the praise, and to give Him, only, the praise, and to give Him the best praise that we can, we are to give that praise to Him now. Jude says, Now and ever. What? Are we to praise the Lord now for keeping us to the end? Will it not do if we praise Him when the end comes and we have been kept to the end? Will it not do if we praise Him when we are presented faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy? But can you not believe Gods promise that He will keep you to the endand bless His name for it even now? Many a time you have expressed your gratitude to a friend when he has said, I will do so-and-so for you. You were sure that he would do what he saidhis promise was enough for you! And as the Lord has promised to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, surely you can say

*And a new song is in my mouth,   
To long-loved music set!   
Glory to You for all the Grace   
I have not tasted yet!   
I have a heritage of joy,   
That yet I must not see   
The hand that bled to make it mine,   
Is keeping it for me.*

Now I close by saying that this praise is to be perpetualboth now and ever. Amen. We may begin now, but we must always keep on, as long as we live, praising Him who is able to keep us from falling. What? Keep on praising Him? Yes, even when the deep waters are all around you, still praise Him. And if they grow deeper, yet still praise Him. Let this be your souls resolve

*Ill praise my Maker with my breath,   
And when my voice is lost in death,   
Praise shall employ my nobler powers:   
My days of praise shall never be past,   
While life and thought and being last,   
Or immortality endures.*

If I can send the children of God away from this service praising Him, good will have been done. But I wish that those who are not Gods people would feel a great longing after these good things! Some of you young people are just now starting in life. You have an excellent character and you hope you may be enabled to preserve it to the end. Let me just tell you of something that was a great help in bringing me to Christ. I knew a young man, a little older than myself, who was often held up to me as model. And he certainly was a model in many respects. But I saw him go wrong, sadly wrong. And then I thought within myself, I may do just as he has done. And when I heard it said that the Lord would keep His people right to the endthat Christ had said, My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand, I must confess that the Doctrine of the Final Preservation of the Saints was a bait that my soul could not resist! I thought it was a sort of life insurancean insurance of my character, an insurance of my soul, an insurance of my eternal destiny. I knew that I could not keep myself, but if Christ promised to keep me, then I would be safe foreverand I longed and prayed to find Christ because I knew that if I found Him, He would not give me a temporary and trumpery salvation, such as some preach, but eternal life which could never be lostthe living and incorruptible Seed which lives and abides forever, for no one and nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Dear young people, do you not feel the same kind of drawing that I felt then? Do you not wish that you were Christs, that you might be kept through life honorable and consistent? May His gracious Spirit lead you to trust yourself to Jesus this very moment! Then you will be safe and saved forever! Yes, and you old people, too, and all of you, whatever your age may be, rely upon Jesus! Make Him your sole confidence and then He will keep you to the end!

When my dear old grandfather was dying, one of my uncles said to him, Dr. Watts said   
*Firm as the earth Your Gospel stands,   
My Lord, my hope, my trust,*

but the aged saint said, That wont do for me now. Firm as the earth. Why, the earth is slipping away from me! I need something firmer than the earth now. I like the doctor best, my boy, when he says

*Firm as His Throne, His promise stands, And He can well secure   
What Ive committed to His hands,   
Till the decisive hour.*

Sovereign Grace, he said, is my trust now! Gods promise standing firm as Gods Throne, and my faith linked to it. There is the safety of my spirit. And so he passed away. It is a grand thing to feel that Gods Throne might sooner fail than that a saint can perish, for His Throne, itself, is established in righteousness! And He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousnessfaithful and just, not merely merciful and gracious! And His very faithfulness and justice require that He should keep the soul that has obeyed His will and committed itself to the Redeemers hands. May the Lord thus save us all, for Jesus Christs sake! Amen.

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PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.

CHRISTIANS KEPT IN TIME AND GLORIFIED IN ETERNITY

NO. 634

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

Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior,   
be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. Jude 24, 25.

OMITTING all preface it will be well to observe in what state of mind Jude was when he penned this doxology, what had been his previous meditations, and when we have done so we will endeavor to come directly to the text and observe what mercies he sums up in it and what praise is due from us to Him of whom he thus speaks.

I. Then, UNDER WHAT INFLUENCE WAS JUDES MIND WHEN HE PENNED THIS DOXOLOGY. Our first observation is that in writing this very short but very full Epistle, he had been led to consider the grievous falls of many others and in contemplating those failures he could not resist the impulse of penning these words, Now unto Him that is able to keep us from falling. You observe in reading that he mentions the Israelites who came out of Egypt. That was a glorious day in which the whole host met at Succoth, having just escaped from the thralldom of Egypt and now found themselves delivered from the whips and the lashes of the taskmasters and were no longer compelled to make bricks without straw and to build up palaces and tombs for the oppressors.

That was, if possible, a more glorious day than when God divided the Red Sea to make a way for His people. The depths stood upright in a heap when the elect multitude walked through. Do you not see them, as with songs and praises they are led all that night through the deep as on dry ground? They are all landed on the other side, and then their leader lifts up his rod and immediately there comes a wind and the waters return to their place. The infatuated Egyptian king, who with his hosts had followed them into the depths of the sea is utterly destroyed. The depths have covered them.

They sank as lead in the mighty waters! There is not one of them left. Then sang Moses and the children of Israel, saying, I will sing unto the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously. The horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea. Is it credible, is it not too sadly incredible that this very people who stood by the Red Sea and marked the overthrow of Gods enemies, within a few days were clamoring to go back into Egypt? And before many months had passed were for taking to themselves a leader that they might force their way back into the place of their bondage? Yes, and they who saw Jehovahs work and all His plagues in Zoan made to themselves a calf and bowed down before it and said, These are YOUR gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt.

With tears in your eyes, look at the many griefs which studded the pathway of their forty years wandering, and with many fears reflect that out of all that multitude which came out of Egypt, there were but two who lived to cross the Jordan! Aaron must put off the breastplate, for he has sinned against God. And even Moses, the meekest of men, must go to the top of Nebo and is only permitted to gaze upon the prospect of that land which he must never actually enjoy! Except for Caleb and Joshua there were none found faithful among all the tribesand these alone shall enter into the goodly land which flows with milk and honey.

Now when Jude thought of this, I do not wonder that he began to consider the case of himself and of his fellow Believers united with him in Church fellowship at Jerusalem and elsewhere. And knowing that all of them who were truly brought up out of Egypt by Jesus shall surely enter into the promised rest, he cannot, he does not desire to resist the impulse of singing, Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.

If YOU read on to the next verse, you perceive that Jude had another example in his minds eyethe angels that kept not their first estate. We do not know much of angels, but from what we gather in Holy Scripture perhaps tinged in our reading with some of the half-inspired ideas of Miltonwe believe that angels are spirits vastly superior to ourselves. In intelligence they may well be so, even if they had been created upon a par for they have had many years in which to learn and gather experience whereas mans existence is but a handbreadth. We regard an angel with intense respect and while never paying any worship to those noble beings, we cannot but feel how little we are when compared with them.

One of these angels appears to have been named Lucifer, son of the morning. Perhaps he was a leader in the heavenly host and first among the princes of Heaven. He, together with multitudes of others, fell from their allegiance to God. We know not how. We have no idea if they were tempted, unless one of them tempted the otherbut they kept not their first estatethey were driven out of Heaven. They were expelled from their starry thrones and therefore they are reserved in chains of darkness until the great day of account.

Now, my Brethren, can you think of the fall of angels without trembling? Can you think of the morning stars put out in blackness? Of the cherub, whose head did wear a crown, cast into the mire and his crown rolled into the dust? Can you think of these bright spirits transformed into the hideous fiends that devils are? Their hearts, once temples for God, now become the haunt of every unclean thingthemselves the most unclean? Can you think of that without feeling a tremor of fear lest you, too, should fall from your first estate? And without another, and a higher thrill of joy, when you think of Him who is, able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy?

*When any turn from Zions way, (Alas, what numbers do!),   
I think I hear my Savior say,*

*Will you forsake Me too?   
Ah, Lord! With such a heart as mine,   
Unless You hold me fast, I feel I must,   
I shall decline,   
And prove like them at last.*

But we can also sing right joyouslyThe soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose, he will not, he will not, desert to its foes. That soul, though all Hell should endeavor to shake, Hell never, no never, no never, forsake. We might continue to follow Jude, but we will not do so. We prefer to add something which Jude has not put in his Epistle. Our first parent, Adam, lived in the midst of happiness and peace in the garden. Unlike ourselves he had no depravityno bias towards evil. God made him upright. He was perfectly pure and it was in his own will whether he should sin or not. The balance hung evenly in his hands.

But you have not forgotten how on that sad day he took of the forbidden fruit and ate and thereby cursed himself and all of us! My Brethren, as you think of Adam, driven out of the Garden of Edensent out to till the ground from where he was takencompelled in the sweat of his face to eat bread. When you recollect the paradise he left, the happiness and peace that have forever passed away through his sin, do you not hear the voice that says to you, as a depraved and fallen creature, Let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall? Conscious of your own weakness as compared with your parent, Adam, you are ready to cry out, O God, how can I stand where Adam falls?

But here comes the joyous thoughtChrist, who has begun with you, will never cease till He has perfected you! Can you help singing with Jude, Now unto Him who is able to keep us from falling? It strikes me that every time we mark an apostate and see the fall of a sinner or of a fellow professor, we should go down on our knees and cry, Hold You me up and I shall be safe, and then rise up and sing

*To our Redeemer God   
Eternal power belongs,   
Immortal crowns of majesty,   
And everlasting songs.   
He will present our souls   
Unblemished and complete   
Before the Glory of His face,   
With joys divinely great.*

This partly accounts for the text before us. But on a further reference to the Epistle we get another part of the thoughts which had exercised the Apostles mind. Observe, dear Friends, that the Apostle had a very vivid and distinct sense of the nature of the place into which those fell and of their utter ruin and destruction. Notice, concerning the children of Israel he says that, God destroyed them that believed not. What is it to be destroyed? Destroyed! This does not end with the white skeleton and the bleached bones which lay in the wildernessa horror to the passerby! He means something more than even that!

Brought out of Egypt and yet destroyed! Take heed, professor! You may be brought into something like Gospel liberty and yet may perish! Take heed, you carnal professor, I say! You may fancy you have escaped the bondage of the Law, but yet you shall never enter into the rest which remains for the people of Godyou shall be destroyed! Let that word destroyed ring in your ears and it will make you bless God, who is able to keep you from falling, if it shall lead you to flee to Him for help!

Next he says of the fallen angels that they are, reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. What that may be, we can but roughly guess. Satan is allowed to go about the world. Still he wears his chains and he has a tether and the Lord knows how to pull him in, both by Providence and direct acts of power. We believe that these spirits are under darknessa glooma thick darkness that may be felt hangs perpetually over their minds. Wherever they may be they are waiting till Christ shall come to summon them as rebellious creatures before His bar that they may receive their sentence and begin afresh their dreadful Hell.

And remember, dear Brothers and Sisters, unless eternal love shall prevent it, this case must be ours! We, too, must enter into places reserved in darkness, wearing everlasting chains, to endure eternal fire. We should do so, we must do so, if it were not for Him, who is able to keep us from falling and present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. Nor is this all, for if you will patiently read the next verse, you will see that Jude has, if possible, introduced a more graphic picture.

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are bright as the sun goes down. The inhabitants are merry with boisterous laughter. There is plenty in the barn. There is luxury in the hall, for the plain of Sodom was well watered and lacked for nothing. Down went that sun upon a disastrous evening never to rise upon the most of those who were in that doomed city. At daybreak, just as the sun is beginning to shine upon the earth, angels had hastened Lot and his family out of the cityand no sooner had they reached the little city of Zoar than straightway the Heaven is red with supernatural flame and down descends a terrific rainas if God had poured Hell out of Heaven! He rained fire and brimstone upon the cities and the smoke of their torment went up so that Abraham, far away to the west, could see the rolling cloud and the terrible brightness of the fire, even at midday.

And as men go to the Lacus Asphaltites, or the Dead Sea, they see to this day where death has reigned. There are masses of asphalt still floating upon the surface of that sea where there is nothing that lives. No fish swim in its turbid streams. There are indubitable evidences there of some dread judgment of God. And as Jude thought of this, he seemed to say, Oh God, preserve us from such a doom, for this is the doom of all apostates, either in this world, or in that which is to come, thus to be consumed with fire. And as he remembered that God would keep His people, he blessed that protecting hand which covers every saint and he wrote down, Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling.

I have a thought in my mind. I cannot, of course, tell whether it is right or not, but it strikes me just nowthe authors name is JudeJudas. Did he recollect Judas, his namesake that was called Iscariot, as he penned these words? He had known him, probably had respected him as the others had done. He had marked him that night when he sat at the table and like others said, Is it I? Probably Jude was very surprised when he saw Iscariot take the sop and dip in the dish with the Savior. And when he went out he could scarcely believe his own ears when the Savior said that he that betrayed Him had gone forth!

He must have known how Judas kissed the Son of Man and sold Him for thirty pieces of silver. He could not but be aware how in remorse he hanged himself and how his bowels gushed out. And I think the shadow of the doom of Judas fell upon this better Judas while he penned these wordsand he seems to say with greater emphasisUnto Him that is able to keep you from falling, unto Him be glory forever and ever. Thus you see, dear Friends, we are getting into the track, I think, of Judes thoughtshe thought about the failures of others and the terrible way in which they had fallen.

Yet again, by your leave, Jude had a very clear view of the greatness of the sins into which apostates fall. Probably there is not in the whole compass of Holy Writ a more fearful picture of the sin of backsliders and apostates than in the Epistle of Jude. I remember preaching to you one evening from that text, Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

I remember how you trembledmyself trembling most with such a terrible message to deliver! Where could such a text or simile be found but in the book of Jude? The sins of apostates are tremendous. They are usually not content with the average of human guilt. They must make themselves giants in iniquity. None make such devils as those that were once angels and none make such reprobates as those who once seemed to bid fair for the kingdom of Heaven! These go into filthy dreams, into sensualitythey give themselves over to fornication and go after strange flesh, as he has put it.

In fact, where can we set the bounds to which a man will go, when he crucifies the Lord that bought him and puts Him to an open shame? Oh, Beloved, as I think of the sin into which these apostates have gone, I cannot but feel that you must bless God with Jude, that there is One who is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

II. I might continue in this strain, but perhaps I had better not. I would rather turn to THE BLESSINGS OF WHICH JUDE SPEAKS. He seems to ascribe in this doxology three blessings, at least, to the power of the Lord Jesus. The first is ability to keep you from falling and for this, I am sure, the highest praise is due when you consider for a moment the dangerous way. In some respects the path to Heaven is very safe. It is so as God made it. But in other respects there is no road so dangerous as the road to eternal life. It is beset with difficulties.

In some of our mountain climbing we have gone along narrow pathways where there was but a step between us and deathfor deep down beneath us was a gaping precipiceperhaps a mile in perpendicular descent. Ones brain reels at the thought of it now and yet we passed along quite safely. The road to Heaven is much like that. One false step, (and how easy it is to take that, if Divine Grace is absent), and down we go!

What a slippery path is that which some of us have to tread. You know that there are a million opportunities in a single week for your foot to slip and for your soul to be ruined. There are some spots, I believe, upon some of the more difficult Swiss mountains where no man ought to go at all, and where, if any must go, they should be only such as have become most accomplished mountaineers through years of practicefor one has to cling to the side of the rockto hold on, perhaps, by bushes or stones that may be there, with nothing for the feet to rest upon except, perhaps, an inch of projecting crag!

And so we go creeping on with our backs to the danger, for to look down upon it would be to make the brain reel and cause us to fall. And the result of falling, of course, would be the end of lifethe body would be dashed into a thousand pieces. Such is truly the way to Heaven. You must all have passed some such difficult places, and, in looking back, I can only, myself, say, Unto Him that has kept me from falling, when my feet had well near gone and my steps had almost slipped. Unto Him be glory forever and ever!

But next you have to think of the weakness of the person. Some men may travel roads which would not be safe for others and what are you, my brother pilgrim, but a little babe? It is unsafe to trust you along the pathway to Glory. In the best roads you are soon tripped up. Those feeble knees of yours can scarcely support your tottering weight. A straw might throw you and a pebble could wound you. Oh, if you shall be kept, how must you bless the patient power which watches over you day by day! Reflect upon your tendency to sin. The giddiness of that poor brain, the silliness of that deceitful heart. Think how apt you are to choose dangerhow the tendency is to cast yourselves downhow you rather are inclined to fall than to stand, and I am sure you will sing more sweetly than you have ever done, Glory be to Him who is able to keep me from falling.

Then you have to notice further the many foes who try to push you down. The road is rough enough. The child is weak enough. But here and there is an enemy who is in ambush who comes out when we least expect him and labors to trip us up, or hurl us down a precipice. I suppose you never did see a man fall from a precipice. Some of you may have been fools enough to go and see a man walk on a rope, in which case, I believe, you have incurred the guilt of murder. Because if the man does not kill himself, you encourage him to put himself where he probably might do so. But if you have ever really seen a man fall over a precipice, your hair must surely have stood on endyour flesh creeping on your bones as you saw the poor human form falling off the edgenever to stand in mortal life again! Surely as you left the place where you stood and fled away from the edge of the precipice, you cried, O bless Him that made me stand and kept my feet from falling!

How alarmed you would be if you were in such a position and had seen one fall and that same monster who had pushed him over should come to hurl you over, also! And especially if you felt that you were as weak as water and could not resist the gigantic demon! Now just such is your case! You cannot stand against Satan! A little maid made Peter deny his Master and a little maid may make the strongest among us tremble sometimes. Oh, if we are preserved in spite of such mighty enemies who are ever waiting to destroy us, we shall have great cause to sing praises unto Him that is able to keep us from falling. Only Christ has the power to take us into Heaven.

You may keep a man from starving, but you cannot take him into the kings palace and present him at court. Suppose that a man had been a rebel. You might hide him from the pursuers and aid in his escape but you could not take him into the presence of the king and cause him to live in the royal castle of the land. But you see that Christ preserves His people though they have offended God and daily provoke His justice. And He does more, for He presents them to the King of kings in the high court of Heaven itself! This it is which makes the other blessing so great. We are not anxious to always live in this world. We find ourselves in a strange land here and would be glad to fly away and be at rest. This is to us a wilderness state and we rejoice to know that Canaan lies beyond.

Our heavenly Joshua can lead us into it! He can fight for us against Amalek and slay all our foes and preserve us from falling. But better still He can and He will take us into the Promised Land and give us to see the better country, even the heavenly, and to there will He conduct all the host so that not one shall perish or be left behind! Christ gives preservation, but He adds glorificationand that is better still! Here then, my Brothers and Sisters, is a thought of incomparable sweetness! We are safe while in this world

*More happy, but not more secure are*

*The glorified spirits in Heaven.*   
And we, too, shall be, before long, as happy as they are because He will present us with them before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy!

We cannot, however, enlarge on this point, though there is much, very much, that ought to be said. We proceed to notice the condition in which the saints are to be when presentedthey are to be faultlessfor our Lord never stops short of perfection in His work of love. That Savior who means to keep His people to the end will not present them at last just alive, all black and foul as when He helped them out of the miry places. He will not bring them in, as sometimes gallant men have to bring those whom they have rescued from drowning, with just the vital spark within them. No, our Savior will carry His people safe from falling through this life and He will present them, how?faultless!

Oh, that is a wondrous word, faultless! We are a long way off from it now. Faulty, yes. We are now faulty through and throughbut Jesus Christ will never be content till we are faultless. And this He will make us in three waysHe will wash us till there is not a spot left, for the chief of sinners shall be as white and fair as Gods purest angel. The eyes of justice will look and God will say, No spot of sin remains in you.

You may have been a drunkard, a thief, an adulterer and what not but if Christ, in mercy, undertakes your case, He will wash you in His blood so thoroughly that you shall be faultless at last! You will be without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Now we are defiled and covered with sin as if we had lay among the pots. We have reveled in uncleanness till we are as if we had been plunged in the ditch. Our own flesh must abhor us if we could but see how defiled we are by nature and by practice.

Now all this shall be completely removed and we shall be whiter than snow! You remember that when the disciples looked at Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, they saw that His garments were white and glisteningwhiter than any fuller could make them! And so shall we be hereafterwhiter and fairer than any earthly art can attain to. The sea of glass, clear as crystal, will not be whiter nor purer than we shall be when washed in the blood of the Lamb. But that is only one way.

If a man had no faults it would still be necessary for him to have some virtues. A man cannot enter Heaven simply because transgression is put away. The Law must be kept! There must be a positive obedience to Divine precepts. Religion is no negation, an absence of things merely evil. It is the presence of the good, the true, the pure. But since even when we do our best we shall be unprofitable servants, we need something higher than we can ever produce by these, our feeble and sinful powers! Therefore the Lord our God imputes to us the perfect righteousness of His Son Christ Jesus, for

*Lest the shadow of a spot   
Should on my soul be found,   
He took the robe the Savior worked,   
And cast it all around.*

The righteousness of Jesus Christ will make the saint who wears it so fair that he will be positively faultless! Yes, perfect in the sight of God! There is a fullness in this which it delights my soul to dwell upon. A man may be faultless in my sight, but not in the sight of those who know him intimately. A Christian may be so holy as to escape the censure of all just men. But ministering spirits, who read the heart and deal with the inner man, can speak of evil which has not come to light before human eyes. And we know that God sees even more clearly than angelic spirits, for He charges them with folly.

Now, God is to see no iniquity in us, no shortcoming. We shall be tried in His scales and set in the light of His Countenance and be pronounced faultless. Gods Law will not only have no charge against us, but it will be magnified in us and honored by us. We shall have imputed to us that righteousness which belongs to Him who has done all this for us that He might present us faultless before the presence of His glory.

Fourthly and best, perhaps, the Spirit of God will make new creatures of us. He has begun the work and He will finish it. He will make us so perfectly holy that we shall have no tendency to sin any more. The day will come when we shall feel that Adam in the garden was not more pure than we are. You shall have no taint of evil in you. Judgment, memory, will every power and passion shall be emancipated from the thralldom of evil. You shall be holy even as God is holy and in His Presence you shall dwell forever!

How altered we shall be! Look within and see if your experience is not like the Apostle Pauls who found a potent law in his members so that when he would do good, evil was present with himand when he desired to escape some evil, he did at times the very thing he allowed not but would most heartily condemn! So is it with uswe would be holy, but we are like a ball that has a bias in itwe cannot go in a straight and direct line. We try to hit the mark but we are prone to start on one side like a deceitful bow. There is a black drop in our hearts which taints all the streams and none of them can be pure.

But it will be all changed one daywe shall be re-made and all the evil gone, gone forever! How joyous must have been the entrance of Naaman, the Assyrian, into his house after he had washed in Jordans stream and found his flesh restored to him as the flesh of a little child! I think I see him as the watchman on the tower has given notice of his approach in the distance. The whole household is at the gate to meet him and to see if he comes back in health. His wife, if eastern customs would not permit her going forth in public, would look from her easement to catch a glimpse of his faceto see if the dread spots were gone.

How joyful the shoutHe is cured and clean! But this is nothing compared with the rapture of that hour when the everlasting doors will be lifted up and we, made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, shall enter into the joy of our Lord! Or take another illustration from Scripture and try and realize the happiness which reigned in the family of the maniac out of whom the legion of devils had departed. Perhaps he had been home before when under the evil influence of the foul fiendshow terrified they doubtless were with the mad frenzy of the poor unhappy wretch as he cut himself with stones and broke all bonds put on him in tenderness and love in order to restrain his self-imposed misery and wounds.

And now, as he comes once more to his house, they see him approach and the old terror seizes them because they know not that he is a changed man, but suppose him still to be the demented being of days gone by. But he enters the door as calm and composed as if he had returned from a long journey and was only anxious to relate the incidents of the pilgrimage and greet loved friends once more! With no fierce frenzy rolling in his eyes, no loud discordant shrieks rending the air, all is the demeanor of a wellregulated, joyful, yet chastened mind! As all this is realized by his friends and they hear what great things the Lord has done for him! What joy must have been in that family circle! I should like to have seen it. I am sure it was a choice exhibition of real human bliss such as earth only witnesses now and then.

It must have been a beam of purest radiance lighting up the scene, like the splendor which Saul of Tarsus saw on the road to Damascus as it lit up the day when he was made a new creature in Christ Jesus. Here, also, we can most truthfully say that the joy, though great, was not comparable to the joy which shall be ours when we are changed into new creatures when we shall be clothed and in our right mindno longer prone to wander among the black mountains of iniquity and no more tempted to abide among those dead in trespasses and sins. Then we shall be ever holy and always living unto God and made like He! Oh this is joy indeed! Not only will He keep us from falling, but He will present us faultless!

My Brothers and Sisters, at the thought of this I think you must join with Jude and say, Now unto Him that is able to do all this, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. I cannot speak to you as I would wish upon such a theme as thiswho could? But when we get to Heaven our song shall be more sweet, more loud, because we shall understand better the dangers from which we have escaped and how very much we owe to Him who has kept us and brought us safely through all

the vicissitudes of life, unto the place He has prepared for us. Meanwhile, never let us be forgetful of that mighty goodness which holds us fast and will not let us go.

III. Still I have not done with the text. I have already forestalled my next thought, but I think it requires a special notice. Observe, the Apostle adds, To present us faultless before His presence, WITH EXCEEDING GREAT JOY. Who will have the joy? My Brothers and Sisters, you will have it! Have you ever mused upon the parable of the Prodigal Son? I know you have! No one can have diligently read the Bible without staying to think over, again and again, of that most tender and instructive of our Lords parables.

Now, I ask, Who was happy at that feast? Dont you think it was the prodigal? What was the character of those thoughts filling his heart and making it heave as if it would burst? How overjoyed he must have been! How utterly crushed down with his fathers love and all the unexpected marks of kindness and affection! He had had his days of feasting and sinful merriment, but no songs could ever have been so sweet as those which rung round the old roof-tree to welcome him home! No viands had ever tasted so delicious as that fatted calf! And no voice of any companion or witching charmer at his guilty feasts had ever sounded such melodious notes in his ears as those words of his father, Let us eat and be merry.

So will it be with us when we have been restored to ourselveswhen wearied of the world and hungering and thirsting after righteousness we shall have been led to the Fathers house by the cords of love which the Spirit shall cast around us. When safely brought through all the weary pilgrimage from the far-off country, we shall tread the golden streets and be safe inside the pearly gates and have the past all gone forever among the things we never shall meet again. What rapture will be ours! This will be Heaven, indeed, when sin shall be gone, Satan shut out, temptation gone forever! You shall have a joy of which you cannot now conceive. Rivers of pleasure shall flow into your soul! You shall drink such draughts of bliss as your soul has never known this side the grave.

Oh, be joyful now with a respite of the joy which is to be revealed! And afterwards you shall have the fullness of Divine bliss forever and ever! Who shall be happy? Why, the minister will be happy! What pleasure was there in the heart of the shepherd youth, David, the son of Jesse, when he had gone forth to do battle with the lion and bear in order to rescue the lamb out of their jaws when God had delivered him and made him successful in his attempt! How gladly he must have watched the little lamb run to the side of its dam and in the mutual pleasure of these poor dumb animals I am sure he found a joy.

And so all the shepherds in Heavenall who have been faithful pastors who have cared for and tended their flocksshall find a bliss unspeakable in welcoming to Glory those darling ones preserved from the power of the devil, who goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Yes, ministers will be sharers in this happiness! I think we shall have a special joy in bringing our sheaves with us. If it may please God to keep me from fallingif I just get inside the door of Heaven with some of the many thousands that God has given to me as my spiritual childrenI will fall prostrate before His feet the greatest debtor to His mercy that ever lived and one that has more cause than any other of His creatures to thank Him and ascribe to Him glory and honor, dominion and power, forever and ever!

Here I am, and the children whom You have given me! Unto You be praise! And what will be the joy of angels, too? How exceedingly great their bliss will be! If there is joy among the angels over one sinner that repents, what will there be over ten thousands times ten thousands, not of repenting, but of perfected sinners, cleansed from every stain, set free from every flaw? Oh, you cherubim and seraphim, how loud will be your music! How you will tune your harps anew! How shall every string wake up to the sweetest music in praise of God. Let the sea roar and the fullness thereof at the thought of the glorious joy at Gods right hand!

Who will have joy, I ask again? Why Christ will have the most joy of all! Angels and ministers and you, yourselves, will scarcely know such joy as He will haveall His sheep safely foldedevery stone of the building placed in its proper position. All the blood-bought and blood-washed onesall whom the Father gave Himdelivered out of the jaw of the lion! All whom He covenanted to redeem effectually savedHis counsel all fulfilled, His stipulations all carried outthe Covenant not only ratified, but fulfilled in all its jots and tittles! Verily, none will be so happy as the great Surety in that day!

As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall Christ rejoice over you. You know it is written that, for the joy set before Him He endured the Cross, despising the shame. And also, He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be abundantly satisfied. Now this satisfaction and joy will be our Lords when the whole Church is faultless and complete in the presence of His Glorybut not till then. In that hour, when all His jewels are reckoned up and none found missing, He shall rejoice anew in spirit and shall thank God with yet more of joy than He did when here on earth and thought of this day in prospect and by that thought nerved Himself for cruel suffering and a death of shame. Yes, Christ will be glad!

Our Head will have His share of joy with all the members! And happily He will be able to bear more, as He most certainly deserves, and will have more. Who will have joy? Why, God Himself will have joy! It is no blasphemy to say that the joy of God on that occasion will be infinite. It is always infinite! But it will be then infinitely displayed before His creatures gaze. Listen to these wordsyou cannot fathom them, but you may look at them. It is written, The Lord your God will rejoice over you with joy. He will joy over you with singing (Zeph. 3:17). As I have said on this platform before, I think that is the most wonderful text in the Bible in some respectsGod Himself singing!

I can imagine, when the world was made, the morning stars shouting for joy. But God did not sing. He said it was very good, and that was all. There was no song. But oh, to think of it, that when all the chosen race shall meet around the Throne, the joy of the Eternal Father shall swell so high that God, who fills all in all, shall burst out into an infinite, godlike song! I will only put in this one more thought, that all this, Beloved, is about YOU. All this you have a share in, the least in the Church, the

poorest in the family, the humblest Believerthis is all true of youHe will keep you from falling and present you spotless before His Presence with exceedingly great joy.

Oh, cannot you join the song and sing with me, To the only wise God and Savior be glory and honor, dominion and majesty forever. Amen? For my part I feel like that good old saint who said that if she got to Heaven, Jesus Christ should never hear the last of it. Truly He never shall

*Ill praise my Savior with my breath;   
And when my voice is at last in death,   
Praise shall employ my nobler powers   
My days of praise shall neer be past,   
While life and thought and being last,   
Or immortality endures.*

I want you to go away with a sense of your own weakness and yet a belief in your own safety. I want you to know that you cannot stand a minutethat you will be damned within another second unless Divine Grace keep you out of Hell. But I want you to feel that since you are in the hands of Christ you cannot perishneither can any pluck you out of His hands! And, poor sinners, my hearts desire is that you may be put into the hands of Christ tonight! That you may have done with trusting yourselves. You can ruin, but you cannot save yourselves.

Oh Israel, you have destroyed yourself, but in Me is your help found. Christ alone can save you! Oh look out of self to Christ! Trust yourselves in His hands! He is able to keep you from falling. You cannot even stand upright yourselves and if He should set you upright you cannot keep so for a minute without His protecting care. If saints need to be kept, how much more need have you to seek the shelter of the Saviors wounded side? Flee there as the dove to the cleft of the rock! If holy men of God cry daily for pardon and profess to have no right of themselves to Heaven, how much more urgent is your case? You must perish if you die as you are! You can never make yourself faultless, but Christ can.

He wants to do itHe has opened a fountain for sin and for uncleannesswash and be clean! Again, I say, look to Jesus! Away with self and cling to Christ! Down with self-confidence and up with simple faith in Christ Jesus! I shall not let you go, dear Friends, without singing one verse which I think will express the feeling of each one of us

*Let me among Your saints be found   
Whenever the Archangels trump shall sound, To see your smiling face.   
Then loudest of the crowd Ill sing,   
While Heavens resounding mansions ring With shouts of Sovereign Grace.*

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